



Theatre Studies 2009–2011

Written examination – November

Revised examination specifications

The following replaces the examination specification published in February 2007. The only change is to the format section of the specification. From, and including, 2009 the examination will be in the form of a question and answer book.

Overall conditions

The examination will be sat at a time and date to be set annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

There will be 15 minutes reading time and 90 minutes writing time.

VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*.

The examination will be marked by a panel appointed by the VCAA.

The examination will contribute 30 per cent to the Study Score.

Content

All outcomes in Unit 3 and Outcomes 2 and 3 in Unit 4 will be examined. All of the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes are examinable. The examination will assess a representative sample of the key knowledge and skills.

Format

The examination will be in the form of a question and answer book.

There will be a combination of short answer and extended answer questions. All questions are compulsory.

The marks in this sample examination are provided as an indication of the length and detail of the responses expected. The marks allocated to individual questions may vary from year to year. The number of lines following each question gives an indication as to the amount of written response required. Beneath the lines provided for some responses is space for students to provide an illustration or diagram.

Questions may require students to respond to stimulus material. The stimulus material may be presented in the following forms:

- Theatre related illustrations/designs
- Other images including photographs/designs/illustrations
- Excerpt(s) of text from one or more playscript(s).

The **theatre illustrations/designs and/or other images** will not require prior knowledge of a particular play, production or designer. The associated questions will require students to apply their knowledge of theatre production and stagecraft gained during the year.

In the insert provided the **excerpt(s) of text** from one or more playscripts will not require any knowledge of the play(s) from which it is derived or of the context within the play(s). Excerpts will be selected from a broad range of theatrical styles and periods in theatre history. Students will be required to read the text(s) and apply their understanding of it by commenting on it and/or relating it to the application of stagecraft.

Some questions may give students the option of using illustrations and/or diagrams either to answer a question or to support written answers.

There will also be extended answer and/or essay style questions on the two plays students have attended from the prescribed playlist.

Students will need to answer with reference to one play in each question.

The question(s) relating to plays from the prescribed playlist may consist of one or more parts. The examination will have a total mark availability in the range 40–60.

Approved materials and equipment

Students are permitted to bring into the examination room in addition to normal stationery: coloured pencils, water-based pens and markers, protractors, compass, set squares and aids for curve-sketching.

Advice

During the current accreditation period for VCE Theatre studies, examinations will be prepared according to the Examination specifications above. Each examination will be an interpretation of these specifications and will test a representative sample of the key knowledge and skills.

The following sample examination has been prepared in order to provide an illustration of how this study might be examined.

The format of the following sample examination paper has been altered to reflect the changed format. There has been no change to the content of the questions on the sample examination paper which was originally published in 2007.

The format has also been altered so that the insert contains the contextual background as well as stimulus materials.

Notes on questions relating to the prescribed playlist

The questions on plays from the prescribed playlist may relate to individual plays and/or they may be questions in which students are invited to discuss a generic question(s) regarding a play. In the Sample examination paper Question 2 relates to individual plays. These questions are based on the 2006 prescribed playlist. This playlist will change every year. Teachers can refer to past papers for examples of questions on plays which are more generic in nature.

Question 3 is an example of a question which is more generic in nature. Teachers can also refer to past papers for examples of this question type.



**Victorian Certificate of Education
2009**

SUPERVISOR TO ATTACH PROCESSING LABEL HERE

STUDENT NUMBER

Figures
Words

Letter

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THEATRE STUDIES

Written examination

Day Date 2009

Reading time: *. ** to *.** ** (15 minutes)**

Writing time: *. ** to *.** ** (1 hour 30 minutes)**

QUESTION AND ANSWER BOOK

Structure of book

<i>Number of questions</i>	<i>Number of questions to be answered</i>	<i>Number of marks</i>
4	4	50

- Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, lead and coloured pencils, water-based pens and markers, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners, rulers, protractors, compass, set squares and aids for curve-sketching.
- Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or white out liquid/tape.
- No calculator is allowed in this examination.

Materials supplied

- Question and answer book of 18 pages. There is a detachable insert for Question 4 in the centrefold.

Instructions

- Detach the insert from the centre of this book during reading time.
- Write your **student number** in the space provided above on this page.
- You **may** support **any** of your answers with illustrations.
- All written responses must be in English.

Students are NOT permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any other unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

Question 1

Read the **contextual background** and **scene** below and answer the questions that follow in the space provided. You may apply **any theatrical style(s)** to interpret the scene. You may use illustrations to support your answers.

Note: It is not assumed that you have prior knowledge of the **contextual background** or **the scene**.

Contextual background

Play: *The Bacchae* was written by the Greek playwright Euripides and was first performed in the year 406 BC.

Synopsis:

- Dionysus, the god of fertility and wine, comes to the ancient Greek city of Thebes with some of his worshippers, known as the Bacchae. Dionysus wants to be worshipped by all of Greece.
- Angry with King Pentheus who has spoken against him, Dionysus decides to teach him and other nonbelievers a lesson. He casts a spell on the women of Thebes causing them to leave their homes, in a wild trance, and go to Mount Cithaeron to join the Bacchae.
- Pentheus tries to stop Dionysus, ignoring warnings not to interfere in the women's celebrations. Pentheus imprisons Dionysus who quickly escapes. Pentheus also imprisons most of the men of Thebes to stop them joining the women in the mountains.
- On learning that his mother, Agaue, is amongst Dionysus' followers in the mountains, Pentheus orders his soldiers to stop the Bacchic celebrations.
- When Pentheus arrives in the mountains where the women are, Dionysus has the women attack him. Pentheus is killed by his mother who does not recognise her son because she is under the spell of Dionysus.
- Agaue, still in a trance, returns to Thebes carrying the head of her dead son, thinking it to be a lion's head.
- As the play ends Dionysus warns that he will take his revenge on the nonbelievers of Thebes.

Setting:

In front of Pentheus' palace in Thebes.

Themes:

Worship, the dealings of humans with the gods, the power of nature, tampering with fate.

Characters:

- The **Messenger**, a servant to King Pentheus.
In Greek tragedies a **Messenger** was often used by the playwright to describe events not shown on stage, especially violent ones.
- The **Chorus**, citizens of Thebes.
In Greek tragedies the chorus was often used by the playwright to comment on the story and/or actions of other characters. The chorus usually speaks as a single voice, and may be played by one or more people.

Staging:

An open studio style space. The arrangement of the seating and staging is flexible.

Scene: – Outside the palace of King Pentheus

In this scene the **Messenger** has just returned to Thebes after accompanying Pentheus to the mountains. The **Messenger** informs the people that at Mount Cithaeron he/she witnessed the murder of Pentheus.

Extract:

(*The Messenger is talking with a Chorus of women who are supporters of Dionysus.*)

MESSENGER: Slave though I am, I suffer with my master's fate.

CHORUS: Are you from the mountain, from the Bacchic rites? What news?

MESSENGER: Pentheus, son of Echion, is dead.

CHORUS: Bromius* lord! Your divine power is revealed!

MESSENGER: What, woman? What was that you said? Do you exult
When such a cruel fate has overtaken the king?

CHORUS: I am no Greek.
I sing my joy in a foreign tune.
Not any more do I cower in terror of prison!

MESSENGER: Do you think Thebes has no men left who can take command?

CHORUS: Dionysus commands *me*;
Not Thebes, but Dionysus.

MESSENGER: Allowance must be made for you; yet, to rejoice
At the accomplishment of horrors; is not right.

CHORUS: Tells us everything, then: this tyrant king
Bent on cruelty – how did he die?

* *Bromius* – another name for the Bacchae

As an **actor** you are going to interpret the character of the **Messenger** within the scene. Answer the following questions with reference to the **scene** and the **contextual background**.

- a. Identify, from the perspective of an **actor**, **two** of the **images and/or ideas** that you could interpret from this scene.

3 marks

Question 1 – continued
TURN OVER

Question 2

Answer either **a.**, **b.**, **c.**, **d.** or **e.** This question is based on the **Unit 3 Theatre Studies prescribed playlist*** below for 2006. Answer **one** of the following questions. Write the name of the play at the top of your answer in the space provided.

2006 plays

Hotel Sorrento

The 25th Annual Putnam Spelling Bee

Doubt

It Just Stopped

Carrying Shoes into the Unknown

a. *Hotel Sorrento*

Analyse how two areas of stagecraft implied in the written playscript of *Hotel Sorrento* were interpreted in performance.

OR

b. *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

Analyse how the theatrical style(s) implied in the written playscript of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* was interpreted in performance.

OR

c. *Doubt*

Analyse how acting and one other area of stagecraft implied in the written playscript of *Doubt* were interpreted in performance.

OR

d. *It Just Stopped*

Analyse how the historical and/or cultural and/or social context(s) implied in the written playscript of *It Just Stopped* was interpreted in performance.

OR

e. *Carrying Shoes Into The Unknown*

Analyse how two individuals, working in two different areas of stagecraft on the production of *Carrying Shoes Into The Unknown*, contributed to the interpretation of the written playscript in performance.

10 marks

* The prescribed playlist will change every year.

Name of play _____

This page has been left blank for any annotated illustrations.

Question 3

Choose **one** of the performances from the **Theatre Studies Unit 4 2006** prescribed playlist* below. Answer **all three** of the following questions, **parts a., b. and c.**, making reference to **the selected** performance. Begin by stating the name of the performance and on which your answer is based.

You may refer to the **same** actor or a **different actor** in each of the questions.

Performances

1. *The Merchant Of Venice* by William Shakespeare
2. *Yanagai! Yanagai!* by Andrea James
3. *I Am My Own Wife* by Doug Wright
4. *Dolly Stainer Of Kew Cottages* by Janet Brown
5. *In The Family* by Graham Pitts

Note: This playlist* will change every year.

Name of performance _____

- a.** Briefly describe **three** ways **one** actor established and/or maintained an **actor-audience relationship** in the performance.

3 marks

- b.** Briefly describe **three** ways **one** actor conveyed one or more of the **motivations** of his/her character(s) in the performance.

3 marks

- c.** Briefly describe how **one** actor used **three theatrical traditions** and/or **conventions** of the **theatrical style** applied in the performance.

3 marks

Question 4

1. Detach the insert from the centre of this book before answering this question.
2. Read the material in the insert.
This material includes
 - contextual background
 - stimulus material.
3. Choose **one** of the following areas of stagecraft and answer **parts a. and b.** You must use the **same** area of stagecraft for both questions.
 - a. Acting
 - b. Costume
 - c. Direction
 - d. Dramaturgy
 - e. Lighting
 - f. Make-up
 - g. Multimedia
 - h. Properties
 - i. Promotion (including publicity)
 - j. Set
 - k. Sound
 - l. Stage management
4. Answer **all** of the questions which follow.

Your answers should draw on the **contextual background** and the **stimulus materials** contained in the insert. Begin your answer by stating the **area of stagecraft** you have selected.

Note: You are **not** expected to have prior knowledge of the material contained in the insert.

- b. Drawing on your response to **part a.**, the **contextual background** and the **stimulus materials**, complete the appropriate task below. You must use the **same** area of stagecraft as you used in **part a.** Where annotated illustrations are used in an answer, these should be drawn on the blank sheets provided in this book.

Acting

Choose **one** of the stimulus materials and describe **three** activities which would be appropriate for developing a character(s) during the production development stage of this playscript.

You may add annotated illustrations to your response.

OR

Costume

With reference to **one or more** of the stimulus materials, design **three** costumes that could be appropriate for this production.

Your design **must** be annotated and include explanatory notes.

OR

Direction

Choose **one** of the stimulus materials and describe **three** ideas that could contribute to your concept for the production.

You may add annotated illustrations to your response.

OR

Dramaturgy

Choose **one** of the stimulus materials and describe **three** ways dramaturgy could contribute to an interpretation of the playscript.

You may add annotated illustrations to your response.

OR

Lighting

With reference to **one or more** of the stimulus materials create a lighting design for **three** key moments of this production.

Your design **must** be annotated and include explanatory notes.

OR

Make-up

With reference to **one or more** of the stimulus materials, design the make-up for **three** characters in this production.

Your design **must** be annotated and include explanatory notes.

OR

Multimedia

With reference to **one or more** of the stimulus materials describe a multimedia design for this production.

You may add annotated illustrations to your response.

OR

Properties

With reference to **one or more** of the stimulus materials, design **three** properties for this production.

Your design **must** be annotated and include explanatory notes.

OR

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Insert for Question 4

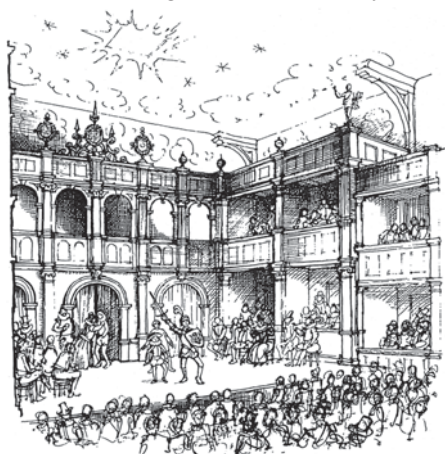
Please remove from the centre of this book during reading time.

Contextual background

Play:

The Knight of the Burning Pestle, a satirical comedy written by Francis Beaumont, was first printed in England in 1613.

- *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is a satire about putting on a play.
- It is believed to have been written for the Blackfriars Theatre in London, an indoor theatre in which boy actors presented plays (see illustration below). Some audience members paid a little extra for the privilege of sitting on stage with the actors. These people sometimes tried to influence the performance of the play.
- In Elizabethan England during a particular festival called the feast of Misrule, the servants were permitted to rule their master's house, turning the generally accepted ideas of leadership upside down. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* reflects this because the stage is taken over by 'lowlier' members of the audience.



Themes:

Social values, pride and honour, competitiveness, role of the hero, actor/audience relationship.

Story:

- A grocer (citizen), his wife and their apprentice, Rafe, are sitting in a theatre waiting to watch a group of boy actors perform.
- They discover the play they are about to see, called *The London Merchant*, is about middle class characters and laughs at the grocer's profession.
- The grocer and his wife continually interrupt the action of the play.
- The grocer and his wife want to see a new character, a knight, who will perform heroic deeds and defend the honourable profession of grocers.
- They demand that their apprentice Rafe play the knight.
- The actors are forced to improvise around Rafe's character leading to two different plot lines.
- The performance becomes more and more disjointed.
- Just as the two plots seem to be coming together, the citizens' interruptions get out of hand, leading to chaos.

Background:

The year is 2007. You are a member of a production team planning to present a performance of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* at a local food festival. The initial production planning meeting determined that the production team will aim to put on an entertaining piece of theatre, experiment with the actor/audience relationship and celebrate the local produce. The play will be performed in the town square.

STIMULUS A

The citizen/grocer is on stage talking to the Prologue (character). His wife is in the audience. They discuss ideas for the play they would like to see the boy actors perform.

CITIZEN (GROCER)

. . . I will have a grocer, and he shall do admirable things.

PROLOGUE

What will you have him do?

WIFE

Husband, husband . . .

CITIZEN

What say'st thou*, cony*?

WIFE

Let him kill a lion with a pestle*, husband; let him kill a lion with a pestle.

CITIZEN

So he shall. – I'll have him kill a lion with a pestle.

* *what say'st thou* – what do you say

* *cony* – rabbit

* *pestle* – a device for breaking up and grinding substances, for example, in cooking and in medicine



STIMULUS B

WIFE

I pray, my pretty youth, is Rafe ready?

BOY

He will be presently

WIFE

Now, I pray you, make my commendations unto him, and withal carry him this stick of liquorice. Tell him his mistress sent it him, and bid him bite a piece; 'twill* open up his pipes the better, say.

* 'twill – it will



STIMULUS C

Rafe is acting onstage. He is a Knight as requested by the Citizen (grocer) and his wife.

RAFE

But what brave spirit could be content to sit in his shop with a flappet* of wood and a blue apron before him, selling mithridatum* and dragon's water* to visited houses, that might pursue feats of arms, and through his noble achievements procure such a famous history to be written of his heroic prowess?

CITIZEN

Well said, Rafe, some more of those words, Rafe.

WIFE

They go finely, by my troth*.

* *flappet* – is a small flap of wood on the shop counter (that lifts up and down – the shutter)

* *mithridatum* – a herbal medicine

* *dragon's water* – a tonic used for fever and the plague

* *troth* – truth



END OF INSERT FOR QUESTION 4