

**Written Examination****Section A – Critical Appraisal of Live Theatre**

Responses were generally well expressed with three or more shows being discussed.

Some responses were lacking in detailed examples and many made broad sweeping comments without linking directly to the focal point of the question. Students need to focus their responses to the **key** words of the question.

Section A is **not** an opportunity to simply repeat 'critiques' that have been completed in class; students must link the theatrical/character elements to the particular question posed.

Two thirds of candidates chose to answer Question 3, making it by far the most popular on the examination paper.

The relatively straight forward nature of the question was probably responsible for this popularity, and it produced some very strong writing. Almost half the answers to this question went into a second booklet, indicating that candidates found they had plenty to comment on about the three productions chosen.

Most candidates took a fairly direct line of nominating the effectiveness of acting, design, technical production and direction as the criteria they use to assess a piece of live theatre, and were able to discuss their chosen examples in detail under these headings. It was interesting to note that over seventy different productions were referred to, with the play *Sylvia*, presented at both the Theatre Royal and the Princess Theatre, as the most popular single production discussed, followed by *Odyssey*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Venetian Twins* and *Reality Check*.

One concern was the number of students who chose to write about **school productions**. Whilst these may well have been excellent, there were clearly problems for many students when it came to using the **same criteria** to assess both mainland touring professional productions and local school productions. The result was often a very unbalanced essay, with comparatively little information provided about the school production. There were far greater problems in a number of cases where the three productions were **all** school productions. It is recommended that teachers encourage students to choose **no more than one school production** in response to any essay question and that, wherever possible, professional productions are chosen.

Section B – Experimental Theatre

On the whole this section was well answered but candidates must address all points of question (ie, 4 dot points **does** mean four (4) dot points).

Detailed examples must be given as students need to remember that the examiner most likely will not have seen the performance.

Question 9 was a three pronged question and not all candidates addressed the 7 'techniques', message and dramatic impact.

Responses were generally detailed and demonstrated a good understanding of the purpose of the production. Students could articulate **how** elements had been used in their own productions for particular effect.

Practical Examination

Candidates were generally well prepared and the organisations of the examination sessions in particular centres was conducted professionally and efficiently.

There are, however, still problems which have been consistently referred to in past assessment reports and are yet to be effected in some centres:

- The guidelines for length of program **must** be rigorously observed. In many instances the poetry element was **too short** while occasionally a piece of prose was **so long** that it possibly ‘disadvantaged’ the student presenting it.
- Dramatic excerpts were, for the most part, varied and appropriate. Fortunately there was only one occasion this year when a drama program ran considerably over time. Teachers must realise that candidates will **not** be advantaged by this stratagem. Nor should their award be put at risk by the wilful disregard of the guidelines.
- In some centres there was an inappropriate level of difficulty in both the drama and solo material — ranging from selections which were too difficult to some choices where the chosen forms were simplistic and sentimental.
- Candidates are strongly advised to consider the issue of **contrast** between the poetic and prose forms. Occasionally this distinction was not evident.
- Far too often solo material was presented in an awkward stance or physical positioning which clearly inhibited effective vocal delivery. There is a need for a greater use of eye contact with the audience.
- Yet again, in solo work some students often stood too close to members of the examining panel.
- Mispronunciation of words was a common feature of many prose selections. Both teachers and students are strongly urged to address this in the **initial** stages of preparation for presentation. Unfortunately such errors can give the impression that the excerpt had not been sufficiently supervised prior to the assessment.
- The wearing of wigs and costumes in the presentation of solo work places the candidate at a distinct disadvantage as it is difficult to separate the impact of the material being presented from the often ‘inappropriate’ visual image before the panel. This must be addressed and is simply a matter of better organisation and utilisations of time within the group.

Statistical Summary

Award Summary

Outstanding Achievement (OA)	25
High Achievement (HA)	91
Satisfactory Achievement (SA)	149
Reassessed into neighbour	27
Total	292

Gender Breakdown	Males	76
	Females	216

Summary of external ratings

	A	B	C	D
Criterion 4	21	90	126	54
Criterion 6	29	79	153	30
Criterion 8	37	78	142	34
Criterion 9	24	93	133	37
Criterion 10	27	85	115	61

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