

**2004 HSC Notes from
the Marking Centre
Drama**

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2004 HSC NOTES FROM THE MARKING CENTRE DRAMA

Introduction

This document has been produced for the teachers and candidates of the Stage 6 course in Drama. It provides comments with regard to responses to the 2004 Higher School Certificate Examination, indicating the quality of candidate responses and highlighting the relative strengths and weaknesses of the candidature in each section and each question.

It is essential for this document to be read in conjunction with the relevant syllabus, the 2004 Higher School Certificate Examination, the Marking Guidelines and other support documents which have been developed by the Board of Studies to assist in the teaching and learning of Stage 6 Drama.

General Comments

In 2004, approximately 5200 candidates attempted the Stage 6 Drama Examination. The majority of candidates once again chose *Performance* for their Individual Project option, with *Design: Costume* the next largest, attracting over 500 candidates. Most other options increased proportionately, with Video Drama numbers significantly growing to over 300 candidates.

In the Written Examination the general quality of responses for both sections has continued to improve, with more students including experiential class work as part of their supporting material. Practice in selecting, framing and appropriately including experiential supporting material will further assist students in the writing of an effective essay response.

Practical Examination

Group Performance

The majority of candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements for HSC performance examinations. Teachers and students are reminded, however, of the following requirements for the HSC drama performance examinations:

- The time limits 6–8 minutes (Individual Performance)
 8–12 minutes (Group Performance)
- Each performer in the group performance is marked individually. As such it is important for the markers to be able to differentiate each student. If all students are wearing similar costumes a distinguishing ribbon, badge or other indicator will assist the markers to identify each student.
- Candidates who read scripts or improvise pieces are unlikely to satisfy the criteria for the examination.
- Under no circumstances should candidates use props in a dangerous or threatening way to the markers or other members of the audience.
- Live performance is a dynamic medium. Candidate should perform their piece for an audience prior to the examination to ensure they are aware of audience responses to their work.

Recommendations relating to Group and Individual Performance

Class work on the Group Performance should commence after the Easter break of the HSC year. Group Performances that begin too early may suffer from over-rehearsal and may lack spontaneity and freshness in their presentation.

Work on Individual Projects may commence in Term 4 of Year 11, ie at the beginning of the HSC Drama course.

Production effects such as costumes, sets, lighting, video, film, sound, microphones and technical support should be minimal and limited to those essential to the work's meaning. As available facilities and technical equipment vary in schools, external markers will not award extra marks to any performance dependent on technical and/or special effects. If candidates choose to use multimedia as a part of performance they must ensure the added elements enhance and are essential to the dramatic meaning of the piece. If candidates use lighting, sound cues, or multimedia they should be thoroughly rehearsed. It is also important that the performers are clearly lit.

Schools need to ensure that technical effects do not impinge or hinder students' performance skills. It is recommended that limited lighting effects be used (lights up and lights down are sufficient). Strobe lighting is strongly discouraged and markers should be informed when unusual lighting or effects are to be used. The performance should not solely rely upon set, or elaborate costume.

Theatrical coherence is vital in conveying the journey of the performance.

- The intention of the performance should be clear to the audience.
- Candidates should be careful to make a theatrical statement for the stage, especially if using material inspired by film and video.
- Candidates should be discouraged from over-reliance on song, dance or music – unless integral to the meaning and theatricality of the performance.
- Placing the focus of the performance somewhere on stage, eg to a chair or 'invisible character', is problematic for the actor/audience relationship.
- Candidates need to understand that a series of connected or related monologues do not always ensure a clearly defined and sustained character. Students need to be theatrical in the development of a whole performance piece.

Voice skills are marked as part of the performance skills criteria.

- Performers who recite their lines risk losing the role and character and the dramatic concept of their piece.
- Some candidates confuse emotional intensity/projection with screaming, shouting and yelling, which indicates a lack of vocal control.

Upper Range	Lower Range
<p>Performances that are marked in the upper range may contain any or all of the following qualities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sophisticated approach to content <input type="checkbox"/> Sophisticated use of a range of dramatic elements <input type="checkbox"/> Cohesive ensemble work <input type="checkbox"/> High degree of integrity in performance conventions appropriate to the chosen style <input type="checkbox"/> Unobtrusive transitions <input type="checkbox"/> Originality and creative flair in the interpretation of the material <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporation of focused energy to realise the intention of the piece <input type="checkbox"/> Stronger performances present a fresh and engaging performance that may deliver a new perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Presents a well-rehearsed and well-researched performance <input type="checkbox"/> Engages audience in an innovative and confident way by manipulating the dramatic and performance elements <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates exemplary control of all criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Recognises and utilises symbol and metaphor <input type="checkbox"/> The development or exploration of an idea, ie A clear theatrical journey <input type="checkbox"/> Sustained and well-developed character(s) or role(s) 	<p>Performances that are marked in the lower range may contain any or all of the following qualities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of clear intention or direction in the work <input type="checkbox"/> Basic, laboured performances that lack focus, planning and theatricality <input type="checkbox"/> The inability to work as an ensemble – often evidenced by students being offstage for periods of time or a series of monologues linked by awkward transitions <input type="checkbox"/> Clichéd, derivative material presented in a simplistic manner, eg A non-theatrical re-enactment of a TV show, film or <i>OnStage</i> material <input type="checkbox"/> Under-rehearsed and over-reliant on improvisation <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional intensity/projection confused with screaming, shouting and crying. This can indicate a lack of control of performance skills <input type="checkbox"/> Not taking the audience into consideration <input type="checkbox"/> A superficial interpretation of the chosen material <input type="checkbox"/> A series of undeveloped, unrelated scenes using awkward or no transitions <input type="checkbox"/> Little or no evidence of students creating or sustaining characters(s) or role(s), eg Students may play themselves

Space should be taken into consideration by candidates to assist in developing the actor/audience relationship.

Individual Performances

Strong Individual Performances are innovative and often complex or sophisticated in content, theme and/or style using material appropriate to skills, with clarity of analysis; they should be created theatrically rather than through an over-reliance on music cues and lighting such as blackouts.

Candidates should clearly define the beginning and the end of their performance. For example, candidates should be encouraged to hold the last position to indicate the piece has finished. Other appropriate theatrical devices should be explored to ensure the audience is aware that the performance has begun, and, similarly, has finished. This allows the audience to become immersed in a theatrical journey from beginning to end.

Several teachers and candidates were still unclear about what is defined as an inappropriate item. All guns – real, replica, toy, plastic, water pistols – are considered inappropriate and must not be used. In 2005 use of these items will be considered a breach of examination rules and will not be permitted. Examiners will stop performances if these items appear. A few candidates also used props as weapons, or in a threatening manner dangerous to themselves, the audience and examiners. It is clearly stated in information sent out to all schools that no weapons or props that can be used as a weapon can be used. This includes such items as: knives/swords, matches, naked flames, lit cigarettes etc. If a teacher is in any doubt as to whether the prop is dangerous or could be used in a dangerous way they must show the prop(s) to the markers before the examination.

Individual Project: Performance

For Individual Performance candidates are able to consider using costume if it enhances the performance. The costuming chosen is not marked in the IP or GP criteria.

Candidates should attempt to create mood and atmosphere using their own voices and bodies. Frequent and/or overly long blackouts can interrupt the momentum of the piece, as can performers leaving the space during the performance.

If candidates intend to perform their own original material for a theatrical performance in the Individual Performance, they must take dramatic structure into account when writing the piece.

Choosing scripts from monologue or audition manuals should be a starting point or springboard into the performance rather than the performance piece itself (which can lack coherence, context and background).

Examiners noted that candidates often make limited choices in their Individual Performance, using material that does not demonstrate the full range of their skills, or are beyond their capabilities. Some performances were under-developed, ran under or overtime, and lacked rehearsal.

Teachers must ensure that candidates are working to the prescribed time frame (6–8 minutes) and not beyond this time. Teachers must provide correct information on time limits to students as specified in the syllabus. Candidates are often better prepared for these time limits if they have performed for a live audience before the examination.

Some candidates did not present Rationales. It is a requirement of the Individual Project Performance that candidates include their Rationale in their logbooks to be available for the markers during the examination. The Rationale should not be a synopsis of the piece but rather a discussion and justification of the candidate's aims and results.

Candidates should be careful in choosing scripts from the internet which have not been written for the stage interpretation of the theatrical requirements of the piece. Material should meet the criteria in all three categories, demonstrating a well-rehearsed, complete theatrical statement with a coherent through-line and clear intention.

It should be noted that great care should be taken to ensure self-devised pieces are thoroughly edited and worked into a piece of theatre. Often candidates split their energies between scripting and performing, without an understanding of the demands of either and to the detriment of both.

In some cases there is still an over-reliance on technical effects. If candidates intend using lighting, sound and other effects, they must ensure that the effects are minimal and the cues are thoroughly rehearsed and the equipment being used is reliable. It is also important to note that candidates can only be marked effectively if they can be seen. Very low or highly focused lighting can prevent this.

Musicals are often used to source Individual Performances. Candidates need to be encouraged to create from this material a **total** performance piece which develops the character's journey without relying on songs, lyrics and dance routines.

Strong Individual Performances:

- are evocative, exhibiting light and shade and reflecting the necessary time involved in the preparation and development, creating a clear theatrical journey for the audience
- present a total, yet intrinsic performance piece which has at its centre a sense of development or 'journey'
- are coherent, energetic and highly skilled using imaginative, fresh and original ideas
- have a strong audience response through a thorough understanding of character and style
- demonstrate exemplary control of all criteria
- employ strong energy, focus and timing
- have a sophisticated use of space
- have seamless transitions
- engage the audience with strong actor/audience relationship
- employ imaginative and inventive movement that extends the theatricality of the piece
- establish strong, clear, sustained characterisations/roles
- develop a clear, original and structured use of metaphor
- are sophisticated not only in subject matter but also in style and technique
- develop ideas from scripted work, demonstrating a sophisticated level of understanding of form. Candidates presenting strong, self-devised pieces were able to use effective scriptwriting skills and performed with a good sense of theatre and superior actor/audience relationship. They were able to demonstrate ownership of their material and inhabited the life of the character
- adhere to time limits
- use a necessary prop in an often simple and effective way.

Weaker Individual Performances:

- chose material beyond the ability and understanding of the student
- presented pieces that were under-rehearsed, poorly prepared, repetitive or without any real structure
- relied on song or dance for significant periods in the performance without integrating them into the piece successfully or meaningfully
- were often fragmented, with poor transitions, lacking cohesion and intention
- used slabs of text from plays without any sense of purpose
- were self-devised psychodrama (eg dealing with suicide or teenage angst), or unrehearsed/improvised performances, lacking evidence of an understanding of the elements of drama
- often relied heavily on props, costumes, lighting and sound to convey mood and/or meaning
- played ‘themselves’ with no evidence of character/role or belief
- presented an ‘audition piece’ or an extract from a film or a musical without consideration of a coherent theatrical statement or character journey
- relied too much on voiceovers, and/or music and other sound effects, and/or intrusive blackouts or other lighting effects.

Supervising teachers are reminded that:

- All paperwork should be completed and signed (including Group Photo Sheets, certification forms and running order for the day) prior to the examination day.
- The performance schedule should include the students’ numbers and titles of performances only (no names) as well as times and scheduled breaks. Breaks may be scheduled around the school bell times and other interruptions. Teachers should include a title for each performance. A synopsis of performances is not required.
- The teacher’s role in the exam room is to support the process and ensure that the exam runs smoothly and without interruption. Markers will inform the teacher when they are ready to continue with the next candidate(s).
- Examiners’ desks should be positioned during the examination in an easily accessible, safe position with a clear and uninterrupted view of the performances.
- Mobile phones are not permitted in the examination room. Please tell your students of this new ruling so they can be secured prior to the exam.

NB: Supervising teachers have a vital role in ensuring that the Principal is advised of the nature and content of HSC works from an early stage. In this way, the candidates’ work may develop in a manner that reflects the values and culture of the school and its community.

Submitted Projects

Critical Analysis

Portfolio of Theatre Criticism

The standard of projects in the *Portfolio of Theatre Criticism* was particularly high in 2004. Candidates generally chose to review a range of productions and demonstrated a broad knowledge and understanding of theatre. Examiners found that more candidates were evaluating and analysing with greater confidence and authority. However, it was felt that more thought should be given to engaging the audience with effective language, expression and humour. Students are reminded to adhere to the word limit and provide a word count for each review.

Stronger projects:

- demonstrated a wide knowledge and understanding of theatre and extensive theatrical experience
- chose a wide range of theatre styles to review
- clearly identified key elements in productions and analysed their effectiveness in conveying dramatic meaning
- demonstrated extensive background knowledge of the play, playwright and production
- used their own distinctive voice in whatever review style they were writing and communicated with sophistication and flair
- were consistently strong across the full body of work.

Weaker projects:

- described some key features but were largely unable to connect them to dramatic meaning
- were unable to demonstrate sufficient research and analysis
- often presented work that was superficial and limited in scope, particularly when reviewing amateur or school productions
- used inappropriate review style and language.

Applied Research Project

There were fewer candidates in this area in 2004 but the standard was higher than in the previous year. While there is still a need to remind candidates to choose research topics that are grounded in drama and theatre, there was a noticeable improvement in candidates showing initiative, choosing relevant topics and in finding appropriate research material. However, examiners noted there were still some candidates who did not use effective methodology and research material and were unable to prove or disprove their hypothesis.

Examiners advise that when creating a hypothesis, candidates should avoid being too broad or complex. It is useful to narrow the focus so that it is possible to draw conclusions.

Examiners request that students who use internet sources should provide hard copies in their logbooks. Candidates should be diligent about citing and annotating all source material in footnotes and bibliography.

Stronger research projects:

- constructed an original hypothesis that had been thoroughly investigated and clearly explained
- extensively researched relevant sources and showed sophisticated analysis and synthesis of the material
- finished with a strong conclusion that clearly summarised the findings of the investigation
- used the language of theatre and drama effectively.

Weaker research projects:

- could not analyse and synthesise research material and/or failed to connect it to the hypothesis
- did not refer to a wide enough variety of sources
- contained a weak hypothesis and/or conclusion
- used inappropriate methodology in their research
- demonstrated problems with sustaining a formal style and/or clear structure.

Director's Folio

As with the other project areas in Critical Analysis, the Director's Folio demonstrated the capacity for candidates to realise highly creative and sophisticated work. Examiners expressed concern that students disadvantage themselves when they impose an impractical and inappropriate vision on a text without valid justification. While scene summaries are not a requirement of the portfolio, it would be advantageous to include analysis of a few key scenes in logbooks to give examiners an insight into how the concept would be realised in performance.

Stronger folios:

- presented a clear and original concept drawn from the essential meaning of the play and that had a social, political or philosophical purpose
- engaged in detailed analysis of the play and were able to draw strong links between the concept and the text
- presented effective and practical design concepts
- were consistently strong in all aspects of the project
- used extensive research to support their concept
- used a presentation style that helped examiners feel the theatre experience
- analysed and annotated key scenes in their logbooks, linking ideas to their concept.

Weaker folios:

- imposed an inappropriate concept which was a particular problem with some of the set texts that did not lend themselves well to changes in setting
- found difficulty in creating a clear concept that was developed through all elements of the production
- neglected dramatic and theatrical elements in their discussions
- tended to make sweeping generalisations in their analysis of the text
- presented vague and often inappropriate rehearsal techniques
- gave inadequate analysis of intended audience response.

Individual Project: Design (Costume)

Examiners noted that the following stipulations require ongoing attention in this project area:

- The rationale for this project should not exceed 300 words. Additional information can be included as support material or renderings, rather than being included in the rationale.
- Candidates are encouraged to include their renderings for a range of characters from a variety of scenes to accurately represent the journey of the play, significant moments, time, period and place etc. Candidates are encouraged to select the most suitable characters for renderings, eg the protagonist.
- Candidates are encouraged to communicate the design of the characters not only through the costume (ie shape, texture and colour) but also by characterisation, stance, facial expressions etc.
- Candidates often misinterpret the ‘idea of timelessness’ in costumes. Mixing garments across different eras, for example, having one character in an Elizabethan costume and another in a 1920s pinstripe suit, does not create timelessness. Timelessness is created by a unified concept contributed to by costumes for all characters.
- The design concept should enhance the message or themes of the play, rather than detracting from them. Inappropriate interpretations do not fulfil criteria. Candidates must balance originality with integrity in their design concept.
- Candidates are encouraged to employ a range of methods to communicate their concept vision including fabric swatches, character details, and annotations on, or accompanying, renderings.
- The overall unity of costumes for a stage production is essential. Background to renderings is only relevant if it enhances rather than detracts from the costume design. Preliminary sketches should include costume designs that enhance and extend the concept.
- While interpretation of the play is encouraged, the text is the source. For example, a ballet production does not include text and therefore is not appropriate as an interpretative form.
- Candidates should refrain from retelling the ‘story’ of the play in their rationale. The rationale is directorial, not only a design concept. The rationale should be separate from the logbook so that it is easily accessible.
- All figures in renderings must be a minimum of 300mm height mounted on cardboard at least A3 size (297 x 420 mm) but no larger than A1 (594 x 841 mm). Candidates are encouraged to clearly label each component of their project for easy identification. Cardboard is the most suitable material for mounting renderings; heavy board should be avoided.

Stronger costume design projects:

- effectively explored a diverse range of colours, texture, fabrics and appropriate accessories to give a clear sense of the nuances of each character
- presented characters in a moment of dramatic action
- reflected a theatrical interpretation in designs rather than fashion. Renderings were imbued with a sense of character, using facial expressions and stance appropriate to the character or scene, resulting in figures being presented as different from each other rather than the same outlines being used for each
- justified the design concept in relation to the underlying themes and issues of the play rather than imposing it on the play
- achieved unity through designs to realise the design concept.

Weaker costume design projects:

- imposed concepts not from a theatrical understanding of the play but rather from students' personal preferences or biases for superficial reasons and without links to the text
- allowed the concept to override the character
- selected characters who did not reflect the whole play, only part of it
- presented designs that lacked an understanding of the play in performance
- chose colours, textures and fabrics that often did not work in unity
- presented poorly executed renderings
- did not complete all components
- presented preliminary sketches and information that lacked a design concept.

Individual Project: Design (Lighting)

Candidates choosing to undertake this project area need to be aware of the requirements of each component and should have a sound technical and artistic understanding of lighting design.

Candidates should not try to go beyond their expertise in using lighting but rather demonstrate their theatrical understanding through effective, appropriate and realistic use of technology to demonstrate their understanding of the chosen play. A theatre should be chosen that they have access to rather than selecting a larger auditorium that may be beyond their personal experience. Candidates must provide a written description of how the chosen lighting enhances the dramatic action, mood and style of the chosen scene. Floor plans should include transparent overlays, to indicate the areas that each lamp is focused on. Running scripts must have cues clearly marked.

Stronger lighting design projects:

- displayed the lighting plan, running script and cue sheet in an easy to follow, coherent manner
- provided clear, logical and easy-to-follow information regarding technical and artistic decisions
- provided detailed written descriptions of the lighting design effect for the two chosen scenes they were trying to create
- gave evocative and detailed descriptions of the lighting state and the effect intended on the dramatic action for the two chosen scenes
- demonstrated practical understanding of the way components of the project need to work together to create a complete and unified approach.

Weaker lighting design projects:

- failed to provide sufficient illumination for the chosen space
- lacked an understanding of the way the lighting reinforced the changing dramatic action, tending to rely on superficial effects that were not integrated into the total concept
- lacked unity in the total design concept
- were missing essential components from the project.

Individual Project: Design (Set)

A 1:25 scale figure has been included with this report to remind candidates that this is the size of the actor using the space in the set model designed to scale. Candidates are to be encouraged to use this figure in their design model.



Very few candidates addressed scenic changes, or acknowledged the potential problems in performing the whole play. It is also important that candidates plot their set design on to the floor plan to help the examiner understand the scale of the production in respect to theatre size, theatre venue, performance space or site.

Support material and Rationale need to be in a separate folder showing the scenic changes accompanied by written descriptions of how the set is to work in the chosen theatre space.

Stronger set design projects:

- demonstrated a thorough and sophisticated understanding of the dramatic concerns of the play in order to develop an effective theatrical design concept
- demonstrated an outstanding vision, and an imaginative and appropriate concept communicated through their design
- employed creative attention to the use of levels, performance space, dimensions and attention to detail, while often taking a minimalist approach
- constructed sound models, in scale, with appropriate materials, with awareness of colour and texture and working of the stage space
- supported designs through well-argued rationales.

Weaker set design projects:

- did not address scale and often did not fulfil other requirements of the project, eg missing floor plans, rationales or logbook
- constructed poor set designs, frequently using difficult or inappropriate materials
- lacked a sense of a director's vision, and were unable to visualise the abstract, interpreting the text literally
- demonstrated little understanding of the theatre space and basic staging conventions, often presenting 'box sets' without consideration of actor's needs, eg entrances and exits.

Individual Project: Design (Promotion and Program)

While examiners indicated there had been an improvement in candidates' meeting requirements for this project area, teachers and candidates are reminded that the work for this project area must be wholly that of the student, and not outsourced to design studios etc. Candidates' logbooks should clearly document the development of ideas, the process of skill acquisition, design resolution and all drafts. This process should be marked by the teacher as part of the internal assessment program and must be considered when teachers sign the certification form to verify the project is entirely the candidate's own work.

Candidates are reminded that the Director's Approach in the Program, the Media Release and the Flyer must be original writing.

Stronger promotion and program design projects:

- presented a strong immediate visual impact that reflected an original interpretation (vision) of the set text
- presented a clear unified concept throughout all components of the project
- demonstrated substantial knowledge and understanding of the whole play
- demonstrated ability to effectively promote their production
- communicated a clear sense of their own production and an understanding of their audience
- demonstrated an ability to 'grab' attention through sophisticated written material
- presented Rationale that was insightful and clearly expressed through the written pieces and the visual design.

Weaker promotion and program design projects:

- lacked an in-depth knowledge of the selected text
- demonstrated little or no understanding of the purpose of promotion material
- demonstrated a lack of unity in the concept or director's vision
- were unable to target a set audience
- presented materials with structural problems that were evident in written components with candidates regurgitating information from the text and other program blurb
- presented items that were often incomplete or failed to meet the size requirements for the project
- demonstrated poor visual imagery.

Scriptwriting

General comments

Examiners were encouraged to see scripts submitted within the page limit – generally with supporting logbooks and drafts and rationales. However, all students undertaking scriptwriting should remember to provide logbooks and rationales with the submitted script. The standard of presentation has improved, with a majority of scripts now word-processed and correctly formatted. However, students should format scripts to facilitate reading.

There is an increase in the number of scripts in which students show an excellent understanding of the technical aspects of theatre and the possibilities available in staging a play. Students are reminded that stage directions need to appear before action or dialogue, not after, and that stage directions should not be used to forward the plot. Pages should be numbered.

Stronger scripts:

- showed evidence of rigorous re-reading and editing that ensured every theatrical moment impelled the action and idea and engaged the audience throughout
- created 'a journey' that was followed through to the end with depth and consistency; the style chosen suited the idea and characters
- provided observed detail which brought a sense of scene/character to life. The detail often involved the situation or a comment on human behaviour with suitable character portrayal
- provided a clear understanding of how a script will be facilitated on the stage
- often brought to life the world beyond the confines of the stage through evocative dialogue and through the use of metaphor
- clearly addressed the question: 'What is this play about?' ie purpose was clear
- showed a consideration for character and setting but not in an overly directorial manner
- demonstrated a clear sense of an audience and the dynamics created by the actor/audience relationship
- manipulated dramatic elements at a sophisticated level
- demonstrated awareness of the practicalities and possibilities of the live theatrical medium
- researched aspects of the time period; for example: era, historical events, speech patterns.

Weaker scripts:

- lacked understanding about the difference between workable, concise, focused theatre scripts and film/TV scripts/computer games
- contained retrospective/irrelevant directorial annotations which were often unactable or confusing
- wrote undifferentiated dialogue for characters
- lacked an individual writer's voice. Scripts often only reflected the appropriation of what has worked for established writers, or more problematically what works on TV, without giving the work a unique voice of its own
- provided character descriptions that were either biographical or filled in the narrative instead of stage action
- did not consider how theatrical elements reinforced the idea of the script
- did not have a clear purpose or understanding of the chosen style: for example, 'Absurdist' plays that lacked an understanding of the philosophy and intent of the style
- narrated a story without consideration for theatricality
- did not consider the practicalities of staging live theatre
- lacked research of time period, issues, cultures, setting and dialogue
- demonstrated inability to master dramatic elements, which led to a lack of theatricality.

Video Drama

General comments

This year there was a marked improvement in understanding narrative in the ideas of the screenplays. The narratives had a strong sense of unity, coherence and clear dramatic purpose. Candidates were also better at manipulating dramatic elements in the production and post-production of Video Drama.

The examiners strongly recommend that students undertaking a video drama project:

1. become familiar with how to use video language and the conventions of a chosen genre
2. understand the importance of framing, the placement of characters and the use of space in controlling dramatic meaning through *mise en scène*
3. apply the same standards and restrictions regarding safety that apply to Individual Performance. This is very crucial when students are filming stunts or filming in and around moving vehicles.

The construction of a narrative is required in the criteria for this project. Students making traditional documentary-style films in this project area should carefully consider the demands of the criteria. Music videos and documentaries rarely meet the demands of the criteria. While encouraging students to experiment with different genres and conventions, the focus is on the student's ability to tell a story through the medium, by manipulating the elements of drama and using video language.

Stronger video drama projects:

- experimented successfully with time, cause and effect, symbolism and genre
- created a narrative that had a strong sense of unity and coherence
- demonstrated accomplished and sophisticated technical skills with camera, sound and editing to create a dramatic experience for the audience
- made dramatic choices in the screenplay, production and post-production which effectively manipulated the audience's experience.

Weaker video drama projects:

- contained narratives which were derivative or clichéd, predictable or confusing
- demonstrated an average to limited awareness of video language which often hindered the understanding of dramatic meaning
- relied on music to drive the narrative
- demonstrated poor directorial skills of acting
- made uninformed choices not achieving the desired dramatic meaning
- demonstrated limited understanding of production skills (eg framing composition).

Written Examination

General Comments

Many candidates demonstrated a substantial knowledge of the relevant topic studied but did not necessarily deal effectively with all parts of the exam question. In particular, candidates required a detailed understanding of how to approach a drama essay to address all of the components of this examination.

Candidates need to be encouraged to imagine the plays as performances, not solely as literary texts, in order to discuss aspects such as dramatic forms and theatrical elements and their effect on an audience. Studying the plays through experiential workshops will help students to develop this skill.

Candidates may include analysis of performance and workshop experiences and observations to support their responses.

Section I – Australian Drama and Theatre

Question 1

General Comments

Candidates attempted to consider the key phrase 'questions of belonging' as the basis of their response. Some candidates were able to integrate classroom learning, practical and workshop experiences, and a sound understanding of the texts in performance in their responses.

Stronger responses:

- engaged explicitly with the specifics of the question in a sophisticated and detailed manner
- demonstrated a complex understanding of the theatricality inherent in the play texts
- demonstrated an ability to explore the implications of ‘questions of belonging’ in a range of contexts
- were fluent, sustained and analytical discussions, supported by appropriate and carefully selected examples and quotations.

Weaker responses:

- ignored the statement about ‘questions of belonging’ or addressed it in superficial terms
- relied on formula or prepared responses to previous exam questions
- discussed plays as if they were novels and thus showed limited understanding of theatricality or dramatic intention of the plays in performance
- gave personal, biased opinions, made sweeping generalisations and/or provided inaccuracies or misinformation that were not relevant to the question
- provided too much historical, social or political context that had little relevance to the question
- paid minimal attention to the second text.

Section II – Studies in Drama and Theatre

Question 2 – Theatre of the Absurd

Stronger responses:

- explored the serious issues of the time through a theatrical exploration, analysis, discussion and synthesis of the stylistic features
- examined the key concepts of the illogical and meaningless and how in performance they made sense
- thoroughly understood and demonstrated how key ingredients in the Absurdist canon (silence, pauses, waiting, comic techniques) were brought out in performance
- were able to clearly decipher how and why comedy is utilised as the idiom of the Absurd
- comprehensively demonstrated a thorough understanding of Absurd theatre, its purpose and implications in performance
- referred to all three plays in a meaningful way – selecting appropriate textual quotes and/or workshop or live theatre experiences, and applying this knowledge to the question presented.

Weaker responses:

- failed to address the terms of the question, in particular the statement
- recounted historical information about Absurdism with relating to the question
- provided a prepared response from a past paper without addressing the question
- completely overlooked the plays as performances
- demonstrated little or limited evidence of experiential treatment of the plays
- simply retold the plot for each play
- failed to refer to all three plays in their response, ie may have referred to one play only.

Question 3 – Irish Drama

Stronger responses:

- demonstrated an analysis and interpretation of the question
- demonstrated comprehensive understanding of Ireland and the Irish at the time in which the plays were written
- discussed the characters' desire to 'escape' and the characters' inability to do so
- used appropriate examples from both plays
- discussed poetry of language extensively
- demonstrated evidence of relevant workshop experiences.

Weaker responses:

- ignored the statement in their discussion
- listed examples of physical actions and spoken dialogue
- demonstrated little knowledge of the topic
- lacked understanding of the plays on stage.

Question 4 - Brecht

Stronger responses:

- discussed performative idioms of Brecht's Epic Theatre (V Effect, Gestus, bare white lighting etc) and connected specific examples from the set texts or productions/workshops and clearly outlined how he democratised the theatre in a 'theatrically clever and striking manner'
- were aware that the question asked to 'analyse' dramatic techniques and were able to reveal the kind of dialectic structure Brecht's plays present via visual and verbal irony
- clearly identified the layers of 'complex' issues and then proceeded to show how Brecht utilised the techniques of Epic Theatre to confront the audience in the 'clear and striking manner' mentioned in the question
- demonstrated experiential treatment of the plays in their analysis of the techniques and issues of Brechtian theatre.

Weaker responses:

- provided a rote-learned catalogue of Brechtian techniques that did little to tie into the question
- were unable to identify the complex issues
- were unable to identify 'clear' or 'striking' ways in which the 'complex issues' were presented on stage
- tended to provide too much background or historical information on Brecht that was not relevant to the question
- failed to address the question
- showed no working knowledge of the plays or experiences in workshopping the plays in class.

Question 5 – Environmental, Street and Event Theatre

Stronger responses:

- demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the performance makers' goals with an extensive knowledge, analysis, and synthesis of specific events and how these events captured the imagination of the audience
- dealt comprehensively with the goals and methods of Welfare State and Bread and Puppet Theatre and their own personal experiences of either environmental, street or event theatre
- demonstrated an ability to analyse the participation of performers and spectators and their effect on the community
- were able to articulate in a sophisticated manner their own experiences of real events and their understanding of the political, artistic and social goals underpinning the event.

Weaker responses:

- superficially outlined the goals and methods of the performance makers
- were unable to provide a comprehensive discussion of the Welfare State, Bread and Puppet Theatre and their own experiences
- lacked cohesive, detailed knowledge of the performance makers themselves
- failed to address the question, in particular, of how the performance makers engaged the imagination of the audience.

Question 6 – Meyerhold

Stronger responses:

- connected an understanding of personal workshop experiences to Meyerhold's intentions
- addressed all aspects of the question
- discussed 'relevance' by referring to theories of acting including masks and the grotesque
- addressed ideas of how Meyerhold used theatrical techniques and innovations to make theatre more 'real' by making it more theatrical.

Weaker responses:

- prepared an answer that did not engage with the question
- demonstrated limited discussion of Meyerhold as a practitioner
- did not address theories of acting, the mask and the grotesque
- failed to discuss Meyerhold's theories in performance
- demonstrated limited understanding of Meyerhold's techniques.

Question 7 – American Drama

Stronger responses:

- addressed all aspects of the question
- explored how the plays went beyond realism; in particular, the use of expressionistic and symbolic techniques and how these confronted the audiences
- were insightful examinations of the plays within of the context of performance
- had a sense of the plays' social and personal issues

- could integrate forms, styles, identity and techniques with supporting evidence
- identified and discussed techniques in the plays and demonstrated how they reflected the playwright's desire to confront the audience
- were able to support their discussion with examples of productions or their own workshop experiences.

Weaker responses:

- identified the elements of symbolism and expressionism in the plays without relating them to the question
- discussed the characters or plot without addressing the underlying concerns of the question
- did not address the impact of conventions of symbolism, expressionism and realism on the audience
- lacked cohesive, detailed knowledge of the plays themselves
- displayed little understanding of form and techniques
- submitted a prepared answer that had no relevance to the question.

Question 8 – Seventeenth Century Comedy

Stronger responses:

- were able to deconstruct and address comprehensively all parts of the question
- showed an awareness of sophisticated witty dialogue and mannered social behaviour which masked hedonism, triviality and deception
- discussed the relationship between what was happening on stage and the concerns of the audience
- recognised the celebratory element in Restoration Comedy as well as the satirical treatment of the characters
- discussed the fact that Molière achieved a level of truth and complexity in his characterisation as well as satirising the foolish of his society
- showed how the dramatic conventions of staging enhanced the actor-audience relationship
- made clear links between performance styles and satirical intention
- provided evidence from textual, performance or practical experience which supported their argument.

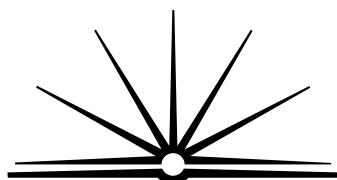
Weaker responses:

- were unable to deal with all aspects of the question
- were mainly plot descriptions
- described costumes and props at length
- showed scant knowledge of the texts
- made no reference to either the 'celebration' or 'exposure' of 'foolishness and sleaze'
- failed to recognise differences between the style of Restoration Comedy and *The Misanthrope*
- failed to support their answers with practical evidence from performance or workshops.

Drama

2004 HSC Examination Mapping Grid

Question	Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
Section I — Australian Drama and Theatre (Core Study)			
1	20	Australian Drama And Theatre (Core Study) – Bush and City in Australian Drama or Contemporary Australian Theatre	H1.3, H3.1, H3.2, H3.3
Section II — Studies in Drama and Theatre			
2	20	Studies in Drama And Theatre – Theatre of the Absurd	H1.3, H3.1, H3.2, H3.3
3	20	Studies in Drama And Theatre – Irish Drama	H1.3, H3.1, H3.2, H3.3
4	20	Studies in Drama And Theatre – Brecht	H1.3, H3.1, H3.2, H3.3
5	20	Studies in Drama And Theatre – Environmental, Street and Event Theatre	H1.3, H3.1, H3.2, H3.3
6	20	Studies in Drama And Theatre – Meyerhold	H1.3, H3.1, H3.2, H3.3
7	20	Studies in Drama And Theatre – American Drama	H1.3, H3.1, H3.2, H3.3
8	20	Studies in Drama And Theatre – Seventeenth Century Comedy	H1.3, H3.1, H3.2, H3.3



B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

2004 HSC Drama Marking Guidelines

Section I — Australian Drama and Theatre (Core Study)

Question 1

Outcomes assessed: H1.3, H3.1, H3.2, H3.3

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of questions of belonging in the representation of social and personal issues• Provides a comprehensive discussion of the performance styles and dramatic forms and conventions relevant to the question of belonging in AT LEAST TWO of the texts• Provides an analytical discussion in a convincing coherent manner, which may demonstrate flair• Provides a substantial response with well-substantiated supporting evidence	17–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of questions of belonging in the representation of social and personal issues• Provides a discussion of the performance styles and dramatic forms and conventions relevant to the question of belonging in AT LEAST TWO of the texts• Provides an informed discussion in a coherent manner• Provides a substantial response with appropriate supporting evidence	13–16
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates some understanding and appreciation of questions of belonging in the representation of social and personal issues• Provides some discussion of the performance styles and dramatic forms and conventions in AT LEAST TWO of the texts• Provides an argument and/or discussion which is reasonably well sustained• Provides an adequate response with some supporting evidence	9–12

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates a limited understanding of questions of belonging in the representation of social and personal issues• Provides a limited discussion of the performance styles and dramatic forms and conventions of the texts• Provides a series of points related to some of the issues in the question• Provides a limited response with little relevant supporting evidence	5–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comments on some ideas that may relate to some aspects of the content of the question• Comments minimally on some aspects that may relate to the performance styles and dramatic forms and conventions of the texts• Provides unrelated personal opinions and undeveloped points which may not be related to the question• Provides little or no relevant supporting evidence	1–4

* Supporting evidence may include examples, quotations, evidence from the chosen text and/or practical experiences related to the selected topic area

Section II — Studies in Drama and Theatre

Questions 2–8

Outcomes assessed: H1.3, H3.1, H3.2, H3.3

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interprets and explains comprehensively the issues addressed in the question • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the specific theatrical and dramatic styles and issues relevant to the topic • Provides an analytical discussion in a convincing coherent manner • Provides a comprehensive response with well-substantiated evidence 	17–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interprets and explains the issues addressed in the question • Demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of the specific theatrical and dramatic styles and issues relevant to the topic • Provides an evaluation in a coherent manner • Provides a substantial response with appropriate supporting evidence 	13–16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains broadly the issues addressed in the question • Demonstrates some understanding and appreciation of the specific theatrical and dramatic styles and issues relevant to the topic • Provides an argument and/or discussion in a logical manner • Provides an adequate response with some supporting evidence 	9–12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines superficially some of the issues addressed in the question • Demonstrates a limited understanding of the specific theatrical and dramatic styles and issues relevant to the topic • Provides a series of undeveloped points related to some of the issues in the question • Provides a limited response with little relevant supporting evidence 	5–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides unrelated personal opinions and disconnected points which may not be related to the question • Demonstrates a minimal understanding of some of the theatrical and dramatic issues and styles • Provides little or no relevant supporting evidence 	1–4

* Supporting evidence may include examples, quotations, evidence from the chosen text and/or practical experiences related to the selected topic area