

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY



**Victorian Certificate of Education
2009**

DRAMA

Solo performance examination

Monday 5 October to Thursday 29 October

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

Performance examination conditions

1. The examination will be set and marked by panels appointed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
2. Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*.
3. The performance venue is set annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
4. The solo performance must not last more than **seven minutes** and will be presented as a single uninterrupted performance.
5. If a performance goes over the **seven minutes** time limit the student will be asked to stop. A timing device will indicate when the **seven minutes** are over.
6. A total of ten minutes per student will be allocated for preparation, performance and clearing the space. **No additional time can be allowed.** When preparing stagecraft for the solo performance, students should be mindful of these restrictions.
7. The performance will use a single clearly lit space. No changes to the lighting grid are allowed.
8. One table and two chairs will be provided in the examination room for students to use in performance if they wish. Any additional props, if required, must be carried in and out of the examination space by the student **alone**, and within the allotted time.
9. Students are **not** permitted to bring any objects or substances deemed hazardous or illegal into the performance examination venue. All actual and imitation weapons are prohibited. The use of such items is **not** permitted in the performance.
10. The use of open flames including candles and matches is not permitted in the performance.
11. Students must ensure that any props, costumes (including footwear) or other aspects of their performance do not, in any way, damage the performance space.
12. Only the panel of assessors and any personnel authorised by the VCAA will be allowed in the examination room with the student during the examination.
13. Students may choose to perform to the assessors as audience or to an imagined audience, or both.
14. Students must not walk behind and/or touch assessors during the examination.

Statement of Intention

1. A pro forma for the Statement of Intention will be published annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
2. Immediately prior to performance students are required to present three copies of the Statement of Intention to the panel of assessors. The Statement should not exceed 100 words.
3. The purpose of the Statement of Intention is to highlight aspects of the student's interpretation that they would like to bring to the assessors' attention, for example:
 - explanation/clarification of decisions made in their interpretation of the prescribed structure
 - give reasons for choices made (for example, for use of costume, prop, accent, symbol).
4. Students should not simply describe their character by rewriting the performance focus.
5. The Statement of Intention will not be assessed.

Prescribed structures

1. Students are required to prepare a solo performance using **one** of the following ten prescribed structures. Marks will not be awarded for performances that do not use one of the prescribed structures.
2. Each prescribed structure is made up of the following: character, stimulus, performance focus, performance style, theatrical conventions, dramatic elements, reference material. The following explanations should be used when preparing the solo performance.
 - **Character** – the main character to be depicted in the performance.
 - **Stimulus** – the source of information which **must** be used in the development of the character and be referenced throughout the performance.
 - **Performance focus** – information about the character that must be portrayed in the performance. This information is given in opening sentences and a series of dot points. **All aspects of the performance focus must be included in the performance.** Each aspect of the performance focus does not have to be given equal emphasis during the performance. Unless otherwise indicated aspects of the performance focus may be performed in any order.
 - **Performance style** – the prescribed performance style(s) is explained in the Terminology section of the examination paper. The prescribed style(s) must be used throughout the performance.
 - **Theatrical conventions** – the following theatrical conventions **will be assessed in all performances:** disjointed time sequences, transformation of character, transformation of place, transformation of object. In addition two theatrical conventions will be specifically **prescribed** for each character and they must be used during the performance. Additional conventions may be added as appropriate.
 - **Dramatic elements** – two dramatic elements will be specifically **prescribed** for each character and they must be used during the performance. The dramatic elements to be prescribed will be selected from the following list: climax, conflict, contrast, language, mood, rhythm, sound and symbol. Students may use additional elements as appropriate. **Focus, space, tension and timing** are dramatic elements that must be present in every performance.
 - **Reference material** – resources are provided as recommendations. This list is not exhaustive and students should undertake research in developing their character(s) for performance. **Please note:** if a resource is listed under **Stimulus**, it **must** be used in the development of the performance.
3. When a prescribed structure includes the term **re-creates**, students are required to use material found in the stimulus.
4. The emphasis in performance must be on action rather than narration; doing rather than telling.
5. A Terminology section is provided. Students should consult this for explanations of performance styles and theatrical conventions as prescribed in the examination.

Notes for Drama Solo Performance examination 2009

- Schools should check local availability of required stimulus material and resources prior to beginning Unit 4. Some materials may not be immediately available.
- Students and teachers should be aware that websites, including Wikipedia, may contain information that has been altered since the publication of the examination paper.
- Where dot points in a particular structure ask for images/key events/experiences/vignettes or the like, at least **two** instances of the requirement must be evident in the performance.
- Students and teachers are reminded that, in addition to the two theatrical conventions prescribed in each structure, **disjointed time sequences, transformation of character, transformation of place and transformation of object** must be demonstrated in **every** performance.
- When making performance choices, students and teachers need to note that all characters must be portrayed in the gender as identified in the prescribed structure.
- While the VCAA considers all the structures in this examination suitable, teachers should be aware that, in some instances, sensitivity might be needed where particular issues or themes are explored. Teachers should make themselves aware of the issues and themes contained in the structures prior to the commencement of Unit 4 so that they can advise students appropriately.
- All enquiries regarding the Drama Solo Performance Examination should be forwarded to Kris Allen, Project Manager Assessment, telephone 9225 2356.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 1

Character

Scout

Stimulus

The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of Scout (Jean Louise Finch).

Accepting life membership of the Law Society of America in 2009 for her work in the legal representation of minorities, Scout challenges young lawyers to share her belief in the goodness of people. To do this she

- re-creates one or more examples from her childhood which show that the innocence of children can be wiser than the wisdom of adults
- demonstrates her involvement in the legal defence of Rosa Parkes after the bus incident in 1955
- creates a montage of dramatic images which shows significant steps forward and/or back in the acceptance of minorities in the US during her lifetime.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Flashback, dramatic metaphor

Dramatic elements

Contrast, symbol

Reference material

The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, any edition

The film *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 1962, directed by Robert Mulligan, starring Gregory Peck [PG]

<http://www.michaelariens.com/legalhistory/timeline.htm>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 2

Character

Achilles

Stimulus

The legend of Achilles

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of Achilles.

At an audition for Ancient Greece's 'Next Top Model', the seemingly invulnerable Achilles attempts to convince the audition panel of his worth to be a contestant on the show. To do this Achilles

- re-creates one or more significant moments from his life before he became involved in the Trojan War
- re-creates an example of the gods' involvement in his adventures
- demonstrates how he as the 'ideal' man is superior to Renaissance Man, and to the 'ideal' man of the 21st century.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of Greek Theatre

Theatrical conventions

Exaggerated movement, fatal flaw

Dramatic elements

Language, sound

Reference material

<http://malaspina.edu/~johnstoi/clas101/troy.htm>

<http://thanasis.com/achilles.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polymath>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 3

Character

Sylvia

Stimulus

The film *The Truman Show*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of Sylvia (Lauren Garland).

At a reunion of cast and crew members marking the 10th anniversary of Truman Burbank's escape from the constructed world called 'Seahaven', Sylvia

- re-creates one or more significant moments from Truman's life as a reality television show character
- creates a major difficulty she experienced in helping Truman adapt to the real world outside 'Seahaven'
- creates dramatic images which demonstrate how *The Truman Show* was influenced by George Orwell's novel *1984*.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Pathos, flashback

Dramatic elements

Climax, mood

Reference material

The film *The Truman Show*, 1998, directed by Peter Weir [PG]

The novel *1984* by George Orwell, any edition

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Truman_Show

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 4

Character

Norman

Stimulus

The novella *The Uncommon Reader*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of Norman Seakins.

Under interrogation by officials from the Prime Minister's Department, the innocuous Norman seeks to justify his partnership with the Queen in Pub Trivia competitions. To do this he

- re-creates moments from his meteoric rise from kitchen hand at Buckingham Palace to the Queen's amanuensis
- demonstrates the influence of Philip Larkin's poem 'The Trees' on the Queen's management style
- creates an example of political intrigue typified by conflict between senior public servants and elected politicians.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Heightened use of language, caricature

Dramatic elements

Contrast, symbol

Reference material

The novella *The Uncommon Reader* by Alan Bennett, published by Allen & Unwin (2007)

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page1.asp>

http://www.poetryconnection.net/poets/Philip_Larkin/4815

<http://www.yes-minister.com/>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 5

Character

Anastasia

Stimulus

The life and legend of Grand Duchess Anastasia Romanova

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the person Anastasia Romanova.

In attempting to prove her identity to officials at the Bank of England, and therefore her entitlement to the Romanov fortune, Anastasia

- re-creates a montage of dramatic images which depict her life prior to the Russian Revolution of 1918
- creates a significant moment in her life after her escape from the Bolshevik assassins
- creates one or more examples of the essential role Royalty plays in enriching the daily lives of the common people.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Exaggerated movement, stillness and silence

Dramatic elements

Climax, symbol

Reference material

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Duchess_Anastasia_Nikolaevna_of_Russia

<http://anomalyinfo.com/articles/ga00007.shtml>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 6

Character

Dennis

Stimulus

The novel *The Loved One*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of Dennis Barlow, the pet mortician.

On his return to England, Dennis seeks to persuade a financial backer to bankroll the People and Pets Paradise Park, his new project combining the best features of Whispering Glades Memorial Park and the Happier Hunting Ground. To do this he

- re-creates a montage of dramatic images depicting services offered at Whispering Glades and/or the Happier Hunting Ground which have inspired him
- creates vignettes of the type of staff best suited to dealing with people and pets, pre- and postmortem
- demonstrates his vision for the future of the funeral business.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of Comedy

Theatrical conventions

Satire, exaggerated movement

Dramatic elements

Contrast, mood

Reference material

The novel *The Loved One* by Evelyn Waugh, published by Little Brown & Co (1948)

The film *Death at a Funeral*, 2007, directed by Frank Oz [M]

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 7

Character

The Spirit of the Painting

Stimulus

The painting *Lucrezia Borgia, Duchess of Ferrara* located in the National Gallery of Victoria

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of the Spirit of the Painting.

Inspired by recent efforts to correct the misrepresentation which has caused it to languish in dark rooms for so long, the Spirit of the Painting seizes an opportunity at its renaming in 2008 to promote its identity to an interested media contingent. While doing so, the Spirit introduces

- the Sitter, who creates a montage of dramatic images from her life
- the Artist, who demonstrates the significance of a clue he incorporated into the painting
- the Art Detective, who explores mysterious parallels which connect the painting to Johannes Vermeer's *The Girl with a Pearl Earring*.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Pathos, lyrical

Dramatic elements

Symbol, contrast

Reference material

<http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/media/mediaReleases/121/display>

<http://girl-with-a-pearl-earring.20m.com/>

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/entertainment/arts/art-detective-says-the-brother-did-it/2008/11/26/1227491634890.html>

<http://www.dragonrest.net/histories/lucrezia.html>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 8

Character

Little Edie

Stimulus

The life and times of Edith Bouvier Beale

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the person Little Edie (Edith Bouvier Beale).

While trying to convince an inspector from the Suffolk County Health Department not to condemn Grey Gardens, Little Edie justifies the validity of her lifestyle choices by

- re-creating a montage of dramatic images from her life prior to 1952
- re-creating an example from her hermit-like life that demonstrates the intense relationship between mother and daughter
- creating one or more parallels between herself and a central female character in a Tennessee Williams' play.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of Cabaret

Theatrical conventions

Pathos, fatal flaw

Dramatic elements

Conflict, mood

Reference material

<http://www.greygardensonline.com/index.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edith_Bouvier_Beale

The documentary film *Grey Gardens*, 1975, directed by David and Albert Maysles [PG]

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 9

Character

Albert

Stimulus

The illustrated children's novel *The Magic Pudding*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of Albert, the Magic Pudding.

At an AGM dinner for the Amalgamated Society of Puddings, a proud, passionate and posturing Albert produces pandemonium by proposing himself as perpetual president of the society. He

- re-creates scenes which show how the current pudding owners, Bill Barnacle and Sam Sawnoff, came to possess him and a difficulty they face trying to keep him
- creates a new fable where he shares an adventure, with Tim the Tasmanian Tiger and Erik the Echidna, which provides a moral lesson relating to greed
- creates one or more musical excerpts from his new radio advertising campaign which addresses a global health issue by encouraging responsible eating.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Song, heightened use of language

Dramatic elements

Conflict, sound

Reference material

The illustrated children's novel *The Magic Pudding* by Norman Lindsay, any edition

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fable>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 10

Character

The British Explorer

Stimulus

The song *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of the British Explorer.

Invited to present to the Society for the Reintroduction of Colonial Misadventure, the somewhat inept British Explorer arouses considerable enthusiasm from those gathered. The Explorer does this by

- re-creating contrasting examples which show how different cultures deal with the heat during the hottest part of the day
- creating his or her involvement in Henry Stanley's successful locating of Doctor David Livingstone in Africa in 1871
- creating one or more examples from history where British Colonialism ignored local knowledge and customs and imposed its own cultural behaviours onto a foreign landscape.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Song, satire

Dramatic elements

Rhythm, climax

Reference material

Mad Dogs and Englishmen by Noel Coward, 1931

<http://www.leoslyrics.com/listlyrics.php?hid=oHWKwEtvZ0o%3D>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPnJM3zWfUo>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mad_Dogs_and_Englishmen_\(song\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mad_Dogs_and_Englishmen_(song))

TERMINOLOGY

The explanations listed below provide direction for teachers and students in the development of the Drama Solo Performance examination.

Non-naturalistic

This term is a broad category for all performance styles that are not dependent on the lifelike representation of everyday life. Non-naturalistic performance styles are not dependent on naturalistic characteristics to establish meaning. In non-naturalistic performance, the actor does not attempt to re-create, on the stage, life as it is lived. Non-naturalistic performance is characterised by a manipulation of character, time, place and object as well as the narrative elements of the drama.

Create

To enact for an audience situations and conversations that may be informed by material other than the stimulus, such as reference material. The emphasis in the creation must be on action rather than narration; doing rather than telling.

Re-create

To re-enact situations and conversations which are informed by the stimulus. The emphasis in the re-creation must be on action rather than narration; doing rather than telling.

Caricature

Caricature is an exaggeration of a character that is often ludicrous or grotesque. It can be comic, at times derogatory, and with the intention of ridicule.

Cabaret

Cabaret is a form of entertainment featuring an intimate style often in non-traditional theatre venues such as restaurants or nightclubs. The performers are usually introduced by a master of ceremonies and performances can include a number of elements such as song, enacted scenes, movement, dance, comedy and satire. While focused on entertainment, the content intends to communicate a particular social and/or political message. The costumes and props are often kept simple due to the multiple roles the performers portray.

Climax

The moment of highest dramatic tension in a performance when things change, or reach a crisis point, and may lead to a resolution.

Comedy

A dramatic style associated with such notions as amusement, jollity, gaiety, fun and humour. May include complex and sophisticated techniques sometimes referred to as 'high' comedy, or 'low' comic aspects such as slapstick and bawdiness.

Conflict

A struggle within a character and/or between characters. Conflict may be between a character and some obstacle.

Contrast

Highlight differences through juxtaposition. This can include dramatic action, expressive skills and stagecraft.

Disjointed time sequences

Dramatic structure that does not unfold chronologically. Past, present and future events in the plot are performed in a non-sequential order.

Dramatic metaphor

The endowment of a word, object or feeling with an intensity of meaning other than the literal. Emphasis is on isolating specifics within the performance that best provide an enhancement of meaning for the work, or at least indicate the complexity of the intended meaning.

Exaggerated movement

Exaggerated movement includes action that is overstated, drawn larger than life; often for the purposes of ridicule.

Fatal flaw

An imperfection, shortcoming or weakness in a character (for example, excessive pride or ambition) which leads them to make a certain choice(s) in a given situation. The choice(s) made results in the character's downfall.

Flashback

A time-shifting technique that takes the narrative back in time from the current point the story has reached. It enables comparisons and/or contrasts between past and present perceptions of the same event. It can also be used to show developments in a character and/or to highlight the shifts in understanding that occur over time.

Greek Theatre

There are two principal dramatic forms: tragedy and comedy. Themes are usually concerned with the relationship of mankind to the gods and with general moral judgments. The actors play different roles within the performance often using large colourful masks to aid transformation of character and so they can be clearly seen. Movement is often lyrical and rhythmic and heightened language such as verse and song are used. Choruses make lyrical and judgmental comment on the action of the play and often speak in unison.

Heightened use of language

Heightened use of language is poetic and exaggerated use of language. It includes the deliberate choice of words whose syntax, alliteration and rhyming patterns enhance the dramatic statement. Intended meaning is enhanced through the use of non-conventional and non-naturalistic dialogue.

Language

The use of verbal and vocal sounds to enhance dramatic meaning.

Lyrical

Achieved by the use of verse, heightened language, song or movement; including the use of poetic imagery.

Montage

In contemporary theatre a montage is a juxtaposition of dramatic images and/or vignettes, often presented in rapid succession. The dramatic images and/or vignettes are closely linked and presented to create an overall impression, and/or a summary of events/actions, and/or an introduction to events/actions.

Mood

The emotional feeling created in a performance.

Pathos

Pathos is a state which evokes a feeling of pity or sadness in the audience, for example the power of stirring tender or melancholy emotion. Pathos may be associated with comedy and tragedy.

Rhythm

A regular pattern of sounds, words or actions.

Satire

The use of wit and comedy to attack, denounce or deride a target. Satire exposes or questions the presence of vice, folly, abuse or pretence. It can be achieved through the manipulation of language, caricature, parody, parable or other comedic theatrical conventions. The satirist laughs at, punishes or questions a target and/or an audience. The target may be an individual or a system.

Song

Musical interpretation of text using the actor's own voice at the time of performance (not pre-recorded).

Sound

The use of voice, recorded/live music or noise in order to create an effect or aural accompaniment to action.

Stillness and silence

To be found where there is an absence of sound and absence of movement used to enhance dramatic effect.

Symbol

Something that suggests something else. Actors may use a prop symbolically or may make a symbolic gesture with their body or voice.

Transformation of character

The actor manipulates expressive skills to create characters in performance. A change in character therefore requires modification of the focus and manner of use of expressive skills by the actor. Additions of mask or costume may enhance the character transformation but does not constitute transformation unless accompanied by communicable changes in the use of expressive skills.

Transformation of object

An object(s) is endowed with a variety of meanings by the actor.

Transformation of place

The actor creates more than one place or setting during the performance and does so without the use of scenery. The actor can communicate transformation of place to an audience through the context they create for the performance and through the use of objects and space in symbolic ways. Transformation of place can be achieved through the transformation of properties (real and imagined) and/or through the use of expressive skills alone.

Vignette

A short scene or sketch based around a character.

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VCE Drama

Solo Performance Examination 2009

STATEMENT OF INTENTION

Student number

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Prescribed structure number

Name of character (from prescribed structure)

Comment *Use the space below to highlight aspects of your interpretation that you would like to bring to the assessors' attention, for example:*

- *explanation/clarification of decisions made in your interpretation of the prescribed structure*
- *give reasons for choices made (for example, for use of costume, prop, accent, symbol)*

DO NOT SIMPLY REWRITE THE PERFORMANCE FOCUS

These comments should not exceed 100 words

3 copies of this completed form must be handed to the assessors on entering the examination room.

