

# Examiners' Report Summer 2007

IGCSE

IGCSE Drama (4348)

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## Examiner's Report IGCSE Drama 4348/01

This is the first year of the IGCSE Drama examination. There are similarities and differences between the GCSE Drama and IGCSE Drama specifications. Paper 1 of the IGCSE Drama specification is broadly in line with Paper 2 of the GCSE, with an added option of a scripted production.

The main difference between specifications is that with IGCSE there is a written examination for candidates (Paper 2) about work encountered during the course.

All candidates this series were entered for Option B (Scripted Performance). Group sizes varied with 3-5 being the most common. The attainment of candidates was generally high. Candidates had been well prepared for Paper 1 examination. Vocal delivery of candidates was often particularly strong with excellent use of pace, tone, pause and modulation. Accents were used, at times, to excellent effect. Candidates had clearly thought carefully about the roles they played and had selected the most appropriate method of vocal delivery.

Movement skills were often extremely convincing, with subtle changes of posture. Hand moves were frequently excellent, emphasising the lines being delivered. Where candidates played more than one role, there were often excellent changes between roles. Rapport between candidates was often extremely convincing, both in terms of rapport of the characters and rapport as performers, for example, timing. Candidates in the top band were seen to react to events within their role(s) often with subtle changes of facial expression or movements. Candidates achieving highly had excellent appreciation of the chosen style and form of the piece and a depth of understanding of the content and purpose of the piece.

Candidates performing less impressively tended to have little moderation, with lines being delivered somewhat mechanically. Their work tended to be somewhat static, with little clear understanding of their role or the place of their character within the play as a whole.

Some candidates' performance was somewhat variable, with stronger moments being counterbalanced by weaker ones. These candidates tended to perform at a higher level in later parts of their performances, starting somewhat less impressively.

There was a wide variety of texts chosen for performance, which included Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' Oscar Wilde's 'The Importance of Being Earnest' to modern texts, such as 'The Pillowman'. Centres had clearly chosen supportive audiences which helped the candidates in their examinations.

The technical quality of videos and DVDs was good, both in terms of vision and sound, which greatly helped the examination process. Centres are, however, reminded that candidates should introduce themselves to the camera in their costumes as worn in performance, not in their school uniforms.

Photographs of candidates, similarly, must be taken as in performance both in terms of costumes and hairstyles.

Overall, centres are to be congratulated on the attainment of candidates in this paper. Examining the wide variety of work sent was a pleasure and delight.

## Examiner's Report IGCSE Drama 4348/02

This is the first time that IGCSE Drama has been examined. The aims, when setting the written paper, were to make the questions straightforward enough for the candidates to answer them as successfully as they were able, but at the same time to offer room for more able candidates to fulfil their potential. Bearing in mind that this paper is an international paper, the choice of language and use of terms was very carefully monitored in an attempt to ensure global understanding. The three bullet points contained in each question were designed to help candidates structure their response effectively. Overall, the aims of the examiners were achieved and some very pleasing responses were made to the questions.

### Q 1

This question was interpreted in several different ways. Perhaps the most obvious interpretation, and indeed one which many candidates made, was that the core of the question was about the use of different heights of different elements of the set or the actors onstage. Another large proportion of candidates made equally valid attempts to answer the question, with alternative interpretations of the "use of levels", and wrote about lighting or sound levels, or levels of intensity of acting at certain moments. Provided that the response was comprehensive, detailed and meaningful, candidates scored well, regardless of their interpretation of the term "levels". Some candidates, however, did not address the crucial part of the question regarding levels, and therefore did not achieve well in this section. These candidates mostly wrote about two decisions that were made during the rehearsal process, or two moments during the performance, but with scant or no reference to level.

NB Some centres had instructed candidates to write at least a paragraph about the play at the beginning of their response, which included details on the writer of the piece and perhaps some social, cultural and historical references. These details were extraneous to the question.

### Q 2

Most students were able to describe how actors used voice, movement and positioning onstage to help communicate their roles. Criteria which helped candidates answer this question successfully when discussing voice were tone, pitch, volume and intonation. Candidates who were successful in their descriptions of a character's movement discussed speed, rhythm, emphasis and gesture. Those candidates who successfully described positioning used stage language (eg upstage, downstage), groupings and what might have been signified to the audience by these different positions and groupings. The candidates, who were able to offer a discussion on the effectiveness of these skills, and not solely a description of the actors at certain moments during the performance, were those who scored most highly. A large percentage of candidates were able to offer detailed descriptions and a good portion of these were able to discuss effectiveness too. A small proportion of candidates had only a small understanding of how actors might use their voices, movements and positioning to achieve different effects onstage, but still attempted the question. These candidates found it challenging to write in great detail about the different skills associated with performance, mainly because they did not have access to the different aforementioned criteria and could not therefore break down the different skills and discuss them. A very small proportion of candidates found this question extremely challenging and were not able to present a response with detail or understanding evident.

### Q 3

It was evident that, in the majority of cases, candidates had discussed the use of costume in the play they had studied, and were able to talk about what that costume might signify to an audience. The aim of the restriction that candidates should only write about one costume for each character was so that they might focus on two costumes in greater detail than would have been possible for more within the time allowed for the examination. There were some very pleasing responses to this question, with candidates presenting very detailed answers which included references to colour, shade, texture, material, era and style and then making the links between this, the character wearing the costume and the audience's perception. There were some responses which did not cover all of the aforementioned criteria but were still highly comprehensive and meaningful and still made all of the connections between the character and the audience. These responses also scored highly. Some candidates were unable to provide very full pictures of two characters in the play, and generally this meant that the descriptions of the costume(s) and what the audience might understand about the character as a result of the costume that they were wearing, was also limited. A very small number of candidates found this question too challenging to provide at least a satisfactory response. Such candidates offered very little evidence of understanding of the characters they were discussing, very few details of their costume and, in some cases, did not even consider what an audience might perceive. This was true in only a very small number of cases however, with many candidates producing at least a satisfactory response to this question.

### Q 4

Most candidates seemed to have a very good idea of the different themes of the plays they had studied. Many candidates offered social, cultural and historical details of the plays they had studied, which they made relevant to their response to the question. Perhaps the most challenging part of the question was the second bullet point which asks candidates to detail how the theme develops through character and/or action. Some candidates who had a very clear grasp of the theme were not able to explain how the theme was explored by the playwright's use of character or the events they had included in their work. Most candidates were able however, to offer at least a satisfactory response to this part of the question, with some completing some very well considered responses. Most candidates were able to offer an opinion on whether the theme they had chosen to discuss would be relevant to a modern audience and why. Even if this was something they had not previously discussed in class, most students were able to provide a satisfactory response here. Some candidates provided very sophisticated responses here which made connections between the reception of the original production and how a modern audience might perceive it differently, and **why**. These candidates scored very highly, as did any who were able to provide evidence of strong reasoning. There were a small number of unsatisfactory responses to this question, where candidates provided scant responses to all three sections, with little evidence of reasoning provided.

## Statistics

	*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Mark	87	78	69	60	0	0	0	0	0
Cum %	41.2	70.6	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

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