



GCSE PERFORMING ARTS
Units 1 and 3

SPECIMEN CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT MATERIAL

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Controlled Assessment Task

GCSE Performing Arts Unit 1: Skills Development

Task summary

Candidates produce a portfolio for assessment in unit 1. The brief below forms part of the portfolio.

Your production company is to produce an evening of entertainment for a target audience of parents and primary school students. The performance will form part of the activities for the school's annual *Open Evening*.

The theme for the event is: 'How to choose your secondary school'.

Performances will be held in the main school drama studio to audiences of up to 100 people. There will be four performances from 6.00pm to 8.00pm during the evening.

You must provide technical and design material to include set, lighting, costume and sound.

Your performance piece should include a range of items, for example, song, dance, drama, physical theatre and design.

Candidates will:

- recall, select, use and communicate their knowledge and understanding of performing arts to generate, explore and develop ideas
- apply practical skills to communicate in performance
- demonstrate contextual understanding of the relationship between their own work and those in the performing arts industry
- use the skills of analysis to evaluate their own work and that of others using appropriate terminology.

Detailed description

This task is a controlled assessment task based on a brief to devise a performance evening to entertain a particular community audience. Candidates will research their audience, plan a piece of entertainment of approximately 10–15 minutes and perform it in front of an audience. Each candidate will keep an individual portfolio of written evidence to accompany the performance. This activity starts at the beginning of the autumn term and the controlled assessment task is completed in 16–20 hours. This is an induction task to introduce candidates to the demands of the course and the demands of working as a production company to create a performance.

The task includes skills development, planning and research, contextual understanding of work-related aspects, practical activities, including performance and evaluation, and addresses all four assessment objectives. The brief was set following AQA's guidelines as outlined in the specification, reflecting the context of the school and the interests of the candidates. The school closely controls the task throughout, adhering to AQA's guidelines on establishing the authenticity of candidates' work, the time allowed for the various activities, the extent of teacher feedback, the degree of collaboration and access to resources. The task is internally assessed and externally moderated.

In the autumn term, the teacher and candidates discuss ideas for the performance evening. This evening is to be part of the schedule for the school's annual *Open Evening* where parents and students from feeder primary schools come to look at what the school has to offer in terms of secondary education. This is a high profile event. The class choose to devise a performance piece for primary school students and their parents on the theme of 'How to choose your secondary school'. They recall the issues that arose when they were making their choices on which school to choose in the local area, where three secondary schools are in competition to attract primary students. The candidates then discuss in groups the possible subject matter, the appropriate style, what problems might be encountered and how they will go about researching and developing the performance piece to fit the theme. This involves recalling and selecting from their previous knowledge and understanding of the performing arts, to include appropriate contributions of dance, drama, physical theatre, music and design.

Skills development

An initial skills base, called a 'skills audit', is provided by each candidate to include all performance skills experienced to date. This forms the basis of the unit 1 portfolio and is evaluated and updated during the course. As candidates work on the content to be included in the performance evening, they are also given the opportunity to improve existing skills and learn new ones. They learn to rehearse and co-operate with other members of the group as they develop their group ethos. Candidates will begin to learn the process involved in creating a performance for a specific target audience and the planning and preparation of that performance. They learn how to work as part of a team whilst also being responsible for their own tasks. Candidates have the opportunity to present a performance in real terms for the school's *Open Evening*.

Planning and research

In the next part of the task the candidates research their target audience. In groups, they devise a questionnaire to help them refine their plans. They also plan a series of activities to take place during the evening to interest the primary school students. This involves the planning and organisation of a balloon launch, with a book token being awarded to the student whose balloon goes the furthest. All students in the group are involved in the publicity of their event on the *Open Evening*. During the planning and research sessions, candidates also explore the variety of skills the group can offer in terms of performance.

All members of the group will visit Year 7 students in tutor or PHSE sessions to find out about their experiences of how they are settling into their new school. At the end of the visit the candidates will ask the Year 7 students to complete a questionnaire on their likes and dislikes of their new school. They will then discuss their findings in groups and with the teacher.

The candidates then collate the information from the questionnaires and produce a report, evaluating their findings and identifying the challenges they will face in devising the performance piece. They will choose how to present the information using ICT and draw conclusions from the responses. The questionnaire and the accompanying report will provide the first piece of evidence for their portfolio. This initial research and preliminary workshop takes place over a period of approximately six hours.

The candidates, in groups of five or six, use their notes, the report and the results of the questionnaire as well as their knowledge and understanding of performing arts to

develop their performance piece. They select from a range of techniques and performance styles that they had learnt leading up to the start of the course. They work in groups, but also create individual storyboards with annotated photographs and scene breakdowns to include in their portfolio.

In addition to the class work, all the groups will practise in their own time. They will perform to the present Year 7 as a dress rehearsal for the *Open Evening* performance piece.

Practical activities

The groups produce a range of original and varied pieces of performing arts, which they will perform on the school's *Open Evening*. This takes place in the first half of the autumn term. Candidates offer work for assessment in a number of disciplines and this is to be encouraged when working in a performing arts context.

A suggested outline of the performance work for candidates

The whole group will enter the stage/performance area in marching formation humming the tune of *The Great Escape*. Candidates enter in two rows, cross over the front of the stage/performance area and speak directly to their audience. They recite the A-Z of high school myths:

eg: A – is for Afraid... on the first day at school.
 B – is for Bullies... they think they rule.
 C – is for Classes ... new friends to be.
 D – is for Dunce... hope it's not me!
 E – is for Excellent... the grade we will make.
 F – is for Friendships...glad they're not fake.
 etc, down the alphabet to Z.

All candidates perform at least one speech as they step out of line and address their audience.

Candidates then introduce their tableau image of a 'bullying' theme. As they say 'Is this you?' They then act out a series of short scenes on the 'myths' surrounding the beginning of life at high school. – Freeze.

There then follows a movement/physical theatre piece accompanied by a song as the group re-establish their places on the stage/performance area.

The candidates then re-form their groups as they act out the 'truth' of life at high school.

Singers then perform a medley of songs, dancers perform a short dance and musicians have the opportunity to play.

Groups re-establish their places on the stage/performance area in semi circle facing their audience. They say 'High school our truth! Come and join us!'

Performances should last approximately 15 minutes.

After the performance candidates will receive feedback through discussion in class with their teacher and questionnaires filled in by parents and primary students who will watch the performance. They will use the findings from this assessment of their final performance work to support their evaluation.

Contextual understanding of work-related aspects

During the research period candidates will begin to understand the demands of the performing arts industry. By offering work in a number of disciplines, candidates will experience an overview of the whole performance process. They will develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the 'backstage crew' including designers and technicians, and how they support what is happening on stage. They will begin to develop an understanding of how to put on a performance piece for a specific target audience and the demands this makes on the individual and the group as a whole. Regardless of the constraints of the performance briefs, the candidates will begin to understand the relevant processes involved in putting on a show. An understanding of the considerations for planning and putting on a performance will be developed with support from the teacher. Some research into Theatre in Education companies in the locality would add to the candidates' understanding of the task ahead.

Once the performance has been developed and finalised, candidates will produce a scenario of the performance accompanied by a cast list and running order.

Candidates will also be responsible for publicity to include posters and programmes. The back of the programme will be the audience evaluation sheet and candidates will ensure these are collected as the audience leave.

Evaluation of own and others' work

Halfway through the devising process the performance piece is formally assessed, to ensure deadlines are met and on target. The group use peer and teacher assessment and candidates use this feedback to refine their work and finalise props, costume and set requirements. The groups also decide how they will collect audience feedback after the performance.

The final evaluation phase is carried out in class under the teacher's supervision. Using the evidence they have gathered, candidates review their performance and individually write a report. Their reports evaluate what was effective, what could have been improved, what was learnt from the entire experience and how the audience responded. Candidates use self-evaluation, peer evaluation and whole group final performance evaluation to present their findings. These evaluations are included in the portfolio.

This is a substantial piece of work that takes place over approximately 16–20 hours. Most of the work takes place in school time, and the teacher plans carefully to ensure that working with other groups of students does not disrupt them and is manageable in terms of time. The teacher also has to plan resources carefully, to ensure that all the groups are able to present their performances on the *Open Evening* to the correct target audience.

The portfolio is assembled according to awarding body guidance and includes a range of written and performed evidence, both individual and group, produced mostly under teacher supervision. The teacher marks the work according to the marking criteria in the specification. The portfolios are internally marked and externally moderated by AQA. The individual pieces of candidate evidence and the teacher's observations of work in progress support the assessment of individual contributions to the performance and overall achievement.

Controlled Assessment Task

GCSE Performing Arts Unit 3: Working to a Commission

Task summary

Candidates produce a portfolio for assessment in unit 3. The simulation/practice commission below forms part of the portfolio.

Your production company is to produce three evenings of entertainment for a target audience of students, parents, guests and friends. The performances will contribute to one of the targets of the specialist school status for the autumn term.

Performances will be held in the main school hall to audiences of up to 250 people.

You must provide technical and design material to include set, lighting, costume, make-up and sound.

Your performance piece should include a range of items, for example, song, dance, drama and physical theatre.

Candidates will:

- recall, select, use and communicate their knowledge and understanding of performing arts to generate, explore and develop ideas
- apply practical skills to communicate in performance
- demonstrate contextual understanding of the relationship between their own work and those in the performing arts industry
- use the skills of analysis to evaluate their own work and that of others using appropriate terminology.

In this commission candidates are asked to provide three evenings of entertainment for a target audience of students, parents, guests and friends. As their school has specialist performing arts status, this project will also contribute to one of the targets of the specialist school status for the autumn term: to produce a performance for a high profile event. The school production is one such event.

Detailed description

This task is a controlled assessment task based on a commission, to devise a school production to entertain an audience of students, parents, guests and friends.

Candidates will research their audience, produce two proposals and plan a performance of approximately 1½ hours to be performed in front of an audience. Each candidate will also keep an individual portfolio of written evidence to accompany the performance. This controlled assessment task is completed in 10 weeks. This is a project used in preparation for AQA's externally set commission.

The task includes skills development, planning and research, contextual understanding of work-related aspects, simulation/practice commission, including performance and evaluation, and addresses all four assessment objectives. It is set following AQA's guidelines, as outlined in the specification and reflects the context of the school and interests of the candidates. The teacher closely monitors the task throughout, adhering to AQA's guidelines on establishing the authenticity of candidates' work, the time allowed for the various activities, the extent of teacher feedback, the degree of collaboration and access to resources.

Candidates' work may be informed by working with others but candidates must provide an individual response for assessment purposes. The task is internally assessed and externally moderated.

In the latter part of the summer term, the teacher and candidates discuss ideas for the school production. These performance evenings are to be part of the schedule for the school's status as a performing arts college, where a target to produce at least one external production each term is acknowledged. This is a high profile event. The class choose to devise a performance piece for entertainment purposes. They also decide to link their choice of production to assist an understanding of a Shakespearian play, to be studied by Key Stage 3 students in preparation for the SATs. The class then discuss in groups the possible subject matter, the appropriate style, what problems might be encountered and how they will go about researching and developing the performance piece to fit the theme. This involves recalling and selecting from their previous knowledge and understanding of the performing arts, to include dance, drama, physical theatre, music, design and modern technologies.

Skills development

An updated skills base is provided by each candidate to include all performance skills experienced to date. This forms the basis of the unit 3 portfolio and is a reflection of their achievements from units 1 and 2. This is backed up with an evidence base collated from the beginning of the course. As candidates work on their rehearsals of the school production they will also be given the opportunity to improve existing skills and learn new ones. They will learn to rehearse and co-operate with other members of the group as they develop their team ethos. Candidates will learn the process involved in creating a school production and the planning and preparation involved for that performance. They will learn how to work as part of a team whilst also being responsible for their own tasks. Candidates will have the opportunity to present a school production in real terms for their target audience of students, parents, guests and friends.

Planning and research

In the next part of the task the candidates research the life of William Shakespeare and one specific Shakespearean play. They have to prepare a presentation to the teacher acting in role as commissioner and to the rest of the group. They are to use a range of technical support, eg a Powerpoint presentation, at this stage. Each candidate presents two proposals. After discussion and evaluating the choices, the candidates decide on two proposals to present as a group. The teacher acts in role as commissioner and chooses the production. In this task it is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

All candidates have to think of a concept for the play and present it to the rest of the group and the teacher. They also have to explain the reasons for their choice and this evidence is recorded in the portfolio. As part of their planning and research, candidates write a character study for the part they are to play. They also design two costumes, one for their chosen character and one for another character in the play. A make-up design for their chosen character and one for a contrasting character also features as part of their planning and research. All candidates in the group are involved in the publicity of their production including ticket design, posters and box office. During the planning and research sessions candidates also explore the variety of skills the group can offer in terms of performance. This forms evidence for their portfolio. This research and planning takes place over a period of approximately 10 hours but may also continue as the production develops.

Candidates use their notes and proposals, as well as their knowledge and understanding of performing arts to develop their performance piece. They select from a range of techniques and performance styles that they had learnt leading up to the start of units 3 and 4 of the course. They work as a whole group, but also create individual storyboards with annotated photographs and scene breakdowns to include in their portfolio.

In addition to the class work, the group practise in their own time. This is a valuable experience to assist their understanding of the demands of putting on a whole school production and experiencing this from a working perspective for work related learning.

Performing the practice commission

The candidates are to produce an original and creative performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This takes place in the latter half of the autumn term. Candidates offer work for assessment in a number of disciplines and this is to be encouraged when working in a performing arts context. After the performance, candidates will seek feedback through discussion in class with their teacher and questionnaires filled in by the audience who have watched the performance. They will use these findings from this assessment of their final performance work to support their evaluation.

This exciting project will stimulate the candidates' imaginative response. Each candidate is to produce a character response in the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A cast list will be produced and the candidates will see which character they are to play in the forthcoming production. The teacher, acting as director, will block the play.

The play opens with the candidates all on stage in tableau. They sing and perform the song *Dancing till the Sun goes Down* to link the concept of the play to a modern audience.

The candidates are in place on the stage/performance area before the audience enter the room in order to increase audience awareness. The candidates offer a series of freeze frame images to open the play. They then:

- act out the play
 - sing and perform a selection of songs
 - dance a collection of dances
 - create a series of modern technology responses using lighting, sound and special effects
 - produce a range of technical skills and outcomes to enhance the production qualities of the play.
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Contextual understanding of work-related aspects

During the research period candidates begin to understand the demands of the performing arts industry by researching the work of people in their chosen field and showing how they have experimented with ideas and techniques.

By offering work in a number of disciplines candidates experience an overview of the whole performance process. They will develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the 'backstage crew' including designers and technicians, and how they support what is happening on stage. They will continue to develop an understanding of how to put on a school production for a specific target audience and the demands this makes on the individual and the group as a whole.

As part of their understanding of working as part of a production team, candidates could also produce ticket designs, posters, organise box office and publicity. This will be evidenced in their portfolio.

The candidates will begin to understand the relevant processes involved in realising this commission. An understanding of the considerations for planning and putting on a performance will be developed with support from the teacher. Research into production techniques will have been part of the development process as candidates visit a range of theatre productions in the locality. This adds an understanding of the task ahead. The work produced by each candidate for their portfolio could include box office administration, designs for tickets and posters. Candidates will also link their performance to one of the school's targets to produce a production for a primary audience and a visiting workshop to accompany the performance in primary school. The focus of the workshop will be to explore one of the themes from the play. This will be fully developed and evidenced in the portfolio.

Evaluation of own and others' work

Halfway through the planning process candidates reflect and evaluate what has been achieved so far. The performance piece is formally assessed and evaluated. Candidates use peer and teacher assessment and use this feedback to refine their work and finalise props, costume and make-up, set requirements, lighting and sound. Candidates also decide how they will collect audience feedback.

The final evaluation phase is carried out in class under the teacher's supervision. Using the evidence they have gathered, candidates review their performance and individually write an analysis of their personal and individual contribution to the process. Their reports evaluate what is effective, what can be improved, what is learned from the entire experience and how the audience respond. Candidates use self-evaluation, peer evaluation and whole group final performance evaluation to present their findings. These evaluations are included in the portfolio.

This is a substantial piece of work that takes place over approximately 10 weeks. Most of the work takes place in school time but this is supported by extra curricular rehearsals at lunchtime and after school. The teacher plans carefully to ensure that candidates manage their time wisely to meet their deadlines. The teacher also has to plan resources carefully, to ensure that the candidates are able to present their performances on three evenings to the target audience.

The portfolio is assembled and will include a range of written and performed evidence, both individual and group, produced under teacher supervision. The teacher marks the work according to the assessment marking criteria in the specification. The portfolios are moderated externally by AQA. The individual pieces of candidate evidence and the teacher's observations of work in progress support the assessment of individual contributions to the performance and overall achievement.