



Questions & Answers

Higher Drama webinar content

1 Question paper

In the acting concept's part for section 1 B marks, can they gain marks if they only write about voice or movement?

Yes they can. There is no set rule for how many voice concepts and movement concepts a candidate should write; however, it is an integrated acting concept so writing only one or two may not allow the candidate to gain any marks.

Can we get a clarification of the marking for the B1 mark in section 1, similar to that in section 3?

In section 1 the B1 mark is awarded for how the integrated performance concept described for the B mark will answer the focus of the question.

In section 3 the B1 mark (and the A1 mark) too is how the candidate analyses the 'Why'; so, for example, why did the director block the actors in the way that they did? This is essentially the analysis part of the performance analysis essay.

In section 3, are you able to use the same moment for the two different productions areas?

Yes, they can; however, from markers' reports it is clear that for many candidates that do this they fall into repetition and therefore do not access the marks. To support your learners, selecting ten moments from the performance will alleviate that risk.

In the performance analysis question in the 'what' section that the candidate must mention at least two aspects of the production area eg if its performance space they must identify the positions on stage (say the actors are in a tableaux) and impact of set/changes of set to ensure that their answer is detailed enough and not a limited response. They then continue to analyse these aspects fully with drilled down detail in the "how "section. To mention only one aspect would be judged as a limited answer.

This would not fall into the 'What' part of a candidate's response. The 'What' gives the candidate the opportunity to state what was happening on stage so the marker has a clear idea of the narrative for the moment selected. The 'How' would be where the candidate discusses how the 'What' was achieved. If the candidate gave a detailed description of the tableau by explaining gesture, proxemics, eye contact etc, then that would allow the marker to credit the response with a mark.

2 Performance

Could you describe the assessment for the PfP at Higher?

The preparation for performance at Higher is assessed by how the candidate researches their play(s), in terms of the social, historical, and cultural context, and that research has informed how they will carry out their role. The marking instructions are also clear in order to access the 9-10 banding that the PfP should be concise. The word count is around 500 words.

In the performance, is the time a collective time for the two pieces or is it for each piece?

The collective time, as per the SQA modification document for Drama, is for each piece. So, for two candidates the time is 7-10 minutes per extract.

Would you double cast in a class for acting?

Double casting is sometimes necessary depending on the cohort. The selection of roles should allow for the candidate to achieve the range of marks available for the acting specialism of the performance assessment.

Can they splice together different sections of play to get 7-10 min length for performance?

Yes, they can in order to achieve the appropriate length for performance.

I have a director for the first time this year, is it acceptable for them to edit the play that they are using? They are keen to use, 'Five Kinds of Silence', but it is very monologue heavy, could they reduce the length of the monologues or is this discouraged?

Generally, monologues are not encouraged at Higher. For a director to direct a piece that is monologue heavy could be disadvantageous to the director in terms of creating effective stage pictures, appropriate character interaction.

For Directing, is casting along gender lines essential if it changes the play (ie can Willy Loman be played by a girl? I don't think so but SMT don't want me to pull male pupils from other subjects to rehearse)

So long as it supports the directing candidate's concept, then this should be fine; however, the concept should be justified in the candidate's PfP.

For the first time I have two candidates who would like to play opposite gender. Am I right in thinking that the gender of the character should stay the same to ensure meaning, but actors can play opposite gender. Any other considerations?

Yes, acting candidates can play opposite gender. All candidates should ensure they can fulfil the playwrights intentions for the character chosen.

For reference, SQA published this statement in 2018:

At SQA, we recognise that no young person should be put in a position where they feel uncomfortable taking on an acting role for their performance assessment, including roles of a particular gender. Therefore, from session 2018–19 onwards, candidates who are assessed for the Drama performance will have the option to choose roles that are the same as, or different from, the gender they identify with. This option will apply to all acting pieces. Previously at Higher and Advanced Higher, both the Instructions to Centres and Visiting Assessors stipulated that candidates must not play two opposite gender roles. We have now removed this restriction. We hope that removing this restriction will allow you to support your candidates in selecting roles that best suit their talents and needs, including roles of the gender they identify with.

Can candidates use their text in context text for directing?

Yes, they can. Similarly, the same applies to actors and designers.

I have an AAR Q for practical, I have a candidate with stammers and lisps. Should I ask my co-ordinator to arrange AAR for the practical?

SQA's policy on access to assessment and qualifications allows for adjustments to be made to published assessment arrangements for the course(s) for candidates who are disabled and/or who have been identified as having difficulties. These are called assessment arrangements. Assessment arrangements can only be requested by schools or colleges. If you have candidates who need assessment arrangements in their external exam (question paper) you must enter the details in the AAR system. If you are requesting an adapted paper or a digital paper, you must make your request by 31 January 2022. If you have candidates who need assessment arrangements in their performance, you must call and discuss this with the Assessment Arrangements team on 0345 213 6890 by 31 January 2022. You must inform the Assessment Arrangements team before the visiting assessor visits. It is not the role of the visiting assessor to make any decision on assessment arrangements. For further details, please see Assessment Arrangements Explained: Information for centres.

What are the social distancing/mask wearing rules for practical elements?

Education Scotland distribute guidance regarding how practical tasks and assessments should be carried out. The current arrangements are available from the Education Scotland website.