

# **2000 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre Drama**

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# Drama

## Practical Examination

### The Group Presentation

#### General Comments

The majority of candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements needed to perform a strong group ensemble piece, however examiners noted that there continues to be some difficulties in addressing specific requirements for the HSC Examination.

Whilst most candidates were aware of the specified time frame of 8-12 minutes, there were a number of candidates who were stopped because they exceeded the time limit. Performance opportunities prior to the examination allow candidates to develop confidence in working within the time limits. Candidates should be reminded that performances under time will be penalised and those significantly over time will be stopped by the examiners. This may lead to serious disadvantage.

To assist in the process of examination of the group performance, teachers are issued with a checklist prior to the examination. Detailed in this checklist is a stipulation that inappropriate items in performances such as weapons or props which could be used as weapons, naked flames, implements that may endanger performers, audience members or examiners, may not be used. Nudity is also inappropriate. It is crucial that candidates be informed that Examiners will stop performances should any inappropriate items appear.

On arrival at marking centres, markers also go through a checklist with teachers prior to the commencement of the examination. During this time teachers have a responsibility to inform and show examiners items or props which candidates intend using in performances as weapons e.g. knives, scissors, forks, sticks, plastic guns or swords etc An increasing number of teachers are not informing examiners of the presence of these items resulting in a significant number of performances being stopped.

#### Teacher's Role

Teachers need to build upon candidates' skills and support the development as a supervisor and facilitator and not as a director. As a facilitator, the teacher is a catalyst, workshop leader, adviser, supervisor, and diplomat. The teacher is also the assessor of each candidate's work-in-progress within the group. This means that a teacher should provide candidates with the experiences and strategies including advice, assistance and negotiation, to look at the development of their own work and to use these strategies for solving dramatic problems that occur.

Direction refers to giving specific instructions that may lead to a performance that is not wholly conceived by the group. Teacher-directed works do not reflect the philosophy or intention of the Group Performance. Should candidates use any other adviser, including outside tutors, the adviser should not assume the role of director. It is inappropriate for other advisers or outside tutors to assist candidates with their work during the term in which the examination will occur.

The group performance depends on and extends knowledge, skills and experiences gained by candidates in the Preliminary course. Teachers need to program the Preliminary course carefully in order to foster candidate performance skills and an understanding of dramatic elements and styles of performance. Knowledge and experiences from studies of the written components in the HSC course further inform these skills and experiences. In developing their work, candidates should use the topic list provided for their Group Performance as a starting point only, and should ensure that their work has dramatic structure with a clear beginning, middle and end. In order to have a sense of ownership of their performance candidates should give their piece a title.

It is necessary that teachers provide opportunities for candidates to perform their work for a variety of audiences prior to the examination. Performance opportunities enable candidates to refine their work, develop confidence in working within the time limits, receive feedback from their teacher and peers and gauge the reaction of an audience in order to better understand the actor/audience relationship. As the HSC examination is not open to members of the public, it is advisable to provide opportunities for parents and friends to attend performances as an audience prior to the examination.

The elements of Drama are the tools candidates use to create a performance which engages an audience. When a performance is not working, candidates may find it useful to look at the elements of Drama to diagnose the problem and to rework the performance.

Key questions candidates could consider in order to analyse the dramatic effect on the audience could be:

- Are the elements of drama being used effectively?
- Does the use of space engage the audience?
- Is there a relationship created with the audience?
- Do the symbols used communicate meaning to the audience?

## **Requirements**

- Schools are required to provide teacher supervision during the examination and to remain within the examination area until completion of the examination process. The examination space should be as conducive to the process as possible for candidates, audience and markers.
- Teachers need to ensure that all paperwork is completed before the examination day. e.g. all sections of the Photo Sheet, certification, misadventure, non-certification etc.
- Markers need to be provided with sufficient lighting and privacy for the marking and interaction periods.
- The audience must be aware of appropriate behaviour and theatre etiquette. Where examinations continue after school hours, arrangements should be made with the audience prior to the day of the examination to remain after school hours.
- Logbooks must be part of the internal school marking assessment and must reflect the developmental process of the Group Performance. They must also be presented to the markers on the day of the examination.
- Each group should comprise no fewer than three and no more than six candidates who are studying HSC Drama course. Where a school has less than three candidates attempting the examination or where a candidate in the group is incapacitated by illness or misadventure there is provision to include other candidates from the school who are not HSC or Year 12 candidates, to achieve the required numbers. Teachers are advised that where this occurs, a

minimum number of replacement candidates should be used, these candidates should not be involved in the development of the Group Performance and are not marked during the examination. If a candidate withdraws from a group early in the development of the group work, the teacher should adjust group numbers from within the drama class to accommodate the change. Specific requests regarding replacement candidates should be made to The Board of Studies.

- The Board of Studies sends out an options sheet to schools in July for collection of information detailing the candidate choices for the Group Performance and for the Individual Project. It is important that these sheets are completed and returned.

## **Recommendations**

- Teachers must ensure the safety of their candidates at all times. With an increase in physical theatre in performances it is important that teachers encourage candidates to warm up adequately, both physically and vocally, before their performance in a safe and supervised area, and provide advice on movements that may be considered unsafe.
- Technical effects need to be kept to a minimum. Candidates need to be aware that they are not marked on these effects. If candidates insist on using lighting and sound cues, they must be strongly rehearsed and kept to a minimum so as not to detract from the piece. Due to issues relating to occupational health and safety, candidates should be discouraged from using smoke machines.
- Schools need to ensure that the examination area and interaction space is quiet and free from interruption. If the performance space is not used for interactions it is recommended the area for interactions be as close as possible.
- If candidates are not easily distinguishable ensure that some form of identification (e.g. coloured wristbands) is used.
- Candidates should be informed that a senior marker might join the two markers present at the school for a proportion of the marking process only. Candidates should not be concerned that the senior marker may arrive or depart suddenly.

## **Strong Group Presentations**

- Candidates were highly proficient in a range of performance skills, exploring the potential of voice and movement to create atmosphere. They performed with energy levels commensurate to the demands of the material, presenting pieces with a clear, engaging dramatic structure and style and were visually stimulating and highly rehearsed. They explored issues and or themes in interesting, innovative and complex ways, taking risks and pushing boundaries using motifs or simple props effectively.
- Candidates performing in a particular style showed clear evidence of research and ownership and a strong sense of ensemble whilst also providing ample opportunity for individuals to display their skills, and made informed decisions in regards to character that best displayed their skills and explored the potential of these roles through out the performance.

## **Weaker Group Presentations**

- Pieces were fragmented, relying on a montage of ideas or a collection of barely related scenes, or images that lacked depth and clarity of intention in relation to the overall theme.

Unrelated material was often included in order to meet the time limit. Transitions detracted from the meaning creating breaks in the rhythm. Performances were often under rehearsed or improvised with little understanding of how to take the audience on a journey, or the actor/audience relationship, often reacting to the audience or other performers out of character.

- Candidates presented cliched topics, simplistic or literal interpretations often based on T.V shows, films or characters not appropriate to a theatrical performance, resulting in large sections of unoriginal material used in an unoriginal way e.g. soap operas, or had a formulaised approach often imitating 'On STAGE'. Pieces were heavily plot driven with weak structure and little sense of theatricality or understanding of the dramatic elements .
- Candidates were unable to discriminate between dance and movement as a performance style. Weaker candidates demonstrated movement skills which often lacked control and dynamics with limited spatial awareness and low energy. Blocking was often weak, using repetitive and unmotivated movement and words to advance the story line.
- There was an over reliance on technical choices or extraneous elements such as music and lighting, particularly in transitions to convey the storyline, e.g. used blackouts or music to fill the space, major set changes during the piece, unrelated song or dance or props and costumes with little dramatic effect.

## Individual Projects

### Requirements

When choosing their Individual Project, candidates **must ensure that they do not choose a topic or text that they are studying in Drama** (as part of Australian Drama and Theatre or Studies in Drama and Theatre) or in any other of their HSC courses. For example, they may not use extracts from a text they are studying in English for the Individual Project Performance, or a playwright they are studying in Ancient History for the Individual Project: Critical Analysis (Research).

Candidates are able to perform texts from lists provided they are not studying them in the written components or in any other subject.

**Teachers should ensure that candidates do not submit the same project for any other HSC subject.**

For example, it is a breach of the rules to submit the same video drama for Drama, Visual Arts, Design and Technology or English.

Teachers should guide candidates to make choices appropriate to their skills for the Individual Project. Teachers should issue candidates with copies of the guidelines, criteria and recommendations for each individual project - pages 32 - 44 of the Stage 6 Drama Syllabus approved 1999 for candidates in 2001, prior to the commencement of projects. Teachers are reminded that for 2001, candidates are required to complete a Rationale for their Individual Project (see page 32 of the Stage 6 Drama Syllabus).

### Individual Project: Performance

Markers noted that while teachers are taking a more active role in guiding candidates to choose Individual Projects appropriate to their skills, there still tends to be a disproportionate number of candidates undertaking an Individual Project in performance who demonstrate weaker performance skills. Teachers should encourage these candidates to explore more appropriate project areas.

While it is clear that many teachers are providing the guidance necessary for candidates to develop effective performances, there are still several instances where teachers have misinterpreted the notion of guidance, by either providing no guidance whatsoever, or in the other extreme directing candidates.

A lack of guidance is evident where several candidates demonstrate outstanding skills in group performance but made poor choices in their Individual Performances or where several performances were marginally undertime. Undertime or overtime performances incur a penalty. It is in the interests of candidates that teachers provide sufficient performance opportunities for candidates prior to the examination and guide candidates to make choices most appropriate to their skills.

Teachers need to ensure that candidates are familiar with the marking criteria, particularly in the third category where several candidates demonstrated difficulty with their chosen material. This was particularly the case for an increasing number of candidates who are using film, adapted novels, or monologues for performance.

This type of material does not allow for a coherent theatrical performance and should be used as a starting point only in developing a dramatic presentation. Material has to be reworked and taken further by candidates to ensure a complete dramatic structure, context and theatrical statement is achieved with a strong 'through-line. Novel or film based characters need to be adapted into a theatrical model; candidates should avoid attempting to recreate film or TV scenes or characters without making appropriate changes to make the work their own. Strong candidates that have the skills to rework material can cope with these demands. It is often better to guide middle range or weaker candidates to use scripts more appropriate to their skills.

## **Requirements**

- Teachers are encouraged to guide the candidates in their developmental process ensuring that their performance meets the time stipulation of between 6 and 8 minutes.
- Teachers need to guide candidates to select pieces within their capabilities with the emphasis on a piece that suits their skills, not their tastes, by either recommending material or providing appropriate feedback on choices. Candidates need to be encouraged to find theatrical solutions in the search for a script rather than psychodrama or poor self-devised scripts.
- Candidates should be encouraged to work on one script rather than combining several.
- Teachers should ensure that candidates have several opportunities to perform their work for an audience prior to the examination. Several candidates presented without an audience. As the relationship to the audience is a part of the criterion for examination in the third category it is in the candidates' best interests to ensure an audience is present and is considered in relation to the performance space.
- It is worthwhile to consider the space carefully in assisting to develop the actor/ audience relationship. Teachers are encouraged to attempt where possible to make performance spaces more intimate for Individual performers e.g. a large hall can appear very empty and can be very difficult for the performer to work the actor audience relationship. Eye contact with the audience should be appropriate to the piece, rather than above the audience i.e. where candidates choose to break the fourth wall it is better to engage eye contact with the audience than look out and talk to imaginary people just above the level of the audience.
- Technology used should be essential to the meaning of piece.

## **Strong Individual Performances**

- Candidates met the criteria in all three categories, demonstrating a well-rehearsed complete theatrical statement with a coherent and definite through-line. Performances were often innovative, complex or sophisticated in content/theme and/or style using material appropriate to skills, with clarity of analysis/interpretation of the theatrical requirements of piece.
- Candidates who developed ideas from scripted work showed a sophisticated level of understanding of form. Candidates presenting strong self-devised pieces were able to use effective script writing skills and performed with a good sense of theatre and superior actor-audience relationship, they were able to demonstrate ownership of their material and inhabited the life of the character. They were able to create and fully realise a sense of atmosphere, character, tension, and rhythm.
- Candidates knew who they were and what they were saying and doing and were able to realise sub-text, specific nuances in the character or script, and understood nature of 'beats' and changes of thoughts. They demonstrated a strong actor/ audience relationship with belief, focus and presented a sense of journey through the embodiment of the character and defined the space well in relation to the audience.
- Candidates were able to demonstrate through their logbooks the progressive development of their piece, research into the chosen dramatic style and their character.

## **Weaker Candidates**

- Choose material beyond their ability and understanding or made poor or ill advised decisions to take 'risks' with a new style that they hadn't experimented with previously. Presented a talk, a recital or a monotone reporting of narrative rather than a theatrical performance. Several candidates performed with a script in hand or were unable to cope with forgotten lines or mishaps. They demonstrated little understanding of character/roles often playing themselves or were unconvincing or unclear.
- Presented pieces that were fragmented with poor transitions lacking cohesion and the intention of the piece. Candidates used slabs of text from plays without any sense of purpose, were self devised psychodrama or unrehearsed/ improvised performances.
- Demonstrated limited performance skills with little or no connection with audience throughout the performance, included unanimated movement or poor spatial awareness, tending to pace backwards and forth or used other inappropriate blocking.
- Lacked evidence of an understanding of the elements of drama and relied heavily on props, costumes, lighting, sound to convey mood and/or meaning. Many candidates seemed unaware of whom they were addressing.
- Made poor choices to play many characters/roles or to present dialogue to invisible characters onstage without awareness of where the character was located, often acting in profile.
- Were confused over the use of accent and had difficulty connecting to the emotional life of the character. It is more important that candidates are able to relate to the content in the presentation of character rather than being able to perform with an accent.

## **Critical Analysis**

Most candidates demonstrated a facility for structuring a theatre review or developing an abstract or a proposal for a research project or an understanding of the role of a Director. Criteria for the three sections had been considered. The logbook is a good indication of candidate's progress in achieving the aim of the project undertaken. Candidates should be encouraged to use the logbook for reflection and research.

## **Director's Production Preparation**

Most candidates met or made a good attempt at meeting the demands of this project area. Generally, presentation was outstanding; candidates are obviously following recommendations from previous years. Candidates indicated an understanding of the role of the director and the importance of the vision and the overall concept. Engaging the text and communication of the practicalities of bringing the text alive on stage characterised the better candidates.

## **Portfolio of Theatre Criticism**

Candidates generally indicated an awareness of the criteria and specifications for the project i.e. critiques should be 850 words in length. There was an increasing indication of exposure to a diversity of live theatre experiences. Candidates displayed an increasing awareness of the style of theatre witnessed. Most candidates were able to identify the main concept of a production and comment on elements relating to the execution of the concept on stage. Candidates are becoming more conversant in the use of theatre terminology and the demands of review writing.

## **Research Report**

Candidates covered a variety of topics and were able to construct a proposal. Candidates must be aware that all resources should be carefully referenced and acknowledged accordingly. Engaging with the resource and displaying an understanding of the research undertaken is of paramount importance. Development of the proposal and drawing conclusions were characteristics of strong candidates. Teachers must advise candidates not to undertake any proposal that is connected with the study of topic areas. Candidates need to be aware of the research project format.

## **Individual Project Design**

### **General Comments**

The improved standard in design generally indicates that teachers are becoming aware of the guidelines. However in some projects there continues to be difficulties addressing guidelines, recommendations and criteria. Candidates should be made aware of these prior to commencement of projects.

The difference between plagiarism and appropriation is an issue for several candidates and their teachers. Images, like quotes, should be sourced and logbooks should provide evidence of how an existing image has been manipulated/ recontextualised to support the issues/themes/ needs of the play.

Fewer candidates provided a statement about the design concept. The design concept should come from a clear understanding and interpretation of the play and not something imposed on it. Candidates are reminded that for the examination in 2001 and onwards this component is compulsory in the form of the 300 word Rationale. The Rationale will be submitted as a separate item and will allow examiners insight into the candidate's intentions for the project.



It is imperative that teachers and candidates take particular note of the recommendations on packaging for all design projects (pages 37-40 of the Stage 6 Drama Syllabus for 2001 onwards) before submitting work.

Candidates for 2001 should be aware of the compulsory components for design projects (page 38-41 Stage 6 Drama Syllabus) and should work within the stipulated parameters for projects. Projects submitted with missing items will be penalised. Material that exceeds the stipulated requirements will be disregarded.

### **Costume**

There was an overall improvement in the costume design. This was particularly apparent in the renderings of the designs. Candidates are encouraged to thoroughly consider and explore their design concept. A design concept needs to be justified in relation to the underlying themes and issues of the chosen play. Candidates are also encouraged to use the logbook thoroughly to document and reflect on the design process. Final renderings and preliminary drawings should be clearly labeled and presented in a separate logbook.

### **Lighting**

The lighting designs indicated an awareness of the requirements of the project and reflected the importance of providing clear, logical and easy to follow information regarding technical and artistic decisions. This was evident in the work of stronger candidates. Candidates are encouraged to thoroughly document the design process in their logbooks including dates for individual entries. Candidates are also advised to research technical aspects of lighting thoroughly to make appropriate choices.

### **Poster, Program, Advertising and Promotional Copy**

This area of design requires that candidates demonstrate skills in both visual images and written descriptions and interpretations. Candidates tend to undervalue the importance of the written components. Many candidates were unable to combine both requirements to produce effective designs.

The design concept in this area requires an interrelated choice of graphic elements and language appropriate to the form. e.g. poster, program, media release etc. The nature of the play, the audience it is trying to attract and the profile of the theatre company presenting the play must be communicated through language style or voice. The layout of the words and what and how the candidate writes about the play are integral to the design concept.

Candidates are reminded that they are required to complete all components of the project themselves. Part of the marking criteria is the candidate's ability to execute the project. The final product should reflect the choice of skills and tools utilised by the candidate to realise their design concept. Candidates must not employ others to produce any aspect of the work on their behalf, for example, the use of computers is prevalent but not compulsory in this project. Candidates who use the computer as a tool should have developed the necessary skill to do so.

An increasing number of computer-generated projects are being submitted unsubstantiated by a logbook. Teachers and schools must ensure that sufficient observation of the process takes place and ensure that a growing body of draftwork and refinement develops in the logbook over the set period to ensure candidate ownership.

Lamination of projects is an unnecessary expense often detracting from the work, especially in the case of hand produced work. Lamination makes the work highly reflective and difficult to mark in overhead lighting.

The strongest candidates presented a clear concise statement (presented with the project and separate from the logbook) about the play and how this is realised through their design concepts. Concepts were conceived with strong visual impact contained in a design metaphor for the whole play, which was unified in all items. Demonstrated an understanding of the audience for which the design was aimed and the image the theatre company wanted to convey and adapted the elements of design and necessary information to suit the different requirements for each of the mandatory items, in a style appropriate to each item.

### **Set Design**

Model construction continues to improve. Candidates are exploring better options for building materials and have a greater sense of theatre space and scale. The set must contribute to the play by providing an appropriate environment for the action, and should demonstrate an awareness of what the audience will see from their perspective. The set should not be submitted without a reference to the audience location, the offstage space (if any) or the actual stage architecture. This can be done on the plan or through the model.

Stronger candidates included all mandatory items, provided a clearly worded design / directorial statement and produced a model with visual impact linked to the play's themes and technical needs by looking for a symbolic or metaphoric approach. Models gave an accurate representation of how the full scale setting would look and work in a specific theatre or performance space and considered the needs of the audience e.g. sightlines, seating arrangements and the actors e.g. acting areas, entrances, exits etc.

### **Scriptwriting**

The markers reflected that the treatment of the structure, characterisation, setting and theatrical styles that are needed to write a complete and cohesive play for live presentation continue to be improved on by candidates. More candidates explored their material through different theatrical forms.

It is important that candidates and teachers note that photocopies of short stories that are adapted MUST be supplied in the logbook to enable markers to ascertain how the candidate has used their creativity to adapt the script. Candidates should be urged to write original scripts and only use existing works as a stimulus. Copying of existing plot-narrative and dialogue without evidence of creative adaptation for stage performance will not fulfil the marking criteria for this project.

Candidates should be reminded that the submission of a Logbook is a requirement of this project. Candidates considering scriptwriting should ensure they:

- Have an understanding of the genre they write in
- Have read scripts from a variety of theatrical styles
- Have experienced a variety of live theatre, and are aware of the practicalities for live theatre
- Are aware that adaptations must be from non-dramatic scripts e.g. short stories, not from already scripted plays or films
- Keep a thorough record of the development and drafting of the play.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that candidates should:

- Take note of the set criteria for this project, in particular, in regard to length and setting out. Scripts should be proof read for spelling, punctuation and consistency.
- Be aware of the importance of recording the development of their script from the original concept, the development, drafting and refining of the script. Evidence that the teacher has monitored the development of the project should also be evident in the logbook.

### **Stronger Candidates**

- Showed evidence of research and submitted logbooks, which also contained research about the subject of the script and characterisation and demonstrated that research was applied appropriately within the dramatic text.
- Showed a good understanding of the audience and used dramatic tension to engage them.
- Showed evidence of good editing and had work-shopped the script with a variety of people.
- Promoted dramatic action by manipulation of props and stage direction.
- Did not rely on adaptations or narrators, were character driven, not plot driven.
- Found a distinct voice for each character.
- Were clear on the type of stage and set suitable for the play often including a set design.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Often adapted other literary material without innovation or awareness of the elements of drama.
- Concentrated on plot and narrative, using stereotyped characters and material.
- Showed limited use of dramatic tension.
- Showed limited understanding of the purpose of stage directions.
- Relied on a narrator to show passage of time or action.
- Did not integrate research into dramatic action or into dramatic dialogue.
- Were vague about the setting of the play which often affected the practicality of the production.

### **Video Drama**

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and standard of video dramas. Innovation in genre styles, camera work, concept and editing have all been evident as the candidature becomes more comfortable with the medium.

Video drama requires a high level of organisation and time management skills. Apart from planning and filming time, time should be set aside for technical problems, particularly in post-production. It is extremely beneficial to have made a practice video before the actual HSC attempt so those problems can be understood.

Whilst videos are becoming more sophisticated, candidates must pay particular attention to the quality of the soundtrack and aspects of framing and composition.

Logbooks should validate the process of the completed project.

Candidates are reminded that when filming safety considerations are paramount. This includes filming fights, accidents, anywhere near the road or involving cars, or in dangerous locations.

Teachers are reminded that their role is restricted to facilitating and monitoring the project. They may not work as cast or crew or edit the project. Teachers must also ensure they are able to certify the authenticity of the candidate's work.

Candidates cannot submit the same video for any other HSC Subject. e.g. they cannot submit the same video for Drama, Visual Arts, Design and Technology, English etc.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that candidates should:

- Produce a practice Video Drama prior to attempting the HSC Video Drama entry
- Remove the in-camera time and date display
- Ensure the sound level of the recording and post-production is such that it can be easily heard and is consistent across all scenes, as sound quality is just as important as visual quality
- Present the best sound and picture quality. The tape (new) used for the original shoot should always be the tape from which the edited / final version (also a new tape) is constructed. Any subsequent versions must be constructed from the original shooting tape or master, not from another edited version. Each time a candidate dubs from an edited tape the sound and picture quality is reduced
- Put down a control track on the new video before editing onto it
- Edit the final Video Drama onto the beginning of a new tape
- Rewind the tape to the beginning before submitting
- Remove the auto-focus quality on the camera whilst shooting
- Remove the tab from the back of the video cassette to ensure it is not accidentally taped over
- Clearly identify the video tape as well as the tape cover with the title
- Submit a Video Drama that is a work of fiction, not a documentary, music clip or 'real TV'
- Produce a video which engages the viewer to invent their own story and a style commensurate with a minimum budget, rather than re-creating what is seen on movies or television
- Note that gratuitous violence generally fails to further the development of the dramatic action

## Written Examination

To assist in developing standards in the marking of both Section I and Section II for the 2000 Examination, a basic criteria was provided to markers as a guide. This was supplemented by topic specific notes on each question. A copy of the criteria is provided.

<b>A</b> 18-20	<b>Thorough understanding of the question</b> <b>Extensive knowledge and convincing substantiation</b> <b>Clear and coherent response</b>
<b>B</b> 14-17	<b>Informed answering of the question, does not consistently address all aspects</b> <b>Substantial knowledge and appropriate supportive evidence</b> <b>Organised response</b>
<b>C</b> 8-13	<b>General understanding of the question</b> <b>Adequate knowledge and limited substantiation</b> <b>Basic essay structure</b>
<b>D</b> 4-7	<b>Partial or limited answering of the question</b> <b>Some knowledge and examples</b> <b>Incomplete or inappropriate essay response</b>
<b>E</b> 0-3	<b>Does not address the question</b> <b>Elementary knowledge and incidental evidence</b> <b>Unstructured or incomplete</b>

## Content Area 4: Drama and Theatre in Australian Societies and Cultures

The majority of candidates studied Theatre in Education, followed by Louis Nowra, Contemporary Aboriginal Theatre, the New Wave and Contemporary Women's Theatre. Fewer candidates undertook Theatre in Contemporary Australian Society and only a small number attempted Puppetry.

Stronger candidates presented clear and coherent responses directly addressing the demands of the question. They made use of relevant substantiation and demonstrated sound understanding of both texts and performance styles and conventions of theatre. In some cases candidates demonstrated a depth of understanding which enabled them to successfully challenge questions or pursue a unique line of argument. Stronger candidates dealt with both texts discussed equally.

Weaker candidates gave general responses that were unsubstantiated, brief or made limited reference to the question. Responses were often incomplete or contained irrelevant information. Weaker candidates failed to explore the theatricality of the texts in their responses.

Students need to be reminded that scripts are blueprints for performance and should be studied experientially. Candidates must ensure they discuss the plays with reference to performance styles and conventions and their experiential understanding of texts. Themes and issues are relevant only in terms of how they are expressed on stage.

Candidates are encouraged to see productions of texts studied where possible. In discussion of these productions, candidates must ensure they differentiate between texts and interpretations of texts seen in production.

Candidates should be made aware that film versions of texts might be markedly different in content and usually incorporate filmic techniques rather than theatrical techniques.

## **Content Area 5: Drama and Theatre in Societies and Cultures other than Australian**

Stronger responses in this section addressed the question using evidence/ quotations from the plays or their study of the topic to support their options and expand them.

It was obvious that these candidates had explored the topic through the rubric rather than just through the plays.

These candidates also demonstrated a sense of the working elements of the play/ style/ practitioner and were able to discuss more fully aspects of the plays/ style in performance because of this. Some of the better candidates were able to integrate the plays into their response rather than writing about them separately.

Weaker responses did not address the question. They did not describe the play/ style/ practitioner in action but gave a more theoretical response. Many of these candidates seemed to rely on prepared answers, which they could not relate to the question.

Some candidates are still retelling the plot or writing all they know about the topic rather than addressing the question.

It is important to note that some candidates did not appear to have studied the three plays in theatre of the Absurd or the six playlets in the Medieval English Cycle Plays. It is important to pay attention to the stimulus material when it is provided.