

Theatre Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

In general, students who knew the content of the course handled the examination well and most answered all questions on the paper.

Areas of strength and weakness

Common areas of strength were:

- a clear understanding of what was required to answer the questions
- a sound knowledge of the key knowledge across the whole course
- use of subject specific terminology and concepts
- a sound understanding of theatre processes
- a good knowledge of two of the following areas of stagecraft: acting, direction, dramaturgy, stage management, set design, costume, lighting, properties, make-up, sound
- clear distinction between the concepts related to the terms 'discuss' and 'analyse'.

Common areas of weaknesses were:

- allocated marks for questions not being used as a guide to the depth of response
- a limited understanding of some of the key concepts/terminology embedded in the course, such as 'realisation', 'interpretation', 'intended meaning', 'dramaturgical decisions' and 'context'
- limited use of appropriate terminology pertaining to the area/s of stagecraft being discussed or analysed.

Advice for students

Where questions are divided up into either parts or have more than one focus, students can either divide up their answer into sections, or answer the question in its entirety in one elongated answer. Students should be alert to whether the question has a performance focus on the 'prescribed scene' or their interpretation of their monologue. Students should name the play to which they are referring where required. Students should only illustrate answers if this was an option stated in the question (e.g. in Question 2).

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The examination paper did not stipulate a particular type of written response was required. The student may have written in essay form, point form, short-answer form or any combination thereof. All were considered to be acceptable as long as the student had answered the focus of the question and that the response was appropriate to the type of response required, e.g. a discussion, an analysis.

Section A

Question	Marks	%	Response
Question 1	0/6	1	This question related to the general use of stagecraft. Students had to look at the photographs in the question and compare the application of (or possible application of) one area of stagecraft. The knowledge and skills gained in the subject through working on the areas of stagecraft during the year would have assisted the student to answer this question. Students should have been able to draw on key knowledge pertaining to the application of stagecraft and demonstrated an ability to apply that knowledge in their analysis of the illustrations. The answer may have taken one of three possible forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• if the student selected a stagecraft area that was clearly evident in the illustration, e.g. lighting, set, props. he/she discussed its use as he/she saw it in the illustration. In the illustrations there was direct evidence of some areas of stagecraft, so students who selected one of these would have been referring mostly to what was present• the student may have chosen to discuss how what was in the illustration implied the use of another area of stagecraft elsewhere in the production, e.g. stage management or sound. If so, the student would have compared how the use of this area of stagecraft was implied in both illustrations, while drawing on examples from the stages in the illustrations• the student's answer was a combination of the other two points above. For example, the student may have discussed the actual use of lighting in one illustration and compared it with the implied application of lighting in the other.
	1/6	1	
	2/6	9	
	3/6	16	
	4/6	23	
	5/6	25	
	6/6	25	
(Average mark 4.34)			

		<p>It was not necessary for the student to speculate about the name production/s and/or to name a play/s that the illustrations might be suitable for. If a student did so, his/her answer was read in terms of how it helped his/her response to the overall question. Also it was not necessary for the student to state the style of the production/s, but if they did, consideration was given to how this information informed his/her overall answer.</p> <p>Set design was a stagecraft area frequently discussed. Acceptable responses included a comparison of the illustrations in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description, e.g. its colour, texture, shape • analysis of the naturalistic and non-naturalistic components • speculation on its construction • reference to symbolic qualities of the design • discussion of dramatic possibilities • discussion of overall design concept • discussion of what impact each set might have on an audience. <p>A high-rating response was characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a well-informed discussion of one area of stagecraft that had been applied and/or could have been applied on the stages • evidence of a clear and comprehensive level of understanding of the nature and purpose of the selected area of stagecraft • use of appropriate terminology to discuss the area of stagecraft • a discussion that was linked closely to aspects of the stage illustrations. <p>A low-rating response was characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a discussion of one area of stagecraft that had been applied and/or could have been applied on the stages drawing on example/s from illustrations that showed limited knowledge of the area of stagecraft • discussion that indicated limited understanding of the area of the nature and/or purpose of the selected area of stagecraft • some use of terminology related to the chosen area of stagecraft • a discussion that had some or tenuous links to the stage illustrations.
<p>Question 2</p>	<p>0/10 2 1/10 1 2/10 3 3/10 5 4/10 10 5/10 13 6/10 16 7/10 14 8/10 16 9/10 10 10/10 10 (Average mark 6.43)</p>	<p>This question assessed students' understanding of their use of two areas of stagecraft in Unit 3 on the production of a play/s or excerpt/s from play/s. The stagecraft could have been used by the student answering the question or by others involved in the production. The discussion of each stagecraft use was assessed out of 5 marks.</p> <p>A high-rating response was characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding of the selected areas of stagecraft including its nature and purpose • the use of appropriate theatrical terminology to discuss the areas of stagecraft • detailed and well explained examples of thinking and working processes • evidence that the application of stagecraft enhanced the intended meaning of the play/s. <p>A low-rating response was characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little evidence of an understanding of the selected areas of stagecraft including nature and purpose • little or no use of appropriate theatrical terminology to discuss the areas of stagecraft • few, if any, examples of thinking and working processes • little or no evidence of how stagecraft was applied to enhance the intended meaning of the play/s. <p>Some students discussed the use of one stagecraft and then the other, while others included both areas of stagecraft in the one response. Both approaches were acceptable.</p>

<p>Question 3</p>	<p>0/8 1 1/8 3 2/8 8 3/8 14 4/8 18 5/8 16 6/8 17 7/8 13 8/8 11 (Average mark 4.88)</p>	<p>For this question students had to explain how they would use one area of stagecraft to enhance the intended meaning of an excerpt from a play (the excerpt was printed on the examination paper).</p> <p>A high-rating response was characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding of the scene, plot development, characters and their status • understanding of the intended meaning of the scene, e.g. menace, character relationships • understanding the context of the scene based essentially on the background information printed as part of the question • demonstration of how one area of stagecraft can be used to enhance the intended meaning of the scene. <p>A low-rating response was characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little understanding of the scene, plot development, characters and their status • retelling the story rather than identifying its underlying meaning • little understanding of the context of the scene • little understanding of how applying an area of stagecraft could enhance the intended meaning of the piece.
<p>Question 4</p>	<p>0/8 1 1/8 4 2/8 10 3/8 17 4/8 23 5/8 12 6/8 14 7/8 9 8/8 10 (Average mark 4.53)</p>	<p>The student had to discuss how his/her understanding of the context of the scene contributed to his/her interpretation of it.</p> <p>The only play the students could refer to for this question was ONE of the following:</p> <p><i>Six Characters in Search of an Author</i> <i>Emma</i> <i>Richard the Third</i> <i>Atlanta</i> <i>The Chairs</i> <i>Meat Party</i> <i>Accidental Death of an Anarchist</i> <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i> <i>The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui</i> <i>The Women of Troy (The Trojan Women)</i> <i>The School for Scandal</i></p> <p>The discussion of the context could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the historical period in which the play was set • the historical period in which the play was conceived • the playwright • the play's themes • play structure, including plot and character • performance styles and theatrical conventions described or implied by the play and the period in which it was conceived • interpretations of the play and the use of theatrical conventions. <p>The student would have been expected to draw on one or more of the points identified.</p> <p>A high-rating response was characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding of the contextual background of the play • well-developed discussion of the contextual background of the play drawing on pertinent examples from a scene the student interpreted in Unit 4 • a well-developed discussion of the interpretation of the scene. <p>A low-rating response was characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little understanding of the contextual background of the play • limited discussion of the contextual background of the play drawing on example/s from a scene the student interpreted in Unit 4. • limited level of discussion of the interpretation of the scene and/or reference to the monologue only.

Section B					
Question 5	0/10	3	<p>This question required students to discuss the performance of one of the prescribed plays on the Theatre Studies play list for Unit 3. The choice of plays listed on the examination paper was:</p> <p><i>Sentimental Bloke</i> by C J Dennis <i>Life X 3</i> by Yasmina Reza <i>Richard III</i> by William Shakespeare <i>Milo's Wake</i> by Margery and Michael Forde</p> <p>Students had to discuss the dramaturgical decisions associated with direction and discuss those associated with design or acting. Some students wrote their answer concentrating on dramaturgical decisions and then design or acting or presented a more integrated discussion in response to the question. Either approach was acceptable.</p> <p>There were three main approaches to this question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student looked at the director, then the designer/s or actor/s and discussed the type of dramaturgical decisions these people made the student discussed how a dramaturgist did/might have advised the director and the designer/s or actor/s a combination of the two above. <p>A high-rating response was characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a detailed understanding of the role of dramaturgy in relation to that of the director, the designer and/or the actor a discussion of how the relationship between dramaturgy and direction, design and/or acting influenced the specified production use of specific examples in the discussion of one of the set performances. <p>A low-rating response was characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a superficial understanding of the relationship between dramaturgy and that of the director, the designer and/or actor little or no reference to how the relationship between dramaturgy and the direction, design and/or acting influenced the specified production limited reference to a specified production, with few or no specific examples. <p>Five marks were given for the discussion of direction and 5 marks for the discussion of the other selected stagecraft area.</p>		
	1/10	3			
	2/10	8			
	3/10	11			
	4/10	14			
	5/10	16			
	6/10	13			
	7/10	11			
	8/10	10			
	9/10	5			
	10/10	6			
	(Average mark 5.31)				
	Question 6	0/8		8	<p>This question required students to make reference to the performance of one of the prescribed plays on the Theatre Studies play list for Unit 4. The choice of plays was:</p> <p><i>The Othello Project</i> researched and compiled by Meredith Rogers and Julian Meyrick <i>Copenhagen</i> by Michael Frayn <i>The Comedy of Errors</i> by William Shakespeare <i>Talking Heads</i> by Alan Bennett</p> <p>Students had to select two of the actors in the play and analyse how they realised the status and motivation of their character/s. Four marks were allocated for the discussion of one actor and 4 for the other.</p> <p>A high-rating response was characterised by a detailed understanding of status, motivation and the process of character portrayal in relation to the character/s of two actors.</p> <p>A low-rating response was characterised by a superficial understanding of status, motivation and the process of character portrayal in relation to the character/s of each actor. The student was also generally unfamiliar with the concept of an actor's realisation of character.</p>
		1/8		4	
2/8		7			
3/8		10			
4/8		14			
5/8		13			
6/8		14			
7/8		13			
8/8		17			
(Average mark 4.8)					