



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

Expressive Arts

42601

(Specification 4260)

**Unit 1: Examination Presentation: Practical
work in response to set stimuli**

Report on the Examination

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Examination Presentation (42601)

The Examination Presentation is still very new to Expressive Arts. This is only the second year where all schools have entered students for the examination unit.

Question Paper

This year's examination paper has been received really well again with all three questions generating some original and exciting responses. Schools clearly researched the areas of study that best suited their students. Superheroes seemed to capture student's imagination particularly well. *Stars* and the *Masai Tribe* were also quite popular. It appears that the paper offered something for everyone. More able students were able to develop original and innovative ideas and they were inspired to work beyond expectations. Lower ability students were also able to respond well. The new 'Record Sheet for Working Processes Material' when used well, presented a good framework for all students, particularly as the guidelines section will steer students towards the areas they need to provide evidence for in any of the suggested formats. Schools seem to have used the preparation time in the main very well, however work carried out during that time cannot be marked and therefore needs to be carefully labelled and organised into a different section. This on the whole was much better than last year. There are still some students who generate a lot of research pages straight from the internet without evidence that they have been used in any way. These should not be included unless the student provides notes to explain how they relate to their work.

Recording and Preparing work for posting

Schools have generally made an excellent effort to ensure that students are easily identifiable and that work submitted was prepared well for marking. Pictures of students are very welcome. Where the new 'Record Sheet for Working Processes Material' was completed fully by each student it made the marking process for the examiner easier. Schools need to make it very clear to their students that only the students own work can be marked, therefore photocopied sheets from a friend in the group should not be included for marking. It was also very helpful when schools put the work of students together who had worked together for the examination presentation. Where schools adhered to the instructions sent out by AQA about recording students work, the sound quality and camera angle used for watching students was generally good. It is in the interests of the students to ensure that the sound quality is good and that student's work can be clearly seen on the media selected by the school. Constant zooming in and out is very distracting and does not enable the examiner to see the full picture and all students. It was good to see that schools decided to use alternative media to writing continuous prose for recording working processes. It is however essential to ensure the examiner knows how the work has been created and not just have various sound tracks without any explanation. The idea of recording the working processes is new to the specification and schools that familiarised themselves with the detail of the guidance given in the specification ensured that all necessary development work for a student was included and clearly labelled.

Combination of Art Forms

This year examiners have seen a good distribution of art forms. Moving images and original writing were very popular this year particularly in schools where access to specialist equipment was readily available. Drama and original writing, music and original writing and dance and drama were also very popular art form combinations again. It was very pleasing to see that the spread of art forms is increasing and that schools are looking for more

unusual combinations that suit their students. In the majority of schools students completed their Examination Presentation Unit with their two strongest art forms. There are however still some schools who let students choose an art form that is completely new to them to use in their Examination. This leads in the majority of cases to the student achieving lower grades as they are not as competent in the chosen art form.

Schools offering dance and drama, especially those that have specialist teaching, produced work of a good standard applying skills and techniques learned from the study of specific styles. Weaker students often produced immature pieces which did not allow them to demonstrate the full range of dance and drama skills. The documentation of the working processes varied greatly. Some schools favoured the students talking about their progress and recorded it on a DVD, other's had students write up their progress. Various means of showing drama and dance skills and their application in their pieces were used, which included: photographs, short recorded sequences on DVD, storyboards, diagrams and stickmen. All of them a valuable means of documenting progress.

Drama and original writing was another popular combination of art forms. Strong students were able to write a good script, providing several drafts and explanations for changes, and applied strong performance skills to show good quality drama. Students should be reminded that there is a time limit for their performance and that shorter snappy pieces of drama are more effective than those that go over the 15-minute time limit. When recording the development process it is important that original writing is treated as an art form. Often a script or poem appeared from nowhere, no drafts or even an idea of how it had been created. This did have an effect on the mark awarded for working processes as it clearly states that 'Students should provide evidence, as appropriate to their chosen art forms' (p12 specification).

Music and original writing was popular this year, too. There seemed to be the whole palette of styles explored by students from rapping to classical pieces. Schools need reminding at this point that the description of music in the specification has changed and is now defined as 'any genre of musical expression to be an original composition and performed or played back in a recording'. This means that just singing an existing song is no longer permissible as music unless it is included as a small contribution to largely original work; **only original work can be marked**. Examiners have seen a great variety of responses here as well as very varying quality. The original writing as the second art form often proved to be an add-on rather than a separate art form. In schools with lower ability students original writing was not really explored. Song-lyrics appeared without any explanation of ideas or development. Some school's tried very hard to show the musical progress by including pictures from the software used with the students then analysing the page. Others included chord sequences and reasoning for it. The accomplished musician usually scored higher than the novice. Music is another art form that is not recommended to be used for the first time in the Examination Presentation.

The use of visual arts and original writing seemed to suit some schools really well. Explorations were often documented in large art folders or supplemented through photographs taken throughout the examination period showing different stages of the work. Some schools made excellent efforts to ensure that the examiner can see the students work from all angles by producing DVD's that pan along the work slowly, and supplementing this with clear photographs. A variety of responses was seen, including posters, museum artefacts, pictures, props and costumes. Original writing in this combination was again a problem as final outcomes just appeared and were not documented. This in turn had an effect on the marks awarded for working processes. Some schools used make up as visual arts. It must be stressed here that if an art form is not listed in the specification permission from the board has to be sought before offering it to students as an option.

For visual arts and moving images some very good work was seen. The quality of film making has improved, and creating animation was popular with some schools. Costume and props for the use in film was also seen. This combination of art forms has increased in popularity this year and students are getting better at using the skills involved. This year has seen fewer power-point style presentations and more film. The sequencing of selected existing images achieved very low marks as there is very little that can be considered to be original work. Such work should be discouraged. Storyboards were not always included as evidence although they are a good way of identifying changes to the planned project.

All art forms in this year's Examination Presentation were present in their manifold combinations. It was both pleasing and enjoyable for examiners to see such variety.

Requirements of the specification

One thing that did become apparent during this year's examination period is that schools who attended standardisation meetings had a better understanding of the specification and its changes including the terminology. There are less schools now, where the old terminology (verbal arts) was used. It should be noted that **evaluations are not required in the Examination Presentation unit**, however some students use evaluations as a means of showing their thinking behind their development work.

One other aspect that is very different to the old specification is that students have to do more in the 15 hours of examination time than before. The time now needs to be carefully divided into creating a presentation as well as documenting the working processes. Where this has been done successfully students were rewarded for their efforts, where this was not the case students in the main lost marks for their working processes if they were not documented as requested in the specification and accompanying booklet.

Other issues examiners encountered from some schools again this year were that students working in groups did not always clearly identify which parts they were responsible for. Also, a teacher can help their students during the preparation time, but once the examination begins, students need to work without teacher assistance. This means that where a video diary is used there must be careful preparation to ensure that teachers are not seen asking leading questions as was encountered again this year. In some instances students only submitted evidence of one art form, although two were listed on the Record Sheet. This resulted in a loss of marks. The specification and the assessment criteria require the integration of two art forms.

Another issue that came to light this year is that students are asked to produce original material for their presentations and that rehashing an existing structure, or changing just a few words in a poem can be ambiguous. Schools need to ensure that their students are aware of this.

It will continue to take some time to adjust to the specification but it was a delight to see how many schools have embraced the specification and that students produced a real range of responses some of excellent quality. It is good to know, that the possibilities this specification offers to students have been identified and explored.

Schools are to be congratulated for the care taken when collating and preparing the work for marking. This was hugely appreciated by all examiners.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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