



GCSE

Drama

8261/W: Understanding Drama

Report on the examination

Version: 1.0
June 2025

Further copies of this report are available from aqa.org.uk

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Summary of the overall performance of the current series

The vast majority of centres have evidently worked hard to prepare students for the demands of this exam. Examiners reported seeing many thoughtful scripts that conveyed a passion for performance and an insightful understanding of how performers and designers convey meaning to their audiences.

Most students attempted all questions on the paper and centres have clearly continued to focus on preparing students to use their time effectively in the exam, encouraging them to ensure the length of their answers match the marks available. It was not unusual to see scripts that included plans for how time was going to be used, and this nearly always resulted in the production of balanced and complete papers.

There were fewer students this year who began their response by answering Section C. Those who moved through the sections in a linear way often appeared to more effectively engage with the extract in Section B and were less likely to skip or jump between questions.

Most students had a clear understanding of their set text, as evidenced through appropriate design and performance ideas for the extract and beyond. However, some students' knowledge appeared flawed, as demonstrated through misunderstandings about where the extract came from and its significance in the play as a whole. In these instances, it was felt that students had not explored the play in its entirety and had potentially only read key moments.

There was also a sense that a large number of students did not read the extract before beginning to answer Section B questions, which again led to unfortunate errors such as students not recognising where the extract is set, or who is on stage.

The majority of students for Section B had been prepared to write about *Blood Brothers*, although *Noughts and Crosses* and *The Crucible* remained popular. The popularity of the other text in order was *Things I Know to be True*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *A Taste of Honey* and *Romeo and Juliet*. It was also pleasing to see a small increase in the number of students writing about our newest texts *The Empress* and *The Great Wave*, both of which elicited some very high-quality responses.

There continued to be a marked preference for studying digital/streamed performances for Section C. Watching recorded performances did not dampen students' enthusiasm for the productions and examiners reported reading some deeply personal responses that beautifully captured the way in which performers and designers had inspired the student. There was again a noticeable trend where students in a centre were all prepared to write about the same few moments from a performance and these moments were often very brief spanning one or two lines of dialogue. This often meant that students simply copied down pre-learnt descriptions without engaging with the specific demands of the question.

There was a slight decrease in the number of students being prepared to write about design in both Section B and C. Many of those who did write on design seemed to lack an understanding of design fundamentals. Students often wrote about effects they wish to

create, or they had seen created, without any understanding of how specific design elements could or were employed to achieve this. Students writing about design must focus on developing their knowledge and understanding of a range of design skills.

A summary of students' performances in Section A

This section tests students' knowledge and understanding of theatre terminology, roles and responsibilities, stage positioning and configurations through four multiple choice questions. It was pleasing to note that most students attempted to answer all the questions in this section and did so with accuracy. Although due to the approach taken by some centres to attempt all questions in reverse order, some students ran out of time and did not complete this section. This is problematic as A is intended to be the most accessible section. There were also a number of students who left questions blank, students should be encouraged to take educated guesses in this section, even if they are not totally sure of the answer

The question that was most frequently incorrectly answered was Q.3 related to the stage manager's responsibility for the safety of actors on stage.

Many students wrote out their answers, some in full sentences, this is unnecessary and wastes time. A simple 'letter response' (A, B, C, D) is all that is required.

Summary of students' performance in Section B Question .1

This four-mark question tests students' knowledge and understanding of the play's original context, from the perspective of a designer. The most effective answers were concise, with a clear focus on precise description that reflected the socio-historical context of the play and the specific demands of the extract. It was not unusual to see answers of five or six sentences achieving full marks.

Centres are reminded that the question asks students to 'describe' and does not ask students to 'explain,'. Less successful answers gave limited description of design, and the rest of the answer was made up of a lengthy justification of choices, often involving detailed description of the social and/or political context of the play.

Some students only provided a diagram, centres are reminded that whilst diagrams can be included, students must provide a written description of their ideas. Other students presented their answers in bullet point form, most frequently when it was the last question attempted, and time was short. Students should be reminded, as per the instructions on the front of the exam paper, only answers written in full sentences will be credited.

For a few of the texts students' ideas directly contradicted information provided in the extract. It was clear that many students were attempting to answer this question before the extract had been read and hence were missing vital information that could have helped inform their design. It was also clear that many were not referencing the clean text taken in and using it to further confirm information about the extract that would have ensured their answer was entirely appropriate.

There were lots of costume designs described that were not complete, whilst it is not a requirement for students to describe every item of clothing worn by the character the description should appear to be a wearable costume. There were lots of designs where key items, such as a top, were not referenced at all. Where possible students should be encouraged to take a top to toe approach, systematically describing each key item in turn.

5.1

Overall, this question was answered well, with the best designs clearly being influenced by an understanding of the role and status of young unmarried women in puritan society as well as a knowledge of the limited resources available to the community. The best answers demonstrated this knowledge and understanding by referencing appropriate terms such as coif and authentic fabrics such as linen and wool.

A number of students simply stated that Mary would be very covered up, without explaining how this need for modesty would be translated into design i.e. long skirt and high neckline.

Some designs did not consider the context of the scene and described Mary as having dirt on her apron from cleaning the Proctors' house all day, when in fact she had been in court. Others described her wearing a cloak, even though she had already returned home and has been called down from her bed.

6.1

Many detailed and appropriate answers were seen which reflected both the fact that Linda was young child playing outside with her friends and the wider context of the play

As with previous years too many answers were informed by damaging and offensive assumptions about what it means to be working class, these included assertions about the working class 'never washing' or 'brushing their hair'. Students must be encouraged to find more appropriate and nuanced ways to acknowledge the poverty in which the characters live, ideas that go beyond covering them head to toe in dirt.

Most students placed Linda in a dress, but often very few details were provided about the style, colour, fit or sleeve and hem length. It is in these details that a student can most effectively reflect their knowledge of period.

There were also a considerable number of students who designed a costume that was clearly more appropriate for a teenage Linda, with reference to miniskirts, heavy make-up and high heels. This suggested either students had prepared a single costume for Linda that they were going to present regardless of the extract or that they had not recognised that this extract took place when they were children in the late 1960s.

There were also responses that referenced entirely inappropriate items such as joggers, hoodies and Lycra leggings.

7.1

The most effective answers seen for this question referenced a complete costume for Fogg that reflected both his status and his emotional state at this critical moment in the play.

Lovely descriptions were seen of costumes that were not only highly appropriate for an English gentleman in the late 19th century, but also recognised that he was now in his own home. These included references to a velvet smoking jacket, a fine silk cravat, a golden pocket watch and neatly trimmed beard and moustache.

A handful of answers seen, wrongly identified the extract as taking place on a boat and placed Fogg in deck shoes and a lifejacket. Others suggested that he may appear scruffy or unkempt due to the lengthy nature of his journey and his recent failure, this showed a lack of understanding of Fogg's meticulous character.

8.1

Different approaches were taken to costuming Fran, most dressed her in casual wear, but some made the decision that she would be wearing her nurse's uniform, both approaches were credited. However, many who chose to place her in uniform, offered no description of the uniform, which restricted their ability to provide precise detail. Students should be encouraged to describe each item in as much detail as possible, rather than assuming that the examiner will fill in the gaps.

A considerable number of students dressed Fran in thick warm jumpers or cardigans, based on the assumption that as it was set as autumn was turning it would be very cold in South Australia. The temperatures at this time of year in this area are normally pleasant, particularly in the daytime. The seasons are key to the play, and it is important that students understand what these seasons look like rather than using their own experience of British weather to inform decisions.

What set 'excellent' answers apart from 'good' answers were the small details that reflected the fact the characters were cooking and Fran's no-nonsense approach, these included her hair being scraped back off her face, worn house slippers and a well-used faded apron.

Although less common, than with *Blood Brothers*, there were still a few students who inappropriately equated Fran's working-class status with torn and dirty clothes.

9.1

A considerable number of students incorrectly designed a set for the McGregor house, failing to acknowledge that the scene was set in the burger bar, in most cases these responses had nothing worthy of credit in them. Students must be encouraged to read the extract and reference their copy of the text, to check the particular location of a scene before they answer the .1 question.

Many students also spent considerable amounts of time outlining their overall approach to set design for the play, for example discussing how their set would reflect the class difference between the noughts and crosses including describing how they would depict Sephy's home, rather than focusing on the specific design for the extract.

There were, however, some brilliant designs offered which provided a highly detailed and appropriate description of set that took into consideration the style, through the use of projections and trucks, and the contemporary dystopian setting of an unjust society in which the noughts are persecuted.

As always, the hallmarks of an excellent answer were often seen in the smallest details including congealed tomato sauce bottles, tables strewn with burger cartons and chipped plastic covered counters, that really brought the set to life

10.1

All answers seen acknowledged that Friar Laurence's costume should reflect his position as a friar in late 16th century Verona, but some struggled to go beyond identifying that he should be wearing a robe and this made it difficult for them to reference more than a 'few precise details'.

This was a question that required the student to provide a considerable amount of detail about a single item of clothing; a floor length brown robe, made from heavy cotton with a rope cord around the waist and a hood with a wide collar.

A few students who achieved an excellent mark, went further than this referencing a simple cross around his neck, woollen hose, slip on leather shoes and a bowl haircut.

11.1

The majority of students described the Boy as being dressed in his naval uniform, although many of the uniforms described were not wholly period appropriate and were more akin to modern uniforms.

There were a considerable number of students who suggested that his uniform would be dirty, faded or torn due to his working-class status. This is highly unlikely due to the high expectations of the Navy about presentation and due to his age and hence the age of his uniform. These ideas again appeared to be informed by damaging assumptions about the working class.

Excellent answers took as from top to toe, referencing details such as his sailor's cap, a wide lapelled collar, the bell bottom on his trousers and polished heavy black boots.

12.1

Several very precise and vivid descriptions were seen in response to this question, which brought to life Tilbury docks in the late 19th century.

In a few instances ideas about depicting ships coming in and out of the docks were suggested that seemed unworkable on a stage and it was not clear how the design would be practically realised. Students need to ensure that they are designing a set for the stage and not simply referencing things that could be seen at a real-life location.

The most successful answers combined the use of projections and a cyclorama to represent the sea and moving ships, with set pieces such as gang planks going into the wings and piles of trunks and suitcases.

This was also a question which saw the largest number of students reference other design elements, for which they were not credited. It was not uncommon for students answering this question to reference the use of lighting and soundscapes to create a sense of the bustling dock.

13.1

The most successful answers recognised Hanako's costume as a symbol of enforced proletarian unity. Some particularly sophisticated answers incorporated an understanding of how this uniform was at odds with her heightened emotional state at this moment, often reflected in strands of hair falling over her face.

Too many students simply stated that she would be wearing a basic black or grey or green uniform, providing no additional design detail. Those students who achieved an excellent mark focused on specific details about her Mao suit including the high, rigid and flipped collar, the pockets and the straight leg loose fitting trousers.

A summary of students' performance in Section B Question .2

This eight mark question tests students' knowledge and understanding of how to create effects through the employment of performance skills, when delivering a specified line of dialogue.

Successful responses saw students considering composite parts of the line separately, normally breaking it into two or three phrases, rather than writing about the line as a whole, which tended to lead to generalisation and a lack of precision. There was an increase in the number of responses where only ideas for part of the line were suggested, in some cases the delivery of a single word or short phrase became the whole focus for an answer.

Many students appeared to have been taught to begin their answer with an introductory sentence where the whole line is copied out, this is unnecessary and time consuming. When this approach was taken it was often the only time the text was referenced. It was however useful when students began with a brief overview of the effects they hoped to achieve linked to the character and the context of the line and extract. This approach also often ensured students were focusing on effects that were fully appropriate.

Some students wrote about their vocal and physical skills separately, whilst this is a valid approach, it did lead to some repetitious and disjointed answers. Examiners noted that the most successful responses were when students described the combined effect of both sets of skills, enabling them to write in a concise and focused way. Some students began each sentence by identifying whether the skill they were writing about was vocal or physical i.e. a

physical skill that I would use is. This form of signposting is unnecessary and adds little to answers.

Some students wrote exclusively about vocal or physical skills, which did inevitably impact the precision of their description. Others wrote about a very narrow range of skills, referencing for example only volume and gesture throughout their answer. Students should be encouraged to reference a range of appropriate skills. However, they should be discouraged from simply listing lots of skills in long sentences as this hampers their ability to explain how effects are created.

Many students were able to skilfully bring their ideas to life using an impressive range of dramatic terminology, adjectives and adverbs, so the examiner could see the stage action. Some responses lacked precision as no adverbs were used, and students simply described characters walking or saying lines without any additional information being provided. It was clear that some students had been taught a wide range of terms that they did not understand, the most misused terms were gait, intonation, pitch and tone. The phrase 'loud pitch' and 'high tone' were used regularly. Gait was often used to describe characters who were sat or still. Another common area of imprecision was the use of the word emphasise, many students suggested they would emphasise a word but then did not explain how they would do this.

The most successful answers combined highly detailed description with appropriate effects. There were numerous examples of detailed descriptions being provided without reference to any effects. Less common but still seen were answers that went into great detail about effects, but it was unclear how these effects would be conveyed in performance.

Overall, there was an improvement in the quality of description this series, but there was often a disconnect between the skills described and the effects identified. Students need to be encouraged to think more carefully about what combinations of skills can convey specific effects as they prepare for this exam.

5.2

Most students understood the very difficult situation that Mary finds herself in and chose to focus on conveying effects that reflected this, describing her fear, her shock and her low status. These were then brought to life on the page with descriptions of her pleading tone, quivering hands and the lack of eye contact.

There were a few students who interpreted this line as Mary dominating Proctor and taking control of the situation, as she has now gained confidence from being an official of the court. This is not fully appropriate for the extract or Mary's character arc. It was clear that some students did not fully understand her character, and this was further seen with assertions that she was sly and manipulative. Students should be encouraged to explore the differences between the young female characters in the play to ensure the interpretations offered are fully appropriate.

6.2

Lots of highly appropriate and detailed responses were seen, many captured Linda's childish excitement and energy, as well as her close bond with Mickey and her desire to show off to Eddie. Students appeared to have fun answering this question and there was a real sense that they understood the joyful and light-hearted tone of this line, in contrast to the opening of the extract.

Some students did not cover the full line in their answers, with lots appearing to run out of time before 'Come on, gang, let's go' or missing 'don't we, Mickey?'. Students should be encouraged to try to move through the whole line, not spending too long on one specific part.

The majority ignored the stage direction '*They all laugh*', students should be reminded that if a stage direction is included in the given line, then ideally it should be addressed in the answer. However, it is not enough simply to repeat the stage direction they must describe how they would bring the direction to life. There were some lovely descriptions of Linda rocking backwards and forwards with glee and doubling over clutching her stomach, whilst clinging onto Mickey.

Some answers were based on misunderstandings about the extract; lots did not pick up on the fact that Linda and Mickey are exaggerating about what they have done previously to try to impress Eddie. Others talked about how close Linda and Eddie were at this point in the play, not acknowledging this is the first time they have met. Some set the extract in the park and described Linda interacting with the statue. The most common error was that Linda is overtly flirting with Mickey and that she already has strong sexual feelings towards him, which is inappropriate considering the age and the innocence of the characters.

7.2

Most answers focused on the line as a means to show Fogg's love for Mrs Aouda, this did lead to some students describing overt displays of affection and physical intimacy that would not be deemed appropriate and did not reflect the clear respect Fogg has for her. Some students described Fogg, grabbing her face and passionately kissing her. There is a level of gentle intimacy described in the stage directions and students should be led by this when considering how they might describe how these two characters interact with each other

Sophisticated answers recognised the importance of this line as the first time Fogg has used her first name and the deep emotional connection this suggests. Other successful answers understood that the delivery of the line might be tinged with some sadness or regret because he can no longer offer her the life she deserves due to his failure. These answers were 'excellent' because the ideas suggested were not only appropriate for the extract but demonstrated an understanding of these characters' journey through the play and the development of their relationship.

8.2

Many students clearly found this line difficult to interpret, as they did not seem to fully understand Fran's 'tough love' approach to parenting. Lots described her as cruel and saw this line as her trying to deliberately hurt Rosie or even brag about her ability to make her children cry. Some went as far as to suggest that Fran doesn't really love her children.

This play is about the complex relationships between parents and adult children and students must be encouraged and supported to explore Bob and Fran's feelings towards their children in some depth, if they are to ensure that they can appropriately interpret interactions between them.

The best answers acknowledged that Fran's bluntness often masks her deep love and concern for her children. There were some lovely responses that had Fran faltering for a moment on 'one way or another', as though briefly filled with regret at the way her and Pip had parted.

9.2

Many appropriate answers were seen in response to this question, with the best acknowledging that as Callum has found out that Sephy is going to boarding school he may never see her again. This again highlights the importance of students understanding the extract as part of the play as a whole.

Some interpreted Callum as just angry, even going as far as saying he now hates Sephy, but more sophisticated answers captured his pessimistic acceptance of the fact they are from two separate worlds and the heartbreak this is causing him.

A number of answers did not recognise that this line was being delivered as direct address and described him delivering the line to Jude. This suggested that students may not be reading the extract before they answer .2, so missing vital information that should inform the delivery of the specified line.

10.2

Some lovely responses were seen, which captured the friar's initial panic in response to the knocking and then his genuine concern for Romeo. A few interesting responses also suggested that there may be an element of worry for his own safety if he is found harbouring a criminal. Whilst this is a less generous interpretation of the character, it is certainly an appropriate one as many critics do see him as self-serving and ambitious in his attempts to help the young lovers. It is important that students do feel empowered to develop their own interpretations of key characters.

Although this line is of a comparable length to the other .2 lines it is made up of six short phrases and this meant that some students struggled to effectively move through the line, addressing all of it, as they attempted to write about each brief phrase in turn. This meant some parts of the line were not addressed or only the first part of the line was dealt with. Ideally students should be taught that when describing the delivery of line with multiple phrases that they should group phrases together to ensure the whole line is covered.

11.2

Most students provided quite detailed and appropriate answers, that focused on the Boy's affection and desire for Jo. Excellent answers also acknowledged his directness and his underlying nerves that she might reject him.

Eye contact and physical touch were written about particularly well in some answers. Less detail was often given about vocal skills, and it was clear that some students did not feel confident identifying skills that communicate feelings. This comes back to the need for students to not only be taught about a range of skills but also to develop an understanding of how they can specifically be used to convey a range of effects.

12.2

Students seem to relish the performance opportunities provided by this line. They wrote very well about Susan's cruelty and coldness towards Rani. Most recognised the inherent racism in the line, focusing on how this could be conveyed through the delivery of 'an English one.'

There were a few answers that focused too much on describing Rani clinging desperately onto Susan. Whilst it may be necessary to provide some detail about the actions of other characters, students must be mindful that lengthy descriptions of these actions are not creditable.

Most answers only focused on her interaction or lack of it with Rani, but some explored the way in which she might position herself in terms of her children. There were some brilliant suggestions of how she might use them as a shield to prevent Rani coming closer to her, others suggested how she might draw them behind her skirt to protect them. It is often useful for students to be encouraged to consider how a character might interact with everyone on stage, not just the character they may be directly addressing.

13.2

Most students focused on conveying Hanako's obvious anger and frustration with her pupil in this moment. Excellent answers went beyond this to hint at the pain and grief Hanako has experienced since being ripped from her home.

There were lovely suggestions for her voice breaking as she says 'Japanese', to convey her desire to return home. Others focused on how her spitefulness towards Jung Sun was driven by a desire to hurt her as she has been hurt. These 'excellent' answers were examples of where students had gone beyond simply identifying the emotion that the character is feeling to explore their internal motivations as informed by characters' previous experiences.

A summary of students' performance in Section B Question .3

This twelve mark question tests students' knowledge and understanding of the use of performance space and interaction. Answers need to be focused on creating a particular effect for the audience, as defined by the question. It was pleasing that examiners noted that this year there was a marked improvement in the number of answers that acknowledged the specific focus within the answer.

Centres are reminded that interaction can include verbal skills, many responses just focused on physical skills and in some cases just on the use of stage space. The use of terms such as stage left and stage right can be very useful in .3 answers, but simply referring to where a character is standing is unlikely to be able to effectively convey the specified effect.

Students should be encouraged to think about the range of ways characters can interact with each other including use of eye contact, response to the delivery of specific lines and touch, or the lack of it.

The term proxemics featured frequently in answers but was often misused. Some students had been taught to use terms such as social or intimate proxemics, these terms rarely added anything to answers unless how the proxemics were created was clearly explained.

The most effective responses focused on three or four well-chosen lines from throughout the shaded extract, lines that offered the most opportunity to convey the specified effect. They then took the examiner through the journey of the shaded extract making frequent references to the brief.

Less successful responses involved generalised description of how the character might be performed throughout the whole of the shaded extract without reference to specific moments or lines. Others only focused on one line or a few lines from the very start of the shaded extract.

Pleasingly very few answers were seen this year where the student spent a considerable amount of time directing the other actor and even fewer that did not focus on the shaded extract at all.

5.3

Most answers very clearly focused on conveying Mary's fear, although some focused on the idea of her fear of Abigail rather than Proctor. Students need to be reminded to address all the demands of the question, rather than focusing on a single key word.

Some answers given were very repetitive as they were based on quite a narrow range of skills employed to convey fear, such as a shaking voice and hunched posture. This is another example of where students could not suggest a range of different skills that might convey one effect.

As with 5.3 there were some students who suggested that Mary was being very aggressive and confrontational in this scene, which is at odds with both the character and the question being asked.

Some of the ideas suggested did not seem fully fitting for the style of the play, with quite farcical movement being described with Mary wildly running up and down the stage as Proctor lunges towards her in a game of cat and mouse. More successful answers used Miller's stage directions as an inspiration for thoughtful descriptions of their tense physical interactions, which employed subtle and highly naturalistic performance skills to convey Mary's fear.

6.3

Lots of focused and detailed answers were provided which gave a real sense of how Linda might be performed to convey her close friendship with Mickey through her compassionate comforting of him as he cries at the beginning of the shaded extract. Many students ignored the last four lines of the shaded extract, failing to see the opportunities that Linda's excitement at seeing the gun and her confusion at the mention of Eddie's names offered them. This meant that some answers did not capture the full journey of the extract.

A lot of the answers focused on the stage direction '*She starts to dry his tears*', but few explained how Linda would do this, as with the 6.2 question, students must give additional detail that goes beyond the direction in the text if their ideas are to be credited.

This question also often saw lengthy descriptions of how Linda's accent would be created, but this was rarely made relevant to the question. There were also frequent references to conveying her working-class status, but again this was often not related back to the idea of conveying their close friendship.

As in 6.2 answers, a surprising number of students described Linda's interaction with Mickey as being sexually driven, which is at odds with the tone of the extract and inappropriate considering the age of the characters. It was not uncommon for students to write about how Linda and Mickey's relationship develops over the course of the play and how in this moment we see the seeds of their love growing and how this makes his cruel treatment of her later more painful to watch. Students should be reminded that lengthy descriptions of what happens elsewhere in the play are not creditable in .3 answers.

7.3

A large number of responses seen focused exclusively on Fogg's romantic feelings towards Mrs Aouda, without fully addressing the idea that at this moment in time his feelings are conflicting. Many students did not acknowledge the overwhelming guilt he feels having brought her to England and now being unable to offer her anything. This meant very few students focused on the significant moment in the shaded extract where he attempts to give her the purse of money, offering her some financial security in this new country.

As with 7.2, many students suggested a lot of intimate touching. This felt even less appropriate as the shaded extract comes before Fogg has even expressed his feelings towards Mrs Aouda.

'Excellent' answers suggested the employment of subtle performance skills such as a brief voice break or the momentary averting of his eyes that hinted at the turmoil below his measured and calm exterior.

Some students did not talk about the use of space at all, because in the opening stage directions it states the characters are sitting. However, some lovely and very creative descriptions were given which focused on Fogg perching uncomfortably on the edge of his

chair and leaning towards Mrs Aouda, as well as moments where his composure is lost and he leaps to his feet.

8.3

The very critical interpretation of Fran's parenting style seen in 8.2 dominated many 8.3 responses. This led to the suggestion of some aggressive performance ideas, with Fran interacting with Rosie in quite a rough way, with some justifying this violence by referencing Pip's account of her mother pulling her hair as a child. These ideas were at odds with the content and the context of the shaded extract.

More effective answers focused on Fran's genuine concern for Rosie's future as shown through the range of different approaches she takes during the conversation that went from blunt directness to affectionate teasing.

Some very thoughtful answers fully embraced the opportunities presented by the fact that they were cooking side by side, with some suggesting that for the first few lines they would not be making eye contact until Fran deliberately places her knife down and turns to face her. Weaker answers did not acknowledge that they were cooking at all.

9.3

Many students answering this question did not focus on showing Callum's difficult choices and those who did often did not seem to understand how and why he is torn in this specific moment in the play. Answers often lacked acknowledgement of what has recently happened to his father or his sense of hopelessness and lack of direction which Jude takes advantage of in this scene.

The best answers seen were underpinned by an understanding of the difficult situation Callum finds himself in and the complex relationship between the brothers which allows Jude to manipulate him. These answers took examiners on Callum's emotional journey in this brief moment conveying his initial frustration with his life, moving to curiosity about Jude's plans, his irritation about being belittled and concern about his mother, all culminating in his decision to join Jude

The error made by some in 9.1, was carried over into this answer, with descriptions of Callum sitting on his bed or on the McGregor's sofa. The public nature of the location of this scene is key to the way in which the characters interact so this led to the suggestion of some inappropriate ideas which again highlights the importance of correctly identifying the extract's location before beginning to answer questions.

10.3

There were a considerable number of excellent answers seen in response to this question that acknowledged multiple triggers for the friar's frustration in the shaded extract. Many of these answers referenced a building sense of frustration and although this wasn't a requirement it was certainly fitting.

Notably there were a number of students who wrote effectively about Friar Laurence's responses to Romeo's lines, something that was not seen as much in answers on the other texts. Students should be reminded that it is perfectly valid to have one of the lines they reference be from the other character in the shaded extract, if focus is sustained on their response rather than delivery of the line.

11.3

A number of straightforward and focused responses were seen, although many understood the word affection as only being a physical, which led to answers that solely focused on the Boy's physical interaction with Jo.

The shaded extract itself provided lots of opportunity to explore use of stage space and interaction as a means of showing his affection, with her moving away, the swinging through the air and the placing of the ring on her finger followed by the kiss. However, as with other questions, for the ideas suggested to be creditable students had to go beyond repeating the directions exactly as they are written, embellishing them to bring them to life for the examiner.

There were examples of responses that were tinged with cynicism based on the knowledge that the Boy later abandons Jo and leaves her to face parenthood alone. This led some students to making suggestion that showed that he doesn't really mean what he is saying in this moment or that he is deliberately misleading her, which is not fully appropriate and made it difficult for students to effectively address the question.

12.3

Very few answers were seen that did not directly address the focus of the question and Susan's lack of care for Rani. Some of the best answers acknowledged that the scene was being played out in a public place which further fuelled Susan's desire to cut the conversation short, and others recognised the importance of the use of the children, particularly as she tries to pull them off Rani.

Again, as with 12.2, some answers focused too much on directing Rani, perhaps because she is the central protagonist and students have been well prepared to write about her. Students must be particularly mindful when approaching .3 questions that they don't waste time directing the other character and only give enough information to allow the examiner to understand the nature of the interaction.

13.3

Hanako's frustration was the focus of almost all responses seen, with particularly detailed reference being made to use of stage space as she angrily paces the room. The most sophisticated answers acknowledged that she is not just frustrated with Jung Sun, but the whole situation she finds herself in.

A few students included moments of physical interaction through touch, which felt forced and not fully appropriate. Students should not feel that they must reference touch if it is not fitting

for the extract, there are lots of other ways that interaction can be explored such as the use of levels and eye contact. Description of the lack of touch can be just as meaningful as touch when exploring scenes such as this one.

A summary of students' performance in Section B Question.4

These twenty mark question test students' knowledge and understanding of how performance skills might be used to interpret character in the extract and in the play as a whole.

The most effective responses offered precise and detailed performance ideas for the extract and then compared these with significant moments from the play as a whole. There were many different and valid approaches taken to answering these questions. Some students paired descriptions of the delivery of a line from the extract with a description of the performance of a key line from somewhere else in the play. Others first wrote about the extract and then turned their attention to the play as whole. It was helpful when students briefly explained where the line has come from to help the examiner make sense of the example being offered.

Regardless of approach what is key to success in this question is well chosen moments that allow the student to describe performance ideas specifically calculated to interpret character. These ideas are then brought to life through reference to an extensive range of appropriate vocal and physical skills.

Less successful responses to these questions tended to only focus on the extract and made no reference to the play as a whole or made generalised assertions about the use of performance skills, without referencing specific moments or lines. Conversely some students seem to have been taught to quote contrasting lines from the play as a whole but not bring them to life by describing performance skills. There were also a number of responses seen, where no moments or lines from the play or extract were referenced and an overview of the character's journey through the play was provided without mention of any performance skills. Students should be reminded that their knowledge and understanding of the play/character should be demonstrated through description and explanation of performance skills, rather than analysis of the text or character.

A considerable number of responses seen suggested that students did not understand what the word interpretation meant. These responses either included descriptions of the use of performance skills without any reference to what these performance ideas might convey about the character or where performance ideas were related to the creation of tension or comedy or the communication of theme, rather than character.

Some centres appeared to have encouraged students to describe how they would use the same skill to interpret the character in two different moments. This led to some slightly odd and disjointed suggestions such as 'I would use a high pitch in the extract to show I am young. Later in the play, I would use a high pitch again to show I am upset when Linda hides my drugs.'

5.4

Considering the complexity of Proctor's character, it was surprising how simple some of the interpretations offered were. Many students simply focused on the idea that he was an angry man in the extract and then sought to find other examples of where he is angry in the play, such as when he shouts in the court. These answers often did not delve into why his rage is so explosive in his confrontation with Mary and how he is wracked with guilt that his sinful behaviour has led to the punishment of his innocent wife.

There were some very insightful responses that explored Proctor as a tortured man living with consequences of his past mistakes. These responses often referenced his strained conversation with Elizabeth at the start of Act Two and their later reconciliation in Act Four.

The majority of students chose to write about his tense conversation with Abigail in Act One, this was a perfectly valid choice and provided an opportunity to explore how torn he feels, however many struggled to relate this scene to the extract making their answers feel disjointed. Whilst it is not a requirement to compare and contrast the extract to the moments from the play as a whole, one of the hallmarks of the most successful answers is the linking of the interpretation offered of the extract to other well-chosen key moments, allowing the student to demonstrate an understanding of the journey of the character through the play.

6.4

Overall, the extract was dealt with quite well, with some appropriate ideas being offered about Mickey's changing emotional state as he veers from despair at the thought of death to joy at the prospect of playing with his new best friend. Most students effectively conveyed a sense of his youthful energy and playfulness, but many did not acknowledge that he is lying or at least wildly exaggerating about their previous run ins with the police. There were some lovely answers that recognised this and described Mickey stumbling over his lies and looking to Linda for reassurance.

Many students appeared to have been influenced by the wording of 6.3 and spoke about the close relationship between Mickey and Linda in the extract and beyond. This was a perfectly valid approach, but for some this became their sole focus which was self-limiting.

As with previous series, some students used their answers to provide lengthy explanations about Russell's social agenda and provide extensive detail about the wider political context of the play, this was rarely made relevant to the question and so attracted little credit.

Lots of students solely focused on Mickey's immaturity and then went one to try to find other examples of when he was immature in the play as a whole, such as when he visits the cinema or talks back to his teacher. This led to the presentation of a very narrow interpretation and meant some students then made inappropriate suggestions that he is immature throughout the whole play, which contradicts the idea that he is forced to grow up too soon due to the crushing pressures of life.

Others focused on the importance of the gun and attempted to use this extract to show that Mickey had always been very violent and was obsessed with guns from a young age. This

interpretation often felt forced and inappropriate, particularly when students suggested that he pointed the gun at Eddie in the extract in the same way he does in the final scene. Students should not feel forced to make connections between moments in the play that are not there and it perfectly valid to contrast moments to illustrate how characters have changed, rather than identifying the same traits in each scene mentioned.

7.4

Some sensitive and thoughtful responses were seen in response to this question, which captured the complexity of Mrs Aouda and her journey through the play. Most students focused on her developing relationship with Fogg and recognised the strength of her feelings in the pivotal moment of the extract, although as with 7.2 and 7.3 some described her being very physical with Fogg which was not appropriate.

Many did not have much to say about her character beyond her feelings towards Fogg, failing to recognise the strength and resilience she shows in overcoming her tragic backstory and the courage she demonstrates in the face of possible ruin in this new and unfamiliar country in the extract.

8.4

Whilst some students' interpretations of Fran were insecure, it was clear that students were far more comfortable writing about Rosie, potentially as they find her more relatable. There were very few instances of inappropriate interpretations being offered, although some were quite simplistic focusing solely on the idea that she is immature. Some of these interpretations were quite negative with criticism being levelled at Rosie for failing to grow up quick enough, without any acknowledgement of the role her family play in treating her as the baby of the family. The most sophisticated answers explored the idea that she is at a crossroads and is torn between wanting her independence and needing the love and support of her family. These 'excellent' answers also often explored the very different relationship she has with Bob and Fran and in some cases each of her siblings.

The vast majority of students referenced moments from Rosie's monologue in Berlin and many others referenced her final one reflecting on her mother's death. The monologues in the play do offer a wealth of material for .4 answers, but students who looked beyond them often found some very useful moments which helped them convey a complex and insightful interpretation. Particularly effective reference was made to her reaction to watching Fran and Pip's bitter confrontation, her tender conversation as she helps Mark pack and her final conversation with Bob when she reveals she is leaving home.

The very best answers conveyed a sense of Rosie's journey of discovery through the play and her realisation that there aren't many things that she knows to be true.

9.4

It was clear that some students did not feel confident or prepared to write about Jude and this was evidenced with some vague and insecure interpretations being offered.

Many presented a surprisingly positive interpretation of him in the extract, seeing him as affectionate and caring towards his younger brother, with no acknowledgement of how he belittles and mocks him and willingly places him in danger. Other painted him as a 2-dimensional villain with no acknowledgement of the hardships and difficulties he has faced as a nought in an unjust society. The most successful answers took a more balanced approach embracing both his vulnerability and cruelty, understanding he is an angry character, but also recognising that his anger is justified.

This was the .4 answer that most commonly did not reference specific moments from the play as a whole, which led to unhelpful and generalised assertions such as ‘I would always be scowling and balling my fists’. In other .4 questions it appeared that many students had prepared a bank of possible examples to reference. Whilst pre-identifying moments for all key characters in the play can lead to less appropriate moments being discussed, it can be a useful revision activity and act as a safety net, if a character a student is not as familiar with is the focus of the question. Students should also be encouraged to make use of the texts they take into the exam, as there is no requirement for quotes from the rest of the play to be memorised.

10.4

The interpretations offered of Romeo were almost exclusively positive, largely focus on his unwavering love and devotion to Juliet, this is understandable and valid, but there are other aspects of his character which could have effectively been explored in relation to this extract. Whilst many students focused on conveying his heartbreak at being parted from Juliet, this extract also depicts a rage filled and impulsive young man who struggles to control his emotions.

Whilst most referenced moments from the play where Romeo is interacting with Juliet, there were other very insightful choices made, including the exploration of his involvement in the fatal fight, his lively and quick-witted interactions with Mercutio and his claims in the opening of the play that he is passionately in love with Rosaline. Choosing a more diverse range of moments allowed some students to showcase a more comprehensive and complex interpretation, demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of play effectively. Students aiming for excellent marks should be encouraged to explore both Romeo and Juliet beyond the confines of their romantic relationship.

11.4

Many students presented an appropriate interpretation of Jo, supported with a range of performance ideas. They understood that the Boy offers her the affection and attention she so desperately craves from her mother and how this makes her more vulnerable to his advances. The best answers recognised that whilst this is possibly the happiest we see Jo, that this happiness is overshadowed by her pessimistic view of life and her inability to trust as she has been let down so much by Helen. Less successful answers failed to pick up on her cynicism in the scene, as demonstrated in her negative reaction to the Boy's kiss, and presented her as whole heartedly throwing herself into the relationship without reservation.

Many different approaches were taken to exploring the presentation of Jo in the play as a whole, the majority unsurprisingly focused on her difficult relationship with Helen, with some insightful links being made to how this dysfunctional relationship informs all her subsequent relationships. Others referenced moments that explored how Jo copes with the pregnancy alone and how she turns to Geof for support after the Boy leaves. Both were valid approaches.

12.4

Some lovely responses were seen, which charted the growth in Rani's confidence as she makes a new life for herself in England. Many answers successfully focused on conveying her vulnerability in the extract and then looked to compare this to moments from later in the play when she is an assured woman working for Dadabhai.

The most successful answers showed an understanding of how desperate Rani's situation is at the beginning of the play as an abandoned ayah, which makes her later success more inspirational. Many of the most appropriate ideas suggested for the extract focused on conveying her genuine shock at Susan's betrayal and the grief she feels being ripped away from the children she has grown to love. A few suggested that Rani was being hysterical or overreacting, which demonstrated a lack of understanding of how dangerous her position is as a penniless young Indian woman, without friends or family to protect her in a new and frightening country.

A number of well-chosen key moments from the play were explored by students including the abuse she experiences at the hands of Lord Oakham, her desperate attempts to give her baby away and her reunion with Hari.

A few students provided too much social and political context about the treatment of India and Indian immigrations during Queen Victoria's reign. Students need to be mindful about whether the information they provide is effectively contributing to their ability to convey their understanding of the play and character through performance.

13.4

The extract was dealt with particularly well in responses seen, with students clearly recognising Jung Sun's desperation to excel in her studies and her excitement about fulfilling her mission. This was often placed in the wider context of her commitment to her country and how she strives for perfection as she seeks to serve the Great Leader.

Answers were often less successful when it came to exploring the play as a whole, suggesting that some students had not fully explored the character of Jung Sun and were unable to easily identify key moments in her journey. Students should be reminded that a wide range of characters might be the focus for the play, not only those considered to be the main characters. Those who did provide well-chosen moments often focused on Jung Sun's changing attitudes to Hanako, culminating in her decision to help Hanako's family find her and her genuine distress when she discovers that she wasn't released after teaching her.

A summary of students' performance in Section B Question .5

There were not enough responses seen to draw conclusions about the performance of students writing about specific texts. The highest number of design responses seen in terms of the percentage of all students studying the play were, in order, *A Taste of Honey*, *80 Days*, *The Crucible*, *Noughts and Crosses* and *Blood Brothers*. No students had been prepared to write about design for *The Great Wave*. Set remained the most popular design skill to write about followed by costume and then lighting. Very few students wrote from the perspective of a sound designer and no students chose to write about puppet design.

Many answers only focused on the extract, with no ideas provided for the play as a whole. Most answers lacked focus on the idea of using design 'to support the action'. Students need to be providing examples of how the design might be used at specific moments in both the extract and the play as a whole, rather than offering a general overview of how they would approach design. Very few students supported their answers with diagrams, whilst this is not a requirement, a clear and well labelled diagram can be a concise and effective way to bring a design to life.

It was apparent that some students attempting these .5 questions had limited understanding of what a design skill is. To achieve an excellent mark an extensive range of design skills must be referenced. Students attempting .5 questions should be looking to both the specification and the mark scheme to help them identify specific design skills they can reference when describing and explaining their ideas.

It was clear that many students who attempted the set design question had pre-prepared a description of a set, but they had not considered how this set could be used or adapted in specific scenes. This was seen in responses to 7.5 where students described a tea-stained backdrop which took the form of a world map. The students then described how a model boat would be moved across the map as Fogg's journey continued, but there was often no explanation of how the set might be adapted to represent Fogg's home for the extract. There were some exceptions to this with very creative answers given explaining how recurring set pieces would be redressed and reused in this play to represent multiple locations, reflecting the style of the piece and conveying a real sense of how set would support the action.

A large number of responses only described one costume for the extract, centres are reminded that it is a requirement that at least two of the characters' costumes from the extract are described. Some students chose to only design for one character throughout the play, this is a valid approach but can be self-limiting if a very similar costume or the same costume with small adaptations is worn throughout.

Lighting answers often lacked an understanding of how lights can be used to support the action by conveying ideas or creating mood and atmosphere. Most only focused on the use of colour to reflect a characters' feelings, with no consideration of the style of the play, so, for example, students described flooding the stage with red to show a character's anger in a naturalistic play. There was also rarely any reference to the use of intensity, positioning, angles, focus or types of lanterns used.

A summary of students' performance in Section C

This section of the paper tests students' knowledge and understanding of the work of theatre makers in a live performance setting.

There are three questions in this section; one focused on the evaluation and analysis of performers, and two questions focused on the work of a designer. Students only answer one question in this section. As in the previous series, overwhelmingly the most popular question was the one which focused on performers.

The majority of students wrote about productions that were available on DVD or streaming sites. The most popular digital productions were: *Billy Elliot: The Musical*, *A Monster Calls*, *Things I Know To Be True*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Peter Pan*, *Jane Eyre*, *Treasure Island*, *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *Everyone's Talking about Jamie*, *A Small Island*, *Frantic's Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Yerma*, *Frankenstein*, *Antigone* and *Medea*.

Some students struggled to introduce the production if they had watched a recorded performance. At times this led to confused and lengthy introductions where they gave details both of when the production was originally staged and when they saw the production. Several answers were seen, where the title of the production was not given and it was unclear what production had been seen.

There were a few instances this year where students wrote about films or Mischief productions that were never presented as theatrical performances, such as episodes from their television series. This represents a rubric infringement. If a recording is studied, teachers must ensure it is a recording of a live theatrical event.

Popular live productions this year included *Warhorse*, *An Inspector Calls*, *2.22: A Ghost Story*, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, *Woman in Black*, *Wuthering Heights*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *The Life of Pi*, *Animal Farm*, *Hamilton* and *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*.

It was also interesting to see an increase in the number of centres who had small-scale touring companies visit. The excitement that some students felt having actors perform in their school was palpable in their responses.

There was a slight increase in the number of students writing about school productions, whilst this is permitted, at times it was clear that some students lack the objectivity to critically evaluate their peers, which hampered the quality of their answers.

There was also an increase in the number of students being prepared to write about musicals. Musicals represent a perfectly valid choice for Section C and they often appear to achieve very high levels of engagement and appreciation. Centres however need to ensure that the production chosen allows the students to talk about a range of performance and design skills as identified in the specification. Any production reviewed should include some spoken dialogue.

Whether live or recorded, excellent answers brought moments to life through vivid detail and description and then went on to analyse these moments in relation to the focus of the question, before offering an evaluative comment to define its relative success.

Again, it was clear many centres, guided students to focus on a narrow range of brief moments as chosen by the teacher. This restrictive focus further hampered students' ability to formulate and communicate their own response to the production. This approach often seemed to involve students pre-learning chunks of description which made it difficult for them to craft answers that met the demands of the question. As per the specification, students should be prepared to 'discuss a variety of aspects' of any production seen.

Many centres had dedicated a considerable amount of time to exploring the texts in class, which deepened the students' understanding and appreciation of the productions seen, however at times this led to students including lengthy descriptions and explanations about the wider context of the play. These passages were rarely relevant or credit worthy, this was most commonly seen in *Billy Elliot* responses, where much time was dedicated to explaining Margaret Thatcher's involvement in the miners' strikes and the repressive gender roles that permeated society at this time.

There were also clearly examples of centres teaching students to write about productions of their English set text for example *Macbeth*. This proved quite challenging for some students who found it difficult to prepare to write about the same text for two exams that have very different demands. This led to the inclusion in some students' answers of English style analysis of the text and unnecessary contextual information about kingship and attitudes towards witches in the Jacobean period.

At times students' answers became confused as they began to talk about the style of the productions seen, this was most commonly seen when the production being discussed was deemed to have been influenced by the ideas of Brecht. Some students provided lengthy explanations of the artistic and political purpose of Epic techniques, but this was rarely made relevant to the question and often the points made were inaccurate. Centres must ensure that if students are to be taught to write about a very specific style of theatre that they are equipped to make points that link to the type of questions on this paper.

The trend continued for students to offer suggestions about how a performance might be improved if they had starred in or designed for it. Whilst it is valid for students to offer critical evaluation, extensive explanations of how they might perform the role more successfully are not relevant or creditable.

Very few rubric infringements were seen, but a handful of students did answer Section B and C on the same text. In a number of these cases, it was also clear that the students had not seen a production of their set text and they were imagining what a performance might look like. There were also a few students who answered more than one of the Section C questions, in these instances all responses were marked and the answer which had been awarded the highest mark was credited.

An increasing number of students wrote responses to Section C questions as though they were being asked to explain how they would create tension or comedy as a performer or how they might use set to create appropriate setting/s. As these answers made no reference to live theatre no marks could be awarded.

14

This question tests students' knowledge and understanding of how meaning is created in performance, with a specific focus on how two or more performers used their performance skills to create comedy or tension. For this question students could focus on either comedy or tension or a combination. The most effective responses vividly described a series of appropriately chosen moments and weaved meaningful and focused analysis and evaluation throughout this description. They were often also punctuated with personal moments of reflection about how the piece had impacted the student.

It was pleasing this year, that very few responses were written about performances only featuring one actor and very few students only focused on one actor in their answer. Often answers focused predominantly on a single performer, but there were brief references to one or more other actors, and this was a valid approach, as there is no expectation that an answer needs to focus equally on each performer mentioned.

Some students chose to focus on both comedy and tension and provided some very interesting descriptions of how deeply tense moments had been momentarily lightened with the creation of a darkly comic moment. Whilst the question did not require students to compare the use of comedy and tension this often proved to be a very successful approach, providing a framework for meaningful evaluation and analysis.

Overall tension was more successfully written about than comedy, as students often struggled to explain why a scene or moment was funny. It was pleasing to see that many students had a broad and comprehensive understanding of the different types of tension that could be created with some responses focusing on sexual and/or romantic tension, whilst others explored status struggles as a source of tension. There was of course considerable focus on the creation of suspense and fear which worked particularly effectively with answers on productions such as *Woman in Black* and *2.22: A Ghost Story*.

At times the explanation of why something was tense or funny was only supported by reference to the context or situation being explored in a scene, this was most commonly seen in *Small Island*, where a student would explain that a scene was tense because a character was portrayed as being the victim of racism. Students should be reminded that all evaluative points need to be fully supported with performance detail.

There were far fewer responses seen this year that did not address the specific focus of the question, when this did happen it appeared to be because the student did not feel they had moments they could refer to that demonstrated the creation of comedy or tension. Other answers were seen where the moment described appeared to contain neither comedy nor tension, but the student simply tagged on a sentence at the end of the description saying 'this moment effectively created tension/comedy'.

15

This was the more popular of the design questions. This thirty-two mark question tests students' knowledge and understanding of how meaning is created in performance, with a specific focus on how set design was used to create appropriate settings.

The majority of answers were focused on *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, *Woman in Black*, *An Inspector Calls* and *The House Party*. Successful answers understood how the set design could be skilfully employed to create appropriate settings. Less effective answers did not focus on the creation of setting at all and often the evaluation and analysis of the set design was focused on the communication of key ideas or the creation of a specific audience response.

Examiners reported that the most successful responses were informed by students' working and practical understanding of set design, including the use of scale, levels, gauzes, projections and specific scenic devices like revolves and flying. Less successful answers often only explained what was on stage i.e. there was a table and chairs or focused on a single aspect of the design such as platforms. In many answers it was not possible to imagine the set being described or how it created an appropriate setting. There were also a few answers about touring production that had very limited sets, which provided little useful material for the student to write about.

There were some answers that very effectively described how the set provided an appropriate setting in terms of supporting the actors, largely during physical theatre sequences, although at times this did lead to lengthy descriptions of the actors' skills which were not creditable.

It was rare in both the costume and set answers for students to write about the use of design in specific moments, whilst this is not a requirement, often referencing design in the context of a scene helps bring a description to life in a more meaningful and vivid way.

There were a number of students who had clearly prepared to write about lighting, and they often began writing about set, but increasingly their focus wavered and was lost as they began to describe lighting design. Centres are reminded that due to the number of possible design skills that students can write about, not all skills will be referenced in the Section C questions in any given series.

16

This thirty-two mark question tests students' knowledge and understanding of how meaning is created in performance, with a specific focus on how costume design could be used to communicate two or more characters. This question was answered by the fewest students, which makes it difficult to comment on specific trends. However, what all successful responses had in common was an understanding of the function and importance of costume design within the play as a whole. They also often referenced the designer's name and had a clear understanding of their aims as realised through their design, demonstrated through the description of a range of design skills such as the use of colour, fabric and ornamentation as well as a wide range of aspects of costume such as footwear, accessories, hair and make-up. They were also able to analyse how design choices communicated something specific about a character be that their age or status or emotional state.

A whole range of productions were written about successfully in this question including *Ocean at the End of the Lane*, *Peter Pan* and *Hamilton*. Generally, students who wrote about exaggerated or non-naturalistic design found it easier to meet the demands of the question. Those who wrote about more naturalistic design seemed to struggle to acknowledge that design decisions had been made about the costume. Several students choose to write about productions where there was simply not enough design to talk about; two handers where

there are no costume changes or productions where all actors wear the same base layer and add small accessories as they multi-role.

Weaker answers often failed to acknowledge the existence of a designer and listed items that made up a costume without describing them. Others focus on a single small aspect of a costume, so there was no sense of how the design as a whole works in performance.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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