



Course Report 2018

Subject	Drama
Level	National 5

This report provides information on the performance of candidates. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: question paper

Overall this year, candidates performed reasonably well in the question paper. Most of the questions were answered satisfactorily as they had been read accurately and understood.

There was a mixture of production and acting roles chosen for Section 1 responses, with the majority choosing acting.

In Section 2, all three stimuli were used, with stimuli A and C the most commonly selected. Candidates developed a considerable assortment of dramas in response to their chosen stimuli. Many used the additional pages to note down and develop their ideas.

Candidates responded well to the unseen stimulus and were able to form creative ideas under exam conditions. Many candidates had created quite complex dramas for Section 2. It did appear that some candidates had pre-prepared a scenario for Section 2. This should be discouraged as some scenarios did not suit the stimuli or questions asked of them.

The majority of candidates developed a response to their chosen stimulus that was entirely suitable for a live theatrical performance.

Candidates coped well with the 20-mark increase in the paper and the majority of candidates completed the paper in the allotted time.

Component 2: performance

Overall, candidates performed very well in the performance exam. Most centres had prepared candidates well and chosen appropriately challenging texts. Most centres presented a range of candidate abilities. Visiting assessors commented on the high standard of performances and the positive experience they had visiting centres. The collaborative marking model continues to be a very positive experience for both markers and centres.

Visiting assessors praised the positive manner in which they were received and the attempt made by many centres to rotate the role of centre assessor to give more colleagues the experience of applying the national standard. The commitment of staff and candidates was praised and many Visiting assessors commented on the high standard of acting and creative skills demonstrated in technical roles.

A wide variety of plays were used and, where appropriate, texts had been chosen and candidates had been suitably cast. Acting candidates overall managed to access the full range of marks.

Candidates who chose production roles were in the minority, but a number of those presented achieved an excellent standard. Visiting assessors were impressed by not only their creativity and skills in their chosen area, but the knowledge these candidates displayed through research on their text.

Many centres took the option to film their sample of candidates in order to be able to engage fully with the pre and post-results services.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper

Question 1(a): Most candidates answered this question well and clearly stated the main theme/issue, with justification.

Question 1(b): Most candidates answered this question well and identified an appropriate target audience, based on their theme/issue, with justification.

Question 1(c): Most candidates answered this question well, giving a clear audience reaction, with justification.

Question 2: Many candidates answered this question well, describing a rehearsal activity or practical task they carried out in some detail. Some candidates described a group activity and not an individual one.

Question 3(a): Most candidates answered this question well, identifying the main genre of their drama and giving a reason.

Question 4(a): Many candidates gave a good description of the mood and/or atmosphere of one other student's drama, with justification.

Questions 5(a): Most candidates clearly stated the structure of their drama.

Questions 5(b): Many candidates explained why they chose this structure with reference to their drama. Some candidates did not reference their drama.

Question 6(a): Most candidates answered this question well and clearly identified one character's motivation.

Question 6(b): Most candidates answered this question well and described a moment when the character revealed their motivation.

Question 7(a): Most candidates answered this question well and clearly described another character's personality.

Question 7(b): Many candidates answered this question well and clearly described the way an actor would use two chosen voice terms to highlight the character's personality.

Question 7(c): Many candidates answered this question well and clearly described the way an actor would use two chosen movement terms to highlight the character's personality.

Question 9(a): Most candidates answered this question well and clearly identified a key moment in their drama, with an explanation.

Question 9(b): Many candidates answered this question well and described one convention they would use to highlight the importance of the key moment.

Question 10(a): Most candidates answered this question well, stating the type of staging they would use for their drama.

Question 11(a): Most candidates answered this question well and clearly stated the main theme/issue explored in their drama.

Question 12: Many candidates answered this question well and identified the feelings and/or emotions they wanted the audience to have when watching their drama, with justification.

Component 2: performance

Acting: Candidates who had been cast appropriately and had a suitable character, in terms of creativity, age appropriateness and challenge, managed to achieve depth and reference textual clues. Most candidates applied skills with appropriate and effective use of voice and movement. Lines and cues were remembered well, relationships were conveyed, and characterisation was sustained. Some candidates had a superb impact on the audience. Many candidates achieved high marks and had been directed well by centre staff, demonstrating a depth of understanding about their character.

Production: Candidates who had clearly documented the process of developing ideas/designs and had researched their skill/design concept(s) achieved higher marks than those who hadn't. Many candidates had developed effective ideas and demonstrated a high level of skills. Lighting and sound candidates generally were technically knowledgeable and executed their role with a good level of skill. Set design, props and costume candidates impressed visiting assessors, those with appropriately chosen texts showed a flair for design, creativity, originality and imagination.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper

Question 2: Some candidates described a group activity used in preparing for their drama, not an individual one.

Question 3(b): Some candidates did not use correct terminology and/or describe the way their concepts had highlighted the genre they had stated in 3(a).

Question 4(b): Some candidates did not use correct terminology and/or identify the way another candidate's concepts had highlighted the mood and/or atmosphere they had stated in 4(a).

Questions 5(b): Some candidates did not reference their drama when explaining their choice of structure and therefore could not access the full range of marks.

Question 6(c): Some candidates only achieved two marks as the rehearsal activities they described were not linked to developing an understanding of the character's motivation.

Question 8: Some candidates did not access the full range of marks for this question due to giving ideas for two productions roles, instead of one, and/or not showing an understanding of the production areas in practice, and/or not using the correct terminology.

Question 9(b): Some candidates confused theatre production areas with conventions and were therefore unable to achieve marks for this question.

Question 10(b): Some candidates did not access the full range of marks for this question due to lack of understanding of stage types — justification was poor and generic. Many candidates did not link the advantages of the staging they had chosen to their drama.

Question 11(b): Some candidates did not access the full range of marks for this question due to a lack of accurate production terminology within their answers (make-up and hair, costume, sound, lighting, set design and props). Candidates also failed to explain how their ideas would help to highlight the main theme/issue stated in 11(a).

Component 2: performance

The length of some acting pieces varied from the recommended duration, a few were too long — many were reported to be too short and did not meet the minimum 10-minute requirement. Many centres had chosen to present candidates in duologues, which led to the minimum time requirement not being met.

Some candidates who had been cast in duologues failed to achieve sufficient depth in their performance and were unable to access the full range of marks. Also in some duologues lack of interaction with other characters was disadvantageous to some candidates.

At times, direction of blocking and movement was weak, with lack of consideration to character interaction or understanding of character motivation.

Candidates who were cast in texts which were repeated by all candidates in a centre were disadvantaged due to lack of appropriate casting and repetition of blocking.

Some production candidates did not cover the minimum requirements for their role, for example, no designs or cue sheets, or lack of suitable/appropriate resources to fulfill their role, especially make-up and hair — some candidates continuing to use cosmetic make-up, as opposed to theatrical.

A small number of production candidates were prepared to demonstrate their skills, but there was no performance of the text they had designed for. This meant certain marks for example, creating an impact on an audience, were affected as the skills need to be applied as part of a performance.

Visiting assessors reported an increase in candidates selecting hair and make-up, though many failed to create hair and make-up designs for every character in the drama or apply these designs to every actor, meaning they were unable to access all available marks. Some candidates were also unable to access marks as they had not been informed of the requirements for their role in relation to the use of suitable/appropriate resources.

Some texts chosen were unsuitable for National 5 candidates and were too challenging.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper

In Section 1, when evaluating their own work, candidates should be able to comment on their individual preparation and/or final performance. When commenting on preparation, candidates should be able to provide a description of the activity in which they participated (answers written from a group perspective will not access the full range of marks). When commenting on performance, candidates should refer to their performance concepts (actor)/design concepts (production role) using appropriate terminology for their role.

When evaluating someone else, candidates can choose another candidate they have worked with in their own group, or a candidate they have observed within another group. Candidates should be able to comment on the candidate's individual contribution and/or final performance.

For questions on self and others, candidates should be prepared to evaluate both the process and the performance. At this level, all answers are expected to use correct drama terminology throughout.

Responses should always be written from an individual, and not from a group perspective.

In Section 2, candidates should be encouraged to use the additional space provided to note down their ideas in response to their chosen stimuli. This allows them time to formulate and work through their ideas and transfer this information into their answers. Candidates who did not utilise this, tended to have less detailed or fluid answers in Section 2.

Candidates should be encouraged to read all the questions in Section 2 before attempting to respond to the stimulus. This allows them to see the through line of the questions and avoid repetition.

Candidates are expected to use drama terminology and would benefit from increased knowledge and understanding of all terminology. Although some candidates answered using terminology, it was clear in several responses that they did not fully understand the vocabulary/concept/language they were using. Some candidates used very little or no drama terminology in their responses, especially in Section 2. Lack of technical terminology and understanding of the practical application of technical equipment/resources was especially apparent in these cases.

General

- ♦ Overall, there was a lack of understanding demonstrated of the uses of rehearsal activities. There was also a lack of production, voice and movement terminology used in answers throughout the paper. Some candidates did not clearly read questions and relate rehearsal activities/production roles/voice/movement to the stem of the question, instead offering generic answers.

- ◆ The use of production terminology was, in some cases, not only poor, but incorrect. Many candidates supplied generic answers with no real understanding of the application of the production role.
- ◆ Candidates should remember that the drama must be suitable for a live theatrical performance, therefore their ideas must be able to be realised.
- ◆ Some candidates were unable to provide an imaginative response to the stimuli (these included copying stories from television or films, reproducing the plot of a play they had performed/read including character names or simply continuing to answer on the performance they had identified in Section 1). There was also evidence of candidates being collectively prepared to respond to the stimuli using the same pre-devised plot. The candidate's drama in Section 2 of the paper should be an individual response to their chosen stimulus that must be suitable for a live theatrical performance. All of the above should therefore be strongly discouraged.

Component 2: performance

Preparation for performance responses can be written or typed and should not exceed 400 words. Reviews which are not concise will not be able to access the top marks (9–10).

These should be written in open-book conditions and must be completed and marked by the centre assessor before the visiting assessor arrives. The visiting assessor should not be given a folio of work instead of the preparation for performance response.

A private, quiet space must be provided for the visiting assessor to read the preparation for performance responses, and for the visiting assessor and centre assessor to discuss national marking standards and decisions. This space should be for the sole use of the visiting assessor and centre assessor, not a room accessed by others during the assessment process.

The selected text must be published and be of a suitable standard for National 5. Some iconic Higher and Advanced Higher texts were used and this was not always appropriate for National 5 candidates. Some visiting assessors commented on candidates struggling to interpret their role adequately where these texts had been used.

Centres that had selected suitable texts and cast appropriately provided candidates with opportunities to achieve excellent marks.

Some productions were too short. Centres should make sure minimum and maximum time limits are adhered to. Each performance must last a minimum of 10 minutes and must not exceed a maximum of 50 minutes. Some centres chose Higher duologue acting pieces which were too short and did not allow candidates to access the full range of marks. Duologues are not advisable to be used for all candidates in a centre.

Some centres chose to repeat texts (especially duologues). Repetition of scenes with similar/same blocking is disadvantageous to candidates.

Acting candidates should be cast in only one role.

All paperwork, ie candidate mark sheets and sample sheet should be completed and ready when the visiting assessor arrives. It is advisable for the centre assessor to have their own

copy of the paperwork to record marks. The centre assessor must ensure photocopies of the relevant paperwork can be made before the visiting assessor leaves. The visiting assessor will bring the EX6 Attendance Register on the day of the performance.

Some centres asked visiting assessor to mark only one or two candidates in each performance and to watch every group in the centre. This is not appropriate. Visiting assessors, as a guide, should watch between two and four performances during the examination day, marking between two and six acting candidates and between two and four technical candidates, depending on group size, during each performance. Where there are more than 12 candidates, the remaining candidates will be assessed by the centre assessor.

When the visiting assessor has left, the centre assessor should continue the assessment, marking any remaining candidates as soon as possible and within two working weeks. The sample of 12 should be made up from between two and four groups, wherever possible.

Centres should allow one full day for the performance to be carried out.

Centre assessors should not operate sound/lighting, cameras, or deal with candidate issues which detract from them fully engaging in the assessment process.

Centre assessors should be familiar with SQA general marking principles and have a copy of the relevant band descriptors ready for the assessment.

A suitable audience must be provided and be available for the duration of the examination. Some visiting assessors were left waiting for long periods of time before the next class arrived to form an audience and this is not acceptable. Performances should take place during the school day and not in the evening. Parents and carers are not a suitable audience for the examination.

Production: candidates must design for a production that will be performed in front of an audience and must carry out their pre-show checks in front of the visiting assessor. Candidates must share their folio of work with the visiting assessor to allow them to mark cue sheets/designs/lists/charts. Minimum requirements set out by SQA for their chosen role must be met. This material should also be referred to during the assessment by the candidate as a working document.

Make-up and hair: candidates must design for all characters and apply theatrical make-up and hair to all actors. The visiting assessor will observe make-up and hair designers applying their make-up and hair design to one actor, but all other actors must have had make-up and hair designs applied in advance of the production, otherwise the assessor cannot fully mark the effectiveness and the impact of the make-up and hair design and its application in the performance. Theatrical make-up must be used.

Costume: candidates must design costume/s for all actors so that the visiting assessor can mark the effectiveness and impact of the costumes in performance. They should also have made or adapted one costume in line with their design.

Lighting: candidates must use and have access to eight lanterns. A minimum of seven lighting cues and five states should be designed. The candidate should produce a detailed lighting plot and create a lighting cue sheet (this includes an annotated script). The

candidate should operate the equipment on cue and at the levels specified in the lighting cue sheets during the performance.

Sound: candidates must have a minimum of six different sound effects and eight sound cues. The candidate should source and edit music and effects and provide a back-up plan. The candidate should produce a sound cue sheet detailing volume, duration and type (this includes an annotated script). The candidate should operate the equipment during the performance in accordance with the sound cue sheet.

Set design: candidates must have working designs and plans for the set covering the whole production, including an elevation. Detailed ground plans must be produced. The final set should reflect the candidate's own creative design as well as being functional in performance.

Props: candidates must have a minimum of eight different props from two of the three areas of personal, pre-set or hand props. One fully functional prop should be designed and created for use in the performance. The candidate should produce a master props list. The candidate should label and store props effectively. The candidate should organise the props table for the performance.

Please read the National 5 Drama Course Specification and Coursework Assessment Task for guidance and assessment requirements.

General

- ◆ Preparation for performance: many were overly long — some ignored recommended word count, and some did not fully show the process or include comments on performance. In a number of centres the standard was very poor, with candidates writing 1,000-2,000 words, meaning that they could not access the full range of marks. Some centres had not realised the marking instructions had been revised and candidates who wrote excessive amounts could not achieve the top marks as their review was not concise.
- ◆ Assessment arrangements: where a centre believes a candidate is entitled to special arrangements or additional support, such arrangements must be made in advance through the appropriate channels at SQA. Visiting assessors should not be told of special circumstances when confirming visit dates or when they arrive for the performance examination. Any issues relating to the candidate's ability to be presented for the assessment must be referred to the centre's SQA co-ordinator to allow SQA to be consulted in advance of the visit and arrangements can be formally put in place.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	4474
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	4507
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	55.7%	55.7%	2511	70
B	22.7%	78.4%	1021	60
C	14.1%	92.5%	635	50
D	5.5%	98.0%	250	40
No award	2.0%	-	90	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary).

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

Therefore SQA holds a grade boundary meeting every year for each subject at each level to bring together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from exam papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the corresponding practice exam paper.