

# **Report on the Components**

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**June 2010**

**1916/R/10**

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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## General Certificate of Secondary Education

### Drama (1916)

#### REPORTS ON THE COMPONENTS

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## **Chief Examiner's Introduction**

This year's text and stimulus had a close synergy which meant that there was less variation in the dramatic themes developed than in previous years. The quality of much of the work seen was once again pleasing. Within the more uniform theme of 'slavery' there was still very varied and imaginative work from candidates in the examined units. As in previous years the quality of the best work was once again very strong with many centres and candidates producing excellent dramas/performances. The text and stimulus led many candidates to introduce live percussion to their work and use storytelling styles of theatre. This had extended their understanding of genre and performance style. Many candidates moved away from the historical to look at 'slavery' in its modern forms eg child soldiers, sex trafficking. Others explored it as a metaphor for the limitations life can place on human beings. Most of the work was serious in tone, but there were a number of satirical approaches. There was also some very interesting use of properties and semiotics generally to support the work.

The standard of the portfolios have been improving year on year and that was again the case this year. They now appear to be well integrated into the process of creating practical drama, an aid to planning effective dramas. Some centres for the coursework go well beyond the requirements for this aspect of the course. They are essentially succinct planning and evaluation documents. In the new specification Working Records (which replace portfolios) will be created within a specified time so will automatically have to be focused.

As in previous years, course work moderations were generally thorough with most centres creating the right atmosphere of positive tension that facilitates quality responses.

# **1916/1 GCSE Drama**

## **COURSEWORK MODERATION REPORT 2010**

### **MODERATION**

In the final year of this specification the Coursework units continue to be delivered with dedication and enthusiasm. The majority of Centres have a good understanding of the requirements of the specification, the marking criteria, its application and the moderation process.

As in previous years the majority of Centres used the two stimulus items from the pre-release as the basis for the moderation session. Using the 'Slavery Poster' many Centres explored the historical context using a variety of genres, styles and conventions. Particularly popular was the use of physical theatre, flash backs, re-enactment, still images and some sensitive and moving monologues exploring the subject. Other Centres explored the themes of slavery in a modern context, in the workplace, at home and at school! The use of 'The Container' by Clare Bayley provided an insight into modern childhood slavery. Moderators saw some powerful and bleak drama on human trafficking and prostitution, which had been maturely and sensitively researched. Similarly the text extract from the 'Anansi' facilitated candidates to explore a range of genre, styles and conventions. The text initiated work that ranged from realistic to abstract physical theatre and some excellent chorus work was observed. The potential of the script in the performance space led to some informed discussions on potential design ideas and the remit and resources available to a TIE company.

Moderators observed other Centres using a range of previous OCR pre-releases in an imaginative context including the 'The Scream' and 'Woman in Black.' Other examples of successful stimuli used include the 'Confidence of Youth' and 'Victim of the Holocaust' by Pastor Niemoller, and the Civil Rights movement in the USA, specifically the Rosa Parkes incident. On a lighter note some extremely humorous work was observed by a straight character and their talking goldfish.

The freedom for Centres to choose a stimulus which 'fits the group' continues to allow candidates to explore the criteria in a pertinent manner and achieve to the best of their ability.

The majority of Centres conducted the moderation session under exam conditions which allowed the candidates to achieve in a suitable and focused environment. The opportunity to discuss the Centres' marking after the session continues to be an opportunity to inform and enlighten moderators.

The majority of Centres were fully conversant with the required paperwork and the deadlines which must be met for the smooth running of the whole process.

### **Portfolios**

This year many moderators commented on the excellent standard of portfolios they encountered. The portfolios were well presented and in the main were succinct planning documents which gave the moderator an insight into the decisions the candidate/group had made when devising their coursework. Most candidates had a very good understanding of genres, styles and conventions and how they could be combined to produce a piece of theatre. The most successful portfolios were those that took a holistic approach to the devising process. These included reference to how they had interpreted the stimulus, how the roles/characters were developed, design ideas with diagrams and sketches to clarify, and the key decisions

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made by the candidate/group. They were easy to access with a confident and informed use of drama terminology throughout.

Moderators were extremely appreciative of those Centres which not only fully annotated the portfolios but also provided further evidence on the back of the 'Teacher Commentary Forms' to justify any anomalies between the content of the portfolio and the 'planning' mark.

### **IN CONCLUSION**

The final year of this specification has been delivered in the main with the usual enthusiasm, rigour and integrity by Centres. Moderators have reported that the new specification has been welcomed and endorsed by the majority of Centres as equally as challenging and rewarding as 1916.

There is a general and genuine feeling of excitement about the opportunities it continues to offer both Centres and candidates to explore research, learn and achieve in this subject.

## 1916/2 GCSE Drama

### General Comments

Responses to Section A questions were generally stronger than for section B. Most candidates were able to use the paper to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of drama. The vast majority provided at least sound responses and a large proportion competent through to accomplished answers. The disparity between sections A and B was in some cases due to running out of time, ie too much time being spent on section A.

The use of subject specific terminology by candidates was once again sound, helping candidates to create efficient and coherent responses. The gaps in knowledge/understanding that hampered some candidates this year were:

- Understanding the role of a set designer and their responsibilities
- Distinguishing between a ships' log and a personal diary

This year's overall theme of 'slavery' encouraged answers in two broad bands, the historical and those that explored modern or metaphorical aspects of the theme. There were strong references made to African story telling approaches to theatre drawn from the text.

There were few rubric errors this year, for instance the number of candidates who answered on the extract rather than the stimulus and vice versa. Misunderstandings in individual questions are listed below.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Section A

1. This sectioned question gives a maximum score for five correct points, which could be very succinct. Fewer candidates than expected scored highly on this question due to a lack of knowledge/understanding of the role of a set designer and what areas were under their control. Marks could be lost through repetition, the same point made in another way. There were some very good answers but generally answers were disappointing.
2. This question was not as well answered as expected, mainly due to some candidates not making specific reference to the text as asked for. This meant there was a cap on the mark they could achieve. Also some answers tended to be general rather than specific to the role.
3. There were some excellent responses capturing the right historical tone, the function of a log and adding some artistry. Less high scoring answers were more akin to a personal diary or did not work so well with the historical context in terms of content and language. A number of candidates misinterpreted the question by writing a diary entry for the boy.
4. The five part structure of this question ensured candidate's answers were well focused and most candidates scored well with many maximums. The set structure however made this question less effective at discriminating between candidates.
5. Most candidates had a clear idea of what a monologue was, with fewer candidates writing duologues than in previous years. Many candidates scored competently on this question, but there were not as many top band answers as would be expected. A good proportion of answers were functional monologues where characters outlined their plight in the world.

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6. Few candidates added additional plot elements/potential. Stage directions also tended to the functional with few adding additional atmosphere.
7. As with question 4, this four part sectioned question facilitated focused responses. However the higher weighting to parts three and four of the question allowed for greater discrimination, so consequently marks were spread more in this question. The question was still generally well answered.

### **Section B**

1. This question was popular and generally well answered with a proportion of excellent responses. Answers particularly on Anansi which included practical and appropriate costume designs helped the candidates 'get into' the role. These answers on Anansi created a real sense of the distinctive theatrical character being created. Pleasingly, most candidates had a clear idea of their target audience and discussed interaction between them. They also considered interaction with other characters. Candidates who chose the captain were not always quite as successful, many foundering on the historical accuracy.
2. This scripting question was not as popular as in previous years. This was probably due to the very specific and defined context. Examiners thought in previous years the scripting question gave more freedom and candidates responded positively to that. Nonetheless those candidates who did select this question created sound to good answers, although fewer exceptional scripts than is usually the case with scripting questions.
3. This question was generally well answered. Virtually all candidates stuck strictly to the four part structure and that focused the answers. The best answers displayed a strong knowledge of structuring, genre and performance style. There was good use of subject specific vocabulary and references to texts and practitioners. The higher scoring candidates were able to explain their thought processes and summarise their work succinctly whilst giving best practice examples. A good number of candidates had taken a modern portrayal of slavery eg child soldiers, gang pressure.
4. This was a popular question with better candidates, choosing two contrasting roles to analyse. Only the better candidates managed to express why the roles were interesting for actor/audience. There were few top scoring responses to this question.



## **1916/3 GCSE Drama**

### **General**

This final year of the examination again produced performances of some exciting, creative and challenging work. Candidates continued to use a wide variety of approaches - the skills and techniques explored adding depth and quality to the performances. The trend towards the creation of well structured drama seems now to be embedded. A range of thoughtful and sensitive work was seen with some outstanding work offered for examination demonstrating a sophisticated handling of theatre form. Candidates continued to convey a sense of enjoyment and achievement through their commitment and energy during their performances.

The most successful candidates were those who had a clearly defined intention which linked directly to the stimulus. Candidates continued to have a thoughtful approach to their use of the performance space with consideration given to the impact on an audience. Few candidates used the less successful narrative form by using many 'scenes' punctuated by entrances/exits and complicated by over long set or costume changes.

Examiners reported that there was greater consistency of rehearsal and performance space allowing candidates to perform better in an environment which was known to them.

It is pleasing to note sound use of technical elements – projections/laptops/lighting. There were many examples of excellent use of technical resources, often to enhance the atmosphere of the piece. Those centres where candidates used a technician or teacher to operate their technical support were better served than those who used other candidates. There was generally a good balance between live action and recorded material.

Most candidates seem to have a much firmer grasp of what can be achieved in ten hours, using their time more effectively. Few groups went significantly over or under the 10 minutes allowed for their pieces this year. Centres which made the most of the preparation period gave candidates exposure to a variety of themes, genres and styles and therefore candidates were ready at the start of the 10 hours to draw the elements together into a coherent piece of work. It is noticeable that drama of a higher standard is created in Centres where there is a sense of gravitas about the day.

### **Set Stimuli**

The stimuli led to a varied field of response. Some Centres commented that the items were too 'similar' but this does not seem to have been an inhibiting factor in producing a range of varied and interesting work. Where Centres had made good use of the preparation period to explore contemporary instances of slavery – people-trafficking, sweatshop workers, forced marriages – some deeply committed work was produced. This year some candidates stuck closely to the stimulus material, with many adapting the script for the performance.

There were examples of Theatre in Education, children's theatre, physical theatre skills, musical elements (especially the use of spirituals), mask work and the creative use of symbolic elements. A wide variety of techniques and conventions – mime, dance, song, physical theatre, chorus, masks and ensemble work - were used to excellent effect. The use of costume and music was mostly sensitive to the drama and enhanced the performance.

Centres are reminded that candidates are allowed a dress rehearsal period before presenting their work to the examiner. Those Centres which took advantage of this were well prepared on the day of the examination.

## **Realisation Test**

Generally the organisation of the visits was smooth and efficient. Examiners were made most welcome and were provided with the required seating, lighting and space. The problem of extraneous noise continues to be an issue in a few Centres. In Centres where the Realisation Test is approached with a sense of gravitas candidates were able to perform to their best. Most Centres ensure that the performance space is isolated. Centres which are flexible in the use of performance space enabled candidates to use a range of genres and styles. It is greatly appreciated when the day is organised for the benefit of candidates and the examiner rather than to fit the constraints of the school day.

It is imperative that the correct paperwork is completed prior to the commencement of the Realisation Test so as to ensure that examiners are able to identify candidates. Many Centres found the checklist very useful for the organisation of the Realisation Test. Most Centres provided excellent Group Identification Forms with detailed and clear descriptions of the candidates and their roles. The use of different coloured ribbons to clearly identify candidates in ensemble pieces who are dressed the same continues to be most helpful.

Fewer Centres experienced difficulties with their recording equipment resulting in VHS/DVD recordings which lacked sound or which did not record at all which is an important development. Examiners reported that Centres understood the importance of checking equipment thoroughly before the start of the Realisation Test. Recorded material should be forwarded to the examiner within two days of the Realisation Test. Please use DVD instead of VHS recording where possible. Centres are reminded that DVD recordings must be chaptered.

## **Portfolios**

The general standard of portfolios has continued to improve with many candidates reflecting on their work with genuine understanding and engagement using subject specific terminology. The best portfolios reflected a sense of excitement regarding the pieces and candidates were more aware of the 'effect upon the audience' and the 'creation of atmosphere'.

Candidates who created the most successful portfolios gave detailed information about their dramatic intentions and genre and made reference to the character being portrayed and how that was to be realised. They also included pertinent analysis and evaluation. As last year an increasing number of candidates made links in their work to good quality professional work seen or practitioners studied. Unnecessary extraneous material is still being added to portfolios in a few Centres. Candidates should be reminded that only material which pertains to the work created within the 10 hours should be included.

Some centres are still providing candidates with a template which results in very similar portfolios. Where the format is helpful to the whole range of candidates this has been an advantage. However, a rigid format can significantly disadvantage higher ability candidates as it discourages the expansion of individual ideas.

Centres are reminded that portfolios are an individual record of the preparation and planning of each candidate's work and therefore should be completed without the input of other candidates. Portfolios must be completed under the guidance of the teacher and must not be removed from the Centre.

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