

Moderators' Report/  
Principal Moderator  
Feedback



Summer 2016

GCSE Drama (5DR02) Unit 2:  
Exploring Play Texts

## Introduction

This is the sixth year of examination of the three unit GCSE specification 2DR01 and as such, the Controlled Assessment Unit 5DR02 is well-established, and well-supported by a myriad of online resources. Extensive Reports from the Principal Moderator are available online for the previous three years; this report is therefore a summative one, designed to support centres by highlighting key issues for the 2016 series only.

## Content of 5DR02

The 5DR02 unit is made up of two components, each with a separate assessment objective. The focus of the unit is the exploration of a centre-chosen text over 6 hours of practical drama, taught and assessed by the teacher for Paper 01 Exploration. This exploration is then evaluated in a written piece of Documentary Evidence. Students also complete a written Response to Live Performance and these two tasks comprise Paper 02 Evaluation.

### Key elements of content:

- Both papers are assessed in Controlled Conditions (level of control - medium), with the drama teacher supervising, assessing and facilitating the work
- 6 hours of Practical Exploration must be made available to all students
- The text is selected by the centre to meet the needs of each group of students
- Selected extracts must be chosen through which the text will be explored
- Skills used throughout the unit must include the use of at least four strategies, two uses of the drama medium and the use of Drama elements for Paper 01, and the evaluation of students' own work and the work of others for Paper 02.

There is essential guidance for all centres about all GCSE units in the Administrative Support Guide (ASG) document, which is updated for each series. Centres must download this from the website as soon as it is available each Autumn. The Assessment forms for all three units are available as appendices to the ASG in PDF format and as editable Word documents.

All centres, including those entirely new to Edexcel GCSE Drama, are advised to re-visit the Specification document (updated for GCSE 2012) for further details of the requirements of the unit. There are also other useful support documents available to download via the GCSE Drama home page including the Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book (updated for GCSE Drama 2012) and the standardisation materials.

The main link to the Drama home page is:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/drama-2009.html>

And the quick link is:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/drama>

## Records of Work

A detailed Record of the Work undertaken by each group of students when exploring the chosen play text, is a requirement of 5DR02; detailed guidance about this document was provided in the 2016 ASG document in addition to the optional Record of Work pro-forma D2e.

Popular texts for Unit 2 Exploration included, but were not limited to:

- Mark Wheeller texts (such as *Too Much Punch for Judy* and *Hard to Swallow*)
- *DNA*
- *Blood Brothers*
- *Blue Remembered Hills*
- *The Crucible*
- *Find Me*
- *An Inspector Calls*
- *The Woman in Black*

Generally, centres have continued to approach this unit pragmatically by choosing texts and productions of which they have had previous experience and which meet the needs of their students and the practicalities of offering young people a chance to see live performance work, and in 2016, a significant number of centres chose the same text for their students' Practical Exploration and for the Response to Live Production. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* was extremely popular for many centres, perhaps partly for this reasons, as were play-texts which provided the opportunity for students to experiment with form and style, for example, '100', 'Equus' and 'Metamorphosis'. Shakespeare plays and a number of popular musicals were also noted as choices for this task

In 5DR02, the choice of which extracts to use for exploration is open to centres and a number adopted a thematic or character based approach to selecting extracts, looking for example at the relationship between Eddie and Mickey in *Blood Brothers* or at 'Christopher's Journey' within *The Curious Incident...*; many centres simply selected 'key' extracts for exploration, based on those scenes which would most engage their students.

Once again in 2016 the optional form D1e was made available to centres, aiding in the presentation of Records of Work, supporting the submission of records of practical work actually completed, rather than a scheme of planned possible lessons. For the majority of centres this pro-forma helped centres to produce a detailed and helpful working document which aided the moderation process. Equally, there were many clearly annotated schemes of work which recorded with clarity the exploration completed by students across the six hours. The best practice seen included timings and clear records of the actual strategies, medium and elements of Drama used in each session by each teaching group. A copy of the stimulus material, the Documentary Response notes tasks and/ or guidance sheets were helpfully presented by many centres and centres presented their records of work both in the future tense ("students will complete...") the present tense ("students complete...") and the past ("students completed...") Any/ all of these options are acceptable provided that the activities listed are those actually completed by each group of students.

## Paper 01 Practical Exploration

Paper 01 marks are based on the entire six-hour exploration and the marks awarded must reflect the application and imagination shown across all the workshops. A recording of one sample practical session with five students identified for moderation purposes, is a requirement of the unit, and teacher-assessors must provide marks **for that session only** for the five identified students, based on their achievement in the recorded session. As in 2015, teacher-assessors were required to make a summative comment on every students' achievement over the 6-hour exploration on the D2a Controlled Assessment Record card and a detailed comment on the D2c Sample Session for the sample students only. Many centres made effective use of the D2c to record marks and comments regarding the achievement of the selected students during the sample session, avoiding repetition of the assessment criteria, and offering clear examples in support.

The practical activities carried out for the Sample Session ranged from the highly imaginative and clearly focused on the immediate exploration of the chosen extracts from the text, to the recording of activities which must take place outside of the 6-hour exploration such as note-taking, reading the play text and warm up activities un-related to the text in question. Teacher-assessors are free to choose the most suitable tasks for their students within each session of exploration, considering, in addition to play-text and extract, the pace of each session, the nature of each task, the length of time allowed for development and opportunities for creative exploration and progression of student understanding of text. Successful sessions demonstrated a clear focus on using the extract to further understanding of the text itself rather than simply creating a performance. The 'off-text' guidance, available on the Drama homepage in 2016, had clearly been of support to many centres in planning exploration activities for this part of the unit.

The role of the teacher in this filmed session is of vital importance and the most successful recordings showed the teacher facilitating exploration while providing the freedom for creative collaboration to take place. The overwhelming majority of centres supported their students appropriately, demonstrating one of the strengths of the specification which is the freedom of teacher-assessors to provide the level of support required by their individual students.

The structure and pace of the session is also key; where strategies were used at an appropriate pace and then developed into further exploration, generally students were more creative, had greater opportunities for collaboration, and their work was of a higher quality in all respects. Where the pace of activities lacked challenge, for example the completion/repetition of one strategy as the sole or main task for the session, outcomes were limited for all students. Where the practical was rooted in the text, allowing candidates to use drama strategies, elements and mediums creatively, the quality of the practical exploration was notably supported for all candidates.

Sharing of work, where centres had made the distinction between 'work in progress' and 'performance', was helpful to the moderation of the session. There were centres in 2016 where this distinction had not been fully realised and students clearly understood themselves to be engaged in the production of performance work. While the sharing of work in process will be part of the six hours, and while many sessions will be successfully based around realising a section of text, the work realised and shared will not have been polished or prepared to a performance standard; further students operating at the higher levels will have had the opportunity to experiment and develop their ideas about the text, as the focus of assessment for this paper is the process rather than the product of the practical exploration.

Verbal evaluation took place in many recorded sessions and this was often evidently both helpful and supportive to students where the evaluation of the work shared linked clearly to the exploration of the text (for example consideration of characterisation, motivation, interpretation) rather than to performance skills. However, candidates were disadvantaged where centres had tried to justify understanding through long periods of discussion or verbal evaluation to camera, rather than evidencing the actual practical exploration. It must be noted that Evaluation itself is only assessed through the written Documentary Response (Paper 02). It may also be useful to both teacher-assessor and moderator in determining students' engagement with and understanding of the practical drama taking place in the session but no marks for Paper 01 may be awarded based on verbal evaluation.

## The Sample Session

The requirement of the unit is for a single unedited teaching session, ideally of approximately one hour and of no longer than two hours in length. This must be recorded from a **fixed camera** position onto a clearly labelled disc enclosed in a hard, protective case and formatted so as to be **playable on a domestic DVD player**.

The quality of the recording is of paramount importance; centres must ensure that they are able to produce a clear, good quality recording for the moderator. Further details about the importance of the recording are available in the ASG document.

The majority of centres provided their recorded evidence on DVD with very few centres submitting VHS tapes. In the vast majority of cases, DVDs were clearly chaptered and clearly labelled, both on the disc and on the case. Equally the majority of recordings were of good to reasonable quality, with some examples of excellent practice. As in previous series', the best practice was often seen where teacher assessors had seemingly viewed the recording although this is not a requirement of the specification.

Students must identify themselves on the recording with clear statement of name and student number. Teachers must also clearly identify students on the D2c Sample Session Record card. In 2016, while many centres had ensured that students were easily identifiable, moderators reported that identification was still a problem in some sample sessions.

As in 2015, there were some examples of practices such as the use of small labels and ribbons to identify students (which tended not to be visible to the camera) and where a fixed camera recorded the entire session without any use of pan or zoom functions. In some cases, there were students selected for moderation whose work was not sufficiently visible to camera to support the moderation process. There were also centres that made use of a 'roaming' camera and/ or who asked students to explain their ideas to camera; this practice did not support students in their exploration as the camera/ teacher-assessor became an intrusion/ interruption and as marks awarded for this paper are for practical exploration only.

### *Best practice for the recording included:*

- Clear, well-paced, introductions with students stating both name and candidate number in full length shot
- Use of A4 sheets with name and number held up for the camera
- Students dressed in the same way for the introduction as in the session itself
- Clear written descriptions of students by the teacher-assessor on form D2c including comments about where the students were or what they did in the session (for example, "Dark hair tied up, working in group left hand side nearest camera for task one").
- Identification on D2b of specific moments on the DVD where the sample students could be seen
- The wearing of coloured bibs or t-shirts to aid identification in large groups
- The use of student names throughout the session, for example when sharing 'work in progress'
- The provision of photographs of the sample students, often "print screen" shots from the session
- The rotation of groups/ careful use of zoom and pan while students were exploring in groups
- Selection of mid-range students who were easy to identify and with lots of evidence on the recording.

Based on the work seen for Paper 01 in the 2016 series,

*Students should:*

- Ensure clear focus on the exploration process rather than on the product
- Engage fully with the practical tasks
- Work collaboratively and contribute to the exploration process, leading as appropriate
- Shape and develop ideas practically rather than repeating and polishing without progression
- Share their work in progress with the class
- Focus any evaluative comments on exploration of text, character, plot and/ or theme
- Make clear notes, including examples, throughout the exploration process

*Teacher-assessors should:*

- Devote 30% of teaching time to the skills and content of 5DR02
- Select a text, extracts and exploration activities appropriate to the needs and abilities of each individual group of students
- Structure each session to both challenge and support the ability of that group of students
- Record the activities completed in each exploration session to form the Record of Work
- Adopt best-practice strategies for the sample session as appropriate
- Select sample students based on their achievement in the sample session only
- Provide precise teacher-assessor comments on the D2c

## Paper 02 Documentary Response

### Documentary Evidence

The Practical Exploration process is evaluated in the Documentary Evidence for Unit Two, an on-paper evaluation, with a maximum of 1,000 words to be submitted for assessment/moderation. This piece of work must be completed in Controlled Conditions. Students must be given the opportunity to record the exploration process over the course of the unit. These notes may be used to support the completion of the final documentary response in the Controlled Conditions Assessment sessions and may be refined to encapsulate the students' evaluative response to the exploration process and the way in which they explored the text throughout this exploration. All reflection, analysis and evaluation within the Documentary Response must relate to the six-hour practical exploration.

It must also be noted that for this task, although students should consider how the use of drama strategies enhanced their understanding of the text, the focus of their evaluation of the exploration need not be on the use of drama strategies. This very different focus to the task in comparison with Unit 1 was where some centres were able to support students in producing both succinct and concise evaluations which remained within the word maximum of 1,000 words. The vast majority of responses made good use of the allowable word maximum and in the majority of cases, where candidates had exceeded this word maximum, or had failed to make full use of it, this was acknowledged by teacher-assessors in both their D2a comments and the marks awarded.

Some centres had encouraged candidates to reflect upon practitioner theory in responding to their chosen text; this is not a specific focus for GCSE and while in some instances this was supportive to students, in many cases this demonstrated a lack of holistic understanding of the practical drama exploration that had taken place. Similarly, responses which focussed on a literary approach without reference to practical exploration or explaining/ evaluating practical with little discernible reference to the text took students some way from their practical understanding of the text.

The majority of Documentary Responses were this year presented on A4 paper, word processed and in a continuous prose format. Writing frames were once again used by many centres which was supportive to many less able students although occasionally often limiting to the most able. As with Paper 1, it was noted that where candidates had been allowed a degree of freedom there was scope for greater depth of understanding. It was very pleasing to note that many centres this year had supported students in providing clear, specific examples of both their own work and the work of others, and the best practice showed students evaluating these very specific examples clearly and in balance.

This part of Paper 02 does not require students to write about all six hours of exploration; a number of student responses demonstrated an episodic accounts of what candidates had said and done in each of the practical sessions and this approach tended to lack depth of evaluation and understanding. More successful this year was the approach where teacher-assessors had prepared students in considering their journey over the unit, with a sense of cross-reference between sessions, and of a development of ideas as a result of completing the six-hour assessment. This enabled students' work to evidence both depth and breadth of understanding and to meet the assessment criteria at the highest levels.



## Response to Live Performance

Students must also complete a Response to Live Performance, a second on-paper evaluation, with a maximum of 2,000 words to be submitted for assessment/ moderation. This records the student's individual response to and evaluation of a live production of the teacher-assessor's choosing. Students must be given the opportunity to record their initial responses and reactions to the production and these notes may be used to support the completion of the final response in the Controlled Conditions Assessment sessions and may be refined to encapsulate the students' evaluative response. All reflection, analysis and evaluation within the final response must relate to the live production seen. This production may be of the text explored in within the Unit 2 practical paper or of an entirely unconnected text; choice of text/ production is entirely a centre decision.

For this part of Unit 2, Paper 02 it was clear that there was a range of experiences in place, with students having visited theatres, having seen touring versions of productions in their own schools and having evaluated the performance work of students within their own centre where professional productions were not an option. Where students had been able to see the live production of the text studied, there was a sense that some students had been supported by this choice. Equally, where a production 'new' to students had been selected, there were examples of personal response to an inspiring 'fresh' theatrical experience.

The majority of responses remained within the word maximum and made use of a consistent Quality of Written Communication throughout.

This was the task which moderators reported had been completed with the most consistent response to the Assessment criteria and it was very pleasing to note that many centres this year had supported students in understanding and utilising technical vocabulary, enabling them to communicate an understanding of theatre and performance in their responses. While writing frames were used successfully by many centres, it was noted that where candidates had been allowed a degree of freedom there was scope for greater depth of understanding and creativity of response. It is not surprising therefore that for many centres, the highest levels of achievement overall were seen in this part of Paper 02 in 2016.

This is also the task where plagiarism was identified in work from a small but increasingly significant number of centres. In these cases, students were found either to have made use of unacknowledged published material based on the performance seen, for example professional reviews, or to have accessed the work of other students online or from their own centre. The regulations for Controlled Assessment Conditions must be observed during the completion of this task and teacher-assessors and students must complete an authentication statement, verifying that **all the work submitted is the student's own**. It is vital that checks for authenticity take place in relation to student notes and to the controlled assessment work during the process of completion. Where this statement cannot be completed in good faith, a **mark of zero must be submitted** for the affected piece of work.

See the current JCQ guidance for further information:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/controlled-assessments/instructions-for-conducting-controlled-assessments-2016-2017>

Based on the work seen for this paper in the 2016 series,

*Students should, for the Documentary Evidence:*

- Avoid analysis of the dialogue unconnected with exploration and/ or general information about the text/ playwright theme
- Ensure clear focus on the evaluation of the exploration process rather than on the product
- Provide clear, detailed examples from students' own work and the work of others
- Focus on what they learned across the whole six hours coherently rather than using an episodic, disconnected structure

*For the Response to Live Performance:*

- Avoid narrative, analysis of the dialogue unconnected with the performance and/ or general information about the text/ playwright theme
- Ensure clear focus on specifics of the productions seen, supported by examples
- Make use of performance vocabulary throughout the response
- Adopt as confident and accurate a style of writing as possible and check/ edit the work to improve the Quality of their Written Communication

*Teacher-assessors should:*

- Consider carefully choice of play-text and whether students will be best supported by exploring the text seen as their Live Performance or a 'fresh' play-text
- Offer opportunities for students to record clear examples in their notes for both Documentary Response and Response to Live Performance
- Offer appropriate support materials such as writing frames, ensuring that these support without restricting
- Check student notes carefully to guard against plagiarism and to ensure that sources have been acknowledged
- Check controlled assessment conditions carefully to ensure that there are no opportunities for plagiarism
- Provide precise teacher-assessor comments on the D2a, supported by examples
- Highlight key examples within student responses to support their comments

## Edexcel Feedback and Support to Centres

### Enquiries about Results

These are completed by members of the senior team using the original Documentary Responses, and/ or Recordings as well as the Assessment Forms which have this year been returned to centres. An Enquiry can be requested on either Paper 01 or Paper 02 or on both aspects of the unit. EARs for this unit are for the whole centre as the original moderation process will be repeated by the EAR moderator and centres will be charged for re-moderation unless centre marks are re-instated. A detailed report will be produced for each centre, providing feedback for the centre, and explaining the findings of the re-moderation process.

### Drama Subject Advisory Team

Paul Webster, a full time member of Pearson's/ Edexcel staff, has been available again throughout the 2016 series to respond to centre queries and to support centres via telephone and email contact as well as through social networking sites. This has proved a successful innovation for the specification.

He and his team are available to respond to centre queries on [TeachingPerformingArts@Pearson.com](mailto:TeachingPerformingArts@Pearson.com)

Student queries can be addressed to [students@pearson.com](mailto:students@pearson.com).

It must be noted that the Subject Advisor has no access to centre data, and cannot comment on the moderation process in terms of mark regression or on the content of E9 reports to centres. Where centres require more detailed information, an EAR must be requested for that paper.

Approval of material to be used or any administrative issues is beyond the remit of the subject advisory team.

### Training from Edexcel

Edexcel has a programme of national, face to face, free standardisation meetings, as well as online training. All details are available on the Edexcel website via the training home page.

## Conclusion

In year six of the specification, it is pleasing to note that centres this year demonstrated continuing assurance in with the 5DR02 unit, with students almost universally demonstrating engagement, enjoyment and understanding as the result of their Unit 2 Exploration evidenced by some innovative and highly creative Records of Work and Sample Sessions.

Centre marking in the vast majority of centres remains accurate in terms of the rank order of marks for students sampled on both papers; however, many teacher-assessors have continued to struggle to accurately judge the level at which their students are working. There was evidence of harsh marking by centres at the lower end of the ability range, sometimes for example where candidates' verbal input within the practical exploration was limited but practical engagement or collaborative work had not been recognised or acknowledged. Equally at the top of the ability range, teacher-assessors did not always accurately assess the levels of creativity and imaginative exploration evidenced in that session, assuming that their highest achieving candidate was worthy of full marks. Free standardisation courses and materials provided by Edexcel will continue to be available to support all centres in making these judgements, enabling the committed work of all teachers to be applied most effectively to all aspects of assessment and learning within 5DR02.

Students of Edexcel GCSE Drama represent a wide and varied range of ability, culture and background. Their individual responses to Unit 2 are the essential components to this unit, developing and demonstrating their learning about dramatic play texts. Students' work on this unit supports not only their ability to work with text and script within a performance context, but also their appreciation of theatre as a member of the audience. While for 5DR02, the focus is on process rather than product, working on this unit for the final series in 2017 will also help to support teacher-assessors in preparing for the demands of the new Drama GCSE specifications where all students will be required both to participate in text-based performance work and to respond on paper to an explored play-text and a live performance.

Moderators in 2016 once more commented that, in the vast majority of case, GCSE Drama students were exceptionally focused and committed to their work in Drama; for the entire team, there was a sense that it had been a highly positive experience to share our students' love of and understanding of theatre through their work on this Unit.

### General summative advice for centres, based on the 2016 series:

- Read/ review both the Specification document for GCSE 2012, the Administrative Support Guide and the Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book for GCSE Drama (2012) in preparation for delivering 5DR02
- Make the most positive choice for each group of students, reviewing/ refreshing/ replacing materials from previous series' as appropriate
- Select a production for the Response to Live Performance which will engage and enthuse your students, and if possible, offer the opportunity to see more than one production
- Ensure that the very best possible recordings are made of as many exploration sessions as possible and select the most appropriate for moderation
- Use this report as a reminder of best practice when making the recordings
- Offer appropriate support and guidance to students throughout their work on Unit 2
- Use the example materials to secure your grasp of the national standard when assessing the units
- Refer to the Administrative Support Guide when preparing materials for submission to the moderator

