



GENERAL COMMENTS

As in previous years, the 2005 examination questions were based on the key knowledge and skills specified for each of the examinable outcomes. Students were required to demonstrate their understanding of dance as a medium of expression and specific theoretical aspects of dance studies.

This year the paper had five questions. All questions were compulsory and students could not attain high marks if they did not answer all parts of each question. Students who gained high marks in all questions demonstrated consistent use of correct terminology as well as detailed knowledge and understanding of the key knowledge and skills relevant to each question.

The marks awarded for each question are indicated on the examination paper at the end of the question. Students should use this information to plan the length and/or amount of detail required for each response. For example, a maximum of three marks was awarded for Question 1; therefore, only a short response was required. On the other hand, a maximum of 14 marks was available for Question 4b., which therefore required a more extended response. Students undertaking VCE Dance in 2006 can also use the written examinations from 2001–2005 and other material, such as Assessment Reports, on the VCAA website (www.vcaa.vic.edu.au) to assist in their examination preparation.

Students should read each question carefully to ensure they understand what it is asking. They should identify the key words and phrases, and ensure that they cover all aspects of the question in their response.

Questions 4 and 5 related to dance works selected from the Prescribed List of dance works published annually in the VCAA Bulletin. Most responses were generally accurate and indicated that the students had studied works selected from the current prescribed list.

Some students were not familiar with the dance terminology used in the *Dance VCE Study Design*. Explanations of the terms used in the Study Design are provided on pages 15–17 of 'The Arts VCE Dance Implementation Resource Kit', April 2001. It is essential that students become familiar with these terms early in the year and use them consistently in all written tasks, including the examination.

Some responses showed little or no understanding of the term 'spatial organisation'. Question 3b. asked students to discuss the spatial organisation involved in their Unit 4 solo dance. Some students only referred to the front or back of the space and neglected to mention any aspect of spatial organisation. Question 5a. asked students to discuss the expressive use of spatial organisation demonstrated in a Unit 4 prescribed work. Some students only discussed the use of asymmetrical or symmetrical groupings and/or interactions in unison, contrast or canon. Spatial organisation refers to the use of direction, level, eye and/or body focus and dimension. Students who did not demonstrate an understanding of spatial organisation and how it was applied to the different works could not score highly on these questions.

Students who did not gain high marks did not provide sufficient detail, displayed a limited understanding of the concept involved, and/or showed limited knowledge of appropriate dance terminology. Diagrams were awarded marks only if they provided information that was additional to written responses.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	10	9	22	59	2.3

This question tested students' understanding of the dance-making processes involved in the learnt group dance work in Unit 3. Responses that gained high marks identified the specific dance-making processes involved in learning the physical skills and body actions of the learnt group dance work in Unit 3.

Students were awarded marks for identification of processes such as:

- imitating specific physical skills and body actions demonstrated by the choreographer
- correct application of safe dance practices explained by the choreographer
- repeating specific physical skills and body actions demonstrated by the choreographer
- memorising specific physical skills and body actions demonstrated by the choreographer
- understanding the expressive intention as explained by the choreographer.

2005 Assessment Report



Question 2

This question tested students' understanding of the dance-making processes associated with their own solo dance work in Unit 3.

2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	16	10	13	61	2.2

Responses that gained high marks described the body actions used in a specific movement phrase from the solo dance work the student had composed in Unit 3 (the Technique Solo).

Points to note

- The *Dance VCE Study Design* defines body actions as gesture, locomotion, elevation, falling, turning and stillness; better responses used these terms appropriately.
- The question required a description of specific body actions used in the selected phrase, weaker responses consisted of generalised descriptions or lists; for example, 'My phrase used locomotion, turning and stillness.' Better answers contained a detailed description such as, 'My technique solo contained a phrase which combined a sequence of locomotive steps, followed by elevation in the form of several split jumps, and a series of pose turns.'
- Marks were deducted if responses discussed the use of body actions throughout the whole solo rather than the specific movement phrase.

2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	21	18	20	41	1.8

Responses that gained high marks described how the phrase nominated in part a. of the question related to the expressive intention selected for this dance work.

Points to note

- Examples of expressive intention may include an exploration of various physical skills through the execution of a broad range of body actions, or it may be a more literal approach such as a narrative storyline.
- Answers required a clear description of the relationship between the selected movement phrase in part a. and the student's choice of expressive intention. Responses to part b. needed to be based on the phrase described in part a.

The following is an excerpt from a response that achieved a high mark.

This phrase relates to my expressive intention of experiencing an anxiety attack. I used fast locomotion, followed by split jumps and pose turns to communicate the feelings of stress and a need to get things done urgently. At this point I was spiraling into a situation where anxiety increases.

2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	18	7	17	16	17	10	16	3.0

Responses that gained high marks discussed two considerations relating to the safe use of physical skills and body actions in rehearsing and/or performing the phrase nominated in part a. of the question

Points to note

- Responses to this part of the question also needed to be based on the phrase described in part a.
- Some students' responses did not address both aspects of the question, which lowered their overall mark.

The following response, which addresses both parts of the question, achieved a high mark.

I selected improvisation as the process which posed the most risk of injury to me because I felt that a dancer is more experimental with her movement during this phase. Consequently the dancer will be more experimental when exploring the movement vocabulary and may be unaware of the physical skills they are capable of executing. For example, I spontaneously executed a hyperextension of my leg, stretching it too far back and as a result I pulled a muscle...In order to best manage this issue and prevent future injury, the dancer may need to have limits and control over their movements and stay within their own range of physical capabilities. It would also be necessary to participate in an extensive warm up focusing on all muscle groups as you would be unaware of which muscles you would be using during the improvisation process.

2005 Assessment Report



Question 3

The three parts of this question tested students' understanding of the expressive use of spatial organisation and dance-making processes involved in their own composition of a solo dance work in Unit 4.

3a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	4	1	2	92	2.8

Responses that gained high marks gave a succinct description of the expressive intention with clear references to the beginning, development(s) and resolution sections of the dance.

Points to note

- In some cases too much information was discussed, considering the number of marks allocated to the question.
- No marks were awarded for discussing the origins of the expressive intention.

3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	18	7	16	9	12	5	33	3.4

Responses that gained high marks discussed ways in which the student used aspects of spatial organisation to communicate their expressive intention when composing the solo dance work.

Points to note

- The answer to part b. needed to reflect the expressive intention described in part a. of the question.
- A maximum of four marks was awarded for each example of spatial organisation (direction, level, eye/body focus, and dimension).
- Students should use dance terminology appropriately and accurately when discussing aspects of spatial organisation used to communicate the expressive intention. For example, '*I crouched down on my knees*' does not reflect correct dance terminology, is not linked to the expressive intention and was not awarded marks. Whereas, '*In the beginning section of my dance I demonstrated use of lower level by crouching down on my knees to convey my fear of my attacker,*' was awarded marks because it uses appropriate dance terminology, and is linked to the expressive intention.

3c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	8	12	23	25	15	17	2.8

Responses that gained high marks explained how the student developed performance skills during the rehearsal process in order to communicate their expressive intention.

Some students only provided a detailed description of a single performance skill. Other students did not refer to performance skills developed during the rehearsal process. Better explanations of the development of performance skills referred to the refinement of aspects such as:

- movement technique (accuracy, transitions, use of the elements of movement and awareness of physical exertion required in each section)
- interpretation (expressive intention, elements of movement, phrases/sections and music)
- spatial accuracy and orientation (body facings and dimension of movements)
- facial expression and whole body expression
- use of projection.

The following is an excerpt from a response that achieved a high mark.

During the rehearsal process I received feedback from my peers...this enabled me to work on the weaker sections to improve my overall projection. I also did this by videotaping my dance. When I watched it back I realised I needed to make clear changes between the sections to create smooth transitions and clarify the communication of my expressive intention.

I practised to refine my movement vocabulary so I could perform the movements in each section with technical accuracy in order to clearly communicate my intent to the audience...I also refined my use of spatial organisation in each section of the dance by watching myself on video. This allowed me to make clear changes between sections and convey my expressive intention effectively.

2005 Assessment Report



Question 4

This question tested students' understanding of cultural influences on, and the expressive use of phrases and sections in, solo dance works choreographed between 1900 and 1969.

4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	6	4	14	12	15	15	11	8	9	2	4	4.5

Responses that gained high marks focused on a description of the relationship between two cultural influences and the choice of movement vocabulary in one of the selected prescribed solo dance works.

Points to note

- Careful selection of the most appropriate work, cultural influences and movement vocabulary was required to respond fully to this question.
- The question required the identification of two cultural influences relevant to the period in which the solo dance work was choreographed.
- A description of the links between the identified cultural influences and the choreographer's selection of movement vocabulary was also required.
- The description of movement vocabulary used needed to be linked to the selected cultural influence.

The following is an excerpt from a response that achieved a high mark. The work discussed is *Revelations*.

Another influence on Ailey's choice of movement vocabulary was his training with Lester Horton. Horton (1906–1953). Horton is regarded as one of the founders of modern dance in America. He developed a unique style of technique which was characterised by diagonal tensions, long stretched out body lines and balances which made the torso the centre of the movement. I Wanna be Ready is strongly influenced by Ailey's understanding of this technique, for example in the development section the soloist performs a series of sustained balances displaying diagonal tension and use of the torso as centre.

4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average
%	10	1	3	4	5	8	10	10	11	8	9	7	6	2	6	7.2

Responses that gained high marks discussed the variations in the expressive use of time, space and energy within two identified movement phrases.

Points to note

- Clear identification of two movement phrases was required.
- To score high marks, responses needed to include a detailed discussion of the expressive use of time (duration, speed and rhythm), space (direction, level, eye/body focus, dimension, floor/air pathway and body shape) and energy.
- Marks were not awarded if the work selected for this part of the question was not the same as the work selected in part a. of the question.

The following is an excerpt from a response that achieved a high mark. The work discussed is *Revelations*.

In phrase one Ailey executes an arm gesture of reaching in an upward direction. The first time he executes it he does so seated on a low level using a slow speed and long duration. The arm gesture is performed with a sustained quality displaying a free flow and light weight. He then repeats this gesture executing it with an even rhythm and a different quality until he occupies a medium level, suspending his arm in an upward reaching movement as he reaches up to God for guidance. The transition to the next phrase sees a dramatic change in the use of the elements of movement as he collapses again to a low level using a faster tempo a shorter duration, showing a bound flow and heavy force.

Question 5

This question tested students' understanding of cultural influences on, and the expressive use of spatial organisation in, group dance works choreographed between 1970 and the present day.

5a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	25	10	10	8	6	5	7	5	6	4	6	2	7	4.3

Responses that gained high marks discussed various ways that the expressive use of spatial organisation in the selected prescribed group dance work was demonstrated.

2005 Assessment Report



Points to note

- Students who used correct dance terminology when discussing expressive use of spatial organisation were able to include mention of direction, level, eye/body focus and dimension as appropriate to the selected dance work.
- Examples given for each aspect of spatial organisation needed to be specific. For example, when discussing Ghost Dances, 'The Ghosts used an outer focus' is not detailed enough to be awarded marks. Whereas, 'In the beginning section the Ghosts use of eye and body focus becomes more confronting as the movement becomes less playful and more purposeful and they focus strongly out to the audience reminding us they represent the oppressors', is specific and demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the ways that focus is used expressively.
- The question required students to discuss, rather than list, expressive uses of aspects of spatial organisation. For example, 'The Ghosts used high, medium and low levels to express their predatory natures...' received low marks.
- Better responses addressed all aspects of spatial organisation.
- Each example needed to be linked to the choreographer's expressive intention. Students generally established links to the expressive intention by including an overview or making direct links throughout the discussion.
- Weaker responses did not relate the use of spatial organisation to any aspect of the expressive intention.

5b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	19	4	8	7	12	11	8	7	10	3	4	2	6	4.7

Responses that gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear understanding of the question, focusing on the description of the cultural influences on production aspects in one of the selected prescribed group dance works
- identification of cultural influences relevant to the period in which the solo dance work was choreographed
- a coherent discussion of the connection between cultural influences and the production aspects used.

Points to note

- Marks were not awarded if the work selected for this part of the question was the same as the work selected in part a. of the question.
- Better responses linked the discussion of production aspects to specific cultural influences.
- Production aspects mentioned in the answer may have been those identified in the question or other relevant production aspects.
- Marks were not awarded if cultural influences were not identified.
- Weaker responses lapsed into a discussion of the expressive intention.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark. The work discussed is *Cats*.

The dominant cultural influence on the choice of set was the 1980's trend for the inclusion of an elaborate set which demonstrated advances in technology. The production of Cats used a custom built set which included ramps for the dancers to interact with the audience, oversized tyres, garbage cans and other articles to suggest the rubbish dump the cats frolicked in. It also enabled the dancers to use different entrances and exits. Use of advances in technology could be seen in the use of hydraulics to create different levels. For example, the hydrolic arm on the tyre Deutronomy sits on elevates his character and helps to emphasise his position as leader of the Jellicle family of cats. It is also evident in the use of fast and complex lighting used to enhance the set.