

POSSIBLE ANSWERS FOR:

**SPEECH AND DRAMA HG
(Paper B)**

**TIME: 3 hours
MARKS: 200**

SECTION A

The learner must answer ANY THREE questions from this section.

1. Each essay must be written about a different text that has been studied this year.
2. All responses must show a clear indication of a well-planned structure.
3. Responses must show evidence of an understanding of the Dramatic Principles
 - Form, structure, plot
 - Characterisation and acting style
 - Language, diction, dialogue
 - Thematic and socio-political concerns
 - Music (if relevant)
 - Spectacle: Setting; treatment of spaceApproximately 60% of the essay content should reflect these principles.
4. Learners must refer to **EXAMPLES** in the text of their choice to substantiate their statements.
5. Responses must also take into account the socio-political-philosophical background of the play and how this has affected or been reflected in the Dramatic Principles as shown above. Approximately 40% of the essay content should reflect this background.
6. A mark will be given for each relevant fact, opinion or example. In addition, marks will be given (no more than 10) for style and structure of the essay and the extent to which the learner has created a coherent and original argument.

QUESTION 1

Social attitudes – attitudes regarding class, status, position in society; unemployment, struggles of women or blacks for recognition, struggles against oppression, poverty, futility of individual solutions, sense of group identity etc.

Political attitudes - e.g. Marxism, Capitalism, Thatcherism, Feminism, Civil rights, Black Consciousness, Apartheid, political oppression of various kinds, theatre of propaganda, etc.

Moral attitudes – moral codes, nature of justice, attitude to religion

what was written – content of play

why it was written – themes of play, intention of playwright

how it was written – language, structure, characterisation, style, use of music/spectacle/setting

[50]

QUESTION 2

"Absurd theatre manages to discover humour even in the worst of circumstances. Laughter tempers the reality of despair and makes comedy the bedfellow of pathos." Learner should demonstrate how this can be said to be true by referring to each of the following:

Structure:

not concerned with the representation of events, the telling of a story, or the depiction of a character

rather presentation of individuals within a situation in such a way as to communicate their experience of existence (that experience not simply comic or tragic, but both)

no linear development

situation is full of activity – often humorous in nature

nothing changes the situation

trivia of daily existence

employ theatrical effects which create humour: circus clowning, music hall backchat, farce

shows the endless and futile ways in which man attempts to fill the vacuum of his existence

all experience is equally serious, equally ludicrous

Characterisation:

Man = actor in a cosmic farce

Characters are abstractions of human attitudes and represent mankind in general objective quality, exaggerated which lends itself to humour

based on circus, vaudeville, Guignol

characters tend to be interchangeable

no longer think or feel individually

mechanistic extensions of a norm

social puppets

pathetically farcical

proliferation - the invasion of the stage by growing masses of people or objects

Double Act: come in pairs, like vaudeville or music hall comedians

mutually dependent

complementary

yin-yang

straight man / banana

old married couple

create one macro-human character with a mind/body split

nonspecific costuming or clichés
defined by their functions, by their habits, by what we see them do
Discuss examples from the play in detail.

Dialogue:

language not equipped to express knowledge or to define the meaningless.
rational language dead
could not express the inexpressible
reduced to making trivial statements – often very humorous
Words become interchangeable objects
Language = depersonalizing and automatic
derision of language
vacuous discussions about unimportant matters
nonsense phrases
repetitions, clichés, puns, slang;
onomatopoeia;
surrealist proverbs;
nonsense use of foreign language;
meaningless association of words
language breaks down entirely
melodic, rhythmical and associative potential of language- as well as silence - to produce
poetic dialogue (can have high degree of seriousness)
dance of words
strong rhythmic progressions
simplicity and brevity of sentence structure
Lack of communication – creates humour to deal with seriousness of situation
Conversations are actually sets of parallels
Characters act in direct contrast to expressed intentions
ritualistic quality
aimless continuity
illusion of progress without any forward movement
word games and cross talk - passing time
undercuts sentiment
Contradictions: actions contradict the spoken words
Discuss examples from the play in detail.

Themes:

Serious themes: meaning of life; Existential crisis of Life and Death; Life is hopeless and futile; The hostile universe; world seen as cold, silent, indifferent
Death seen as both an escape and release from the hostile universe, as well as man's enemy.
Hope: Man's hopes and dreams for something to arrive to give meaning to life and are his driving force. hopes to be relieved from death
Deterioration: there are breakdowns in communication, physical deterioration, loss of memory
Time is a prison where only forward motion is possible, but man only thinks he is moving forward, in fact he is moving backwards towards death
Man is bound in relationships - these relationships can be exploitative, but both oppressor and oppressed are trapped
Capitalism is criticised as alienating man from the true essence of existence
Man is in conflict with himself (body as opposed to mind) and in conflict with others
The uncertainty of the hope of salvation through divine grace
The act of waiting is an essential and characteristic aspect of the human condition
Examples from the play

Style of the play:

Laurel and Hardy routines

Incongruous rituals of waiting

Mistaken identity

Slapstick

Farcical

French farce

Movements = conscious automatism

Actions border on the mechanical, with a puppet-like over-precision.

Verbal rhythms demand supporting patterns of gesture (at times repetitious gestures may reinforced the gibberish of the speech)

language should not be approached as naturalistic speech, but as a poetic structure.

[50]

QUESTION 3

"The concept of **gestus** is at the heart of all Brecht's theatre. **Gestus** is a physical representation of the thematic idea." Learner should demonstrate how this can be said to be true by referring to each of the following:

the scenes:

each episode is complete in itself

each scene has a well-defined action and purpose = a **gest** or **gestus**

chain of events present a body of evidence from which socio-political lesson arises

"Grund gestus" or "Basic gestus" of a play

encourages detachment – like a scientific experiment

want to see what principles governed them and whether these principles could be improved

– change for the better

Give examples from the play

the characters:

main characters = underdog, unheroic

basis for physical characterisation is **gestus**

both a physical attitude and a point of view

gesture and gist

gestus may be the physical (including costume) attributes of a character that project the socio-economic function of the role

OR a particular gesture or action that embodies thematic meaning

Give examples from the play

the acting style:

actor must be aware of a group scenic **gestus** and the role he plays in it, also of **Grundgestus**

actor must build role from social perspective

examine character to discover the political dialectics

determine the function of his character in the presentation of the theme of the play

entertain

arouse the critical consciousness of the audience

play the actions and not the emotions

report on the events

simple gestures

Give examples from the play

the use of space:

space reinforces epic quality

unlocalised and unspecific

no realistic illusion

practical and utilitarian staging

didactic (classroom/laboratory)

suggestive backdrops (Eastern theatre)

no attempt to disguise the theatrical apparatus of the stage

Music/screens/titles/projections/slides to highlight *Grundgestus*

Space not just a background

reinforced the thematic concerns of the play

Give examples from the play

the use of costume:

very important to show wear

historical accuracy

bring out *gestus* of character

Give examples from the play

the use of music and song:

kind of punctuation

underlining of the words

well-aimed comment giving the gist of the action or the text

singer = reporter

contrapuntal (like jazz, folk songs)

Give examples from the play

the use of language:

narrative

intelligible to proletarian audience

simple and communicate clearly

conveys the underlying *gestus* of the scene and character.

Gestus is the essential attitude which underlies any phrase or speech, thus language had

to exactly follow the attitude of the person speaking

avoid the creation of emotional empathy, while keeping a clear and direct thematic focus.

Satirical

clarity, precision and a dialectical sense of contradiction

syncopation

Blank verse and prose alternate

Give examples from the play

QUESTION 4

"South African play as a piece of great theatre":

May consider all or some of the following in the answer:

**Structure
Character
Theme
Dialogue
Music
Spectacle
Style
Setting
Genre**

The learner must motivate why these elements make for great theatre.

They must consider the impact on the audience, the nature and/or universality of the message, the innovativeness of the techniques, the inventiveness of the staging

**[50]
TOTAL FOR SECTION A: [150]**

SECTION B QUESTION 5

Answer 5.1 OR 5.2:

5.1

Articulation: Clarity of speech is dependent on the care and precision with which the speech organs change position from one sound to the next;

A tight jaw interferes with the movement of the articulatory organs contributing to nasality and flatness of tone in the voice.

Immobile lips; Inactive soft palate; Sluggish, inactive tongue; very NB correct organs of articulation should be used;

difference between voiced and unvoiced consonants must be clear

no slackness or exaggeration

neat transitions between consonants

comfortable rate of delivery

structuring/shaping of vowel sounds:

vowel sounds depend on accurate positioning of the speech organs (1) the placement of the tongue and (2) the degree of lip rounding; steadily held position; steady airstream

pace of delivery: must be comfortable, to ensure that clarity is possible

use of pause: allow time to take a breath; emphasize a word; allow our eyes to move ahead of the voice, when reading aloud, therefore no stumbling; allow listeners to comprehend what we are saying; makes the sense of speech clear; helps articulation

projection: must always be heard, not shout, hurt/strain voice; need supported breath; Central diaphragmatic breathing; Volume; Resonance; Clear articulation

energy through the line: sustain energy to end of sentence

Explain ONE exercise in detail: e.g. tongue twisters; consonant marathon; Lessac structural or consonant NRG; or any other relevant exercise

[10]

OR

5.2 Unnecessary tension is the enemy of the actor.

Body:

Need to feel free, ready for action, alert, without any unnecessary tension.

most efficient application of all muscles of the body to the task at hand

NOT floppy, heavy, dull, sleepy or lethargic

constant harmony between the muscles

Action and rest cannot be separated

wasted energy, being kept in the body and not being used for communication.

Will affect posture, breathing and proper use of organs of articulation (tense jaw/tongue etc)

tension in the torso constricts the lungs, not allowing them to expand and thus preventing good breath support.

Neck, shoulders very NB in terms of voice

Voice:

voice extremely sensitive to any feeling of unease

Shoulder tension leads to tension in the neck - leads to tension in the laryngeal muscles

Tension in the jaw can also lead to tension in the laryngeal muscles

vocal folds tense, pushing the voice up slightly in pitch;

the voice takes on an unfocussed quality;

talk at people instead of to them

tension in the neck constricts the throat, cuts out the lower tones of the voice

Mind:

Will find it hard to concentrate

May forget lines

Will find it hard to focus on task at hand

Hard to interact with other actors – listening/reacting

[10]

QUESTION 6

Vocal warm-up:

Relaxation and posture: body needs to be freed from any unnecessary tension; a neutral posture should be achieved so that voice work can occur without the hindrance of tension; this step is important in order to combat performance nerves; relaxation does not imply going to sleep - this should be an energising start to the warm-up

Breathing: controlling exhalation; achieving quick, efficient inhalation; strengthening the diaphragmatic and intercostal muscles; learning to release the lower body (stomach/pelvic floor) so that the diaphragm can do its work; connecting the sound with the breath;

Connecting the sound with the breath: usually done through sighing and humming, i.e. gentle sounds which are not going to strain the voice unduly; working with the diaphragm so that each sound feels "rooted"; the following should be worked towards - an open channel for the sound, open throat, relaxed jaw, easy initiation of tone, lack of breathiness/glottal stops

Creating resonance and freeing the voice: Long term goals: achieving a free, rounded, rich, interesting voice which is capable of creating different qualities, pitches and volumes; building tonal energy; developing a responsive voice i.t.o. freedom of pitch and inflection, changing qualities

Articulation/Agility: Long term goals: building structural and consonantal energy; improving clarity, forcefulness, energy, muscularity, economy, precision of speech; improving audibility; warming the organs of articulation

Give FIVE exercises from this sequence - any relevant exercises considered (4 marks each)

e.g:

RELAXATION AND POSTURE:

- Yawns - forwards (AW sound) and backwards (AH) yawns
- Tense and release
- Roll up and down the spine

BREATHING:

Awareness of breath - getting breath low in body

Lie on the floor with your legs up on chair (right angle to rest of body) - back flat on floor and spreading; feel the back of the neck lengthening, the shoulders wide - With each inhalation, release down into pelvis and tummy; with each exhalation, allow the breath to escape slowly and gently without strain; wait between breaths until the body needs to breathe again; get the breath lower into the body each time. Keep an open passage for the breath. The back of throat should be wide, open and soft.

PHONATION:

- Dropping into centre: Drop down into centre (martial arts position - feel strong, rooted, balanced, breathing into pelvis) - take in air from far corners of room and breathe out to the far corners. Release up through the legs. Drop down with a sigh: HUH. Drop down with two sighs. Then three. Drop down with HAH, HOO, HER, HAW, HEE. Drop down with a short phrase. Feel the solidity of the sound, rooted in your lower body. Walk and drop spontaneously connecting with centre at any moment.

RESONANCE:

- The Lessac y-buzz or humming; then take it into Calling: Using a forward focus and a structural stretch, call H'loh. Short, sharp call, with the focus in the front of the face. Call a long "HEY"; then shake the "HEY" out, bouncing the shoulders, the knees and the whole body.

ARTICULATION:

Consonant marathon: practice plosives in rhythmic patterns.

[20]

TOTAL FOR SECTION B: [30]

**SECTION C
CREATIVE INTERPRETATION**

Answer any **ONE** questions from this section.

QUESTION 7

Masks –

The learner may discuss in each case

the social status (x 3 marks)

personality (x 3 marks)

attitude of the character (x 3 marks)

Motivate reasons for making these particular choices (at least 1 mark)

[20]

QUESTION 8

Improvisations should show understanding of nature of the character, the style of the play, the nature of the relationships etc. Any relevant or creative answer allowed.

[20]

QUESTION 9

Poster: this must reflect

style – ie. very physical nature of Woza Albert, or absurd nature of Waiting etc. (x 5 marks)

themes – anti-materialism, anti-apartheid, women's roles in the world (x 10 marks)

should also show relevant production information, and understanding of the function of a poster
(x 5 marks)

extra marks can be given for boldness, creativity etc.

[20]

**TOTAL FOR SECTION C: [20]
TOTAL: 200**