

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Drama

Qualification area

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
Included in this report**

Drama Standard Grade

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	
Pre appeal	5,452

Number of entries in 2003	
Pre appeal	5,663

General comments re entry numbers

A slight increase in numbers is reassuring.

Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

1 – 84%	4 – 50%
2 – 74%	5 – 38%
3 – 62%	6 – 25%

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

A small increase across bands 1 – 5 was the result of a marginally easier paper.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The general impression of markers was that candidates performed well in both sections. Section A was well done by all candidates and there was a notable and welcome increase in the number of candidates who attempted the last two questions in section B. All markers reported a high standard of response and candidates overall gained high marks for the paper.

Markers commented that there was a wider and fuller awareness of the Body of Knowledge.

No marker felt that the foundation pupils were disadvantaged by the paper or that Credit candidates were not challenged by it. Indeed, the creative rather than knowledge based nature of the last question helped make the paper accessible to all.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Feedback from markers indicated that questions 1 – 7, 9 and 10 were well done. In question 10 in particular, candidates' range of vocabulary was impressive. Section A generally was well done: a degree of consistency in the content of questions in this section means that candidates are being well prepared for the first part of the exam. There is clear evidence that candidates have a sounder understanding of a groundplan and the characterisation questions were well answered. Question 13a, b and c elicited some very imaginative responses, most candidates appreciated the dramatic requirements of a 'nightmare'. Some nightmares, however, were more of the nature of bad luck stories.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

The two questions which posed the most difficulty in the paper were question 12 and question 13d. The vocabulary in question 12 is in the Body of Knowledge but definitions are not included. This led to differences in interpretation of the definitions. Allowances were made for this in the marking instructions, but it remains a fact that this was the most poorly done question. However because, nationally, the average mark for the paper was higher than usual, candidates as a whole were not adversely affected by the difficulties with this question.

In question 13d some candidates simply replicated statements made in (c) and did not exploit a range of voice, facial expression and movement techniques in answering this question.

Question 5 (the scenario question) is still not being done as consistently well as would be hoped, given its inclusion in the paper year on year. A recommended approach for maximising marks is included below.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

In general, candidates are being well prepared for the examination.

There is increasing awareness and use of the Body of Knowledge. The introduction to the document is worth noting:

“The stated course content is a required minimum. Centres will inevitably go beyond the contents of this document to stimulate and further educate candidates. However, examinations will be based on this body of knowledge”.

Later,

“Vocabulary used in this document will be the standardised vocabulary used in examinations from the year 2000”.

The most common reasons for candidates losing marks this year were:

-not reading the question carefully or giving an either/or response when one is stipulated

-not checking the marks available and drawing conclusions from them

-not reading all parts of an a), b), c) question before answering

This leads to needless repetition or, more commonly, no further responses because candidates feel they have already answered the ensuing question(s).

In the scenario question, the main reason for pupils losing marks is an imbalance in the amount written about various stages of the plot eg the beginning is detailed, the ending vague or inconclusive. Another common fault is an inconsistency in stating time and place of each new scene. Candidates are often not brief in their scenarios and this leads to time management problems. A simple but effective pro forma for a scenario may be set out thus:

Scene number

Time (as it relates to the previous scene after scene 1)

Place

Action

In general, drama teachers continue to carry out very well the highly demanding task of preparing candidates of mixed ability groups for a ‘one paper for all’ examination. The numbers of candidates being presented continues to rise, testament in itself to the popularity of the subject and the quality of results.