

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Drama

Qualification area

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

Drama Standard Grade

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	5,663
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Number of entries in 2004	6,018
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General comments re entry numbers

The numbers of candidates being presented continues to rise (to 6018 this year).

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

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Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

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Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Standard Grade

Assessable Element – Knowledge and Understanding

Grade	Maximum Mark	Minimum Mark for Grade
1	100	81
2	80	69
3	68	57
4	56	45
5	44	33
6	32	22

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

Cut off scores were lowered slightly from last year, more into line with previous years

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The general impression of markers was that all candidates performed well in the exam as a whole and in Section A in particular. The vast majority of candidates attempted all questions in both sections. Where imaginative responses were sought, many candidates responded creatively and well.

No marker felt that Foundation pupils were disadvantaged by the paper or that Credit candidates were not challenged by it. The rigour of the final question proved to be a discriminator, but several questions leading up to it had given all candidates opportunities to demonstrate their creative abilities.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Section A. There is clear evidence that candidates are being well prepared for this section, although a slight concern about over-preparedness is emerging as some candidates are not adapting their answers to changes in, for example, the voice and movement questions.

The scenario question is being answered much more succinctly by most candidates, although some are still submitting scenarios which are excessively long and detailed for the space allocated for responses.

Most candidates lost marks in Section A only when the question was not read properly. In section A this was particularly evident in Question 10 when the key scene/moment was not identified.

Feedback from markers indicated that the Theatre Arts question, 15 in section B, was very well done and elicited many imaginative and creative ideas.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

The questions which posed the most difficulty in the paper were Questions 10, 11, 12 and 16(c).

- In Question 10 many candidates did not provide the correct voice vocabulary word required.
- In Question 11 most candidates knew 2 of the 3 ground plan faults, but added a third which is not consistent with SQA's advice paper on ground plans: they stated that opening positions of actors was necessary. (See 'Feedback to Centres' in next section).
- In Question 12 candidates who lost marks did so because they failed to read the part of the question which asked them to state the key scene/moment. If this was not identified, or implicit in the answer, marks were lost. However, the main problem with this question lay in candidates' interpretation of "how" as meaning "why". As a result, they failed to give details of the TA effect and instead, justified at length a single, simple effect.
- Question 16 was a testing question. Some candidates answered it very well with responses which showed astute awareness of how the factors mentioned contributed to the realisation of purpose. However, many candidates simply re-told the story of a drama without adequate, or only passing reference to the factors mentioned.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

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

However, centres should beware of over preparing candidates, leaving them unprepared for slight changes in emphasis or wording.

Centres should also remind candidates not to use the drama devised from the stimulus in Section B of the paper.

Some candidates are still writing scenarios which run to 2/3 pages, although by and large, candidates are describing their dramas much more succinctly.

Over the years, the improvement in candidates' ability to write about the use of Theatre Arts is encouraging. However, some confusion between cinematic and theatrical effects is becoming evident and centres should remind pupils to describe what is seen or can be effected 'on stage' as opposed to on the screen.

With reference to the ground plan question, centres are urged to consult the advice on ground plans which is contained in the 2002 Update Letter, available on the Drama page of the SQA website.

In general, Drama teachers continue to carry out very well the highly demanding task of preparing candidates in mixed ability groupings for a 'one paper for all' examination.