



GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2009 Drama solo performance examination contained 10 prescribed structures that provided a broad selection of characters for students to develop from a variety of stimuli.

Students who were successful:

- fully addressed the requirements of the prescribed structure
- ensured that the prescribed character occupied the majority of the performance time
- made substantial and appropriate reference to the stimulus material
- clearly identified time, place and implied audience
- ensured dramatic action far outweighed talking
- appropriately demonstrated the required non-naturalistic performance style(s), theatrical conventions and dramatic elements.

Weaker work was characterised by:

- too much talking and a lack of dramatic action
- poor or no transformation of object
- little or no reference to the stem details in the performance focus
- omission of parts of the dot points
- a lack of research and/or little or no reference to the stimulus material
- a naturalistic performance style.

It is critical for teachers and students to note that if **any** part of the prescribed structure is omitted, students **cannot** score full marks for criterion 1. If students do not score full marks for criterion 1, they cannot score full marks for any other criterion. Analysis of the structure should be part of initial planning for the performance and, as the performance is developed, edited and refined, care should be taken that requirements of each dot point are being met in obvious and dramatically appropriate ways.

Students need to be reminded that, in addition to the two prescribed theatrical conventions listed with each prescribed structure, the following four theatrical conventions **must** be demonstrated throughout their performance:

- disjointed time sequences
- transformation of character
- transformation of place
- transformation of object.

Describing action was a choice that undermined the non-naturalistic performance style. It indicated a lack of understanding of non-naturalism and had a direct impact on the assessment of criterion 4, 'Use of performance style(s) prescribed in the structure', and criterion 10, 'Use of expressive skills'.

Dramatic action should happen without a commentary. Students need to find dramatic, **nonverbal** solutions to providing information.

Better work was characterised by a richness of detail obtained through obvious research. Students need to generate a sufficient amount of raw material as they prepare for their solo performance so that they can edit and shape it into a maximum of seven minutes of effective dramatic action. Careful editing helps to avoid repetition. It also helps with pacing the performance and creating dramatic tension, which is assessed in criterion 8.

The choice of costume requires careful consideration as the wrong choice has the potential to undermine belief in the character(s) being performed.

Students should **not**:

- wear street clothes, school uniforms or T-shirts turned inside out, unless this choice is specifically appropriate for the character(s) they are performing
- wear jewellery or make-up that is inappropriate for the character(s) they are performing
- expose flesh unnecessarily.



SPECIFIC COMMENTS

The characters

Scout

The best work:

- captured the tone and language of the novel
- clearly established the differentiation between the varying ages of Scout
- effectively used dramatic metaphor
- handled the issue of minorities with sensitivity and sophistication
- cleverly linked Scout with Rosa Parkes.

Weaker work:

- had poor costume choices which limited character transformation
- did not establish the audience of young lawyers, nor Scout's challenge to them
- struggled with the montage of dramatic images and failed to demonstrate dramatic metaphor
- lacked historical research.

Achilles

The best work:

- skilfully used language in order to establish different eras
- appropriately referenced Greek mythology and demonstrated a strong understanding of Greek theatre
- employed highly controlled energy, combining strong physical and vocal skills
- demonstrated sophisticated links and almost effortless transformations between Achilles, Renaissance Man and the 'ideal' man of the 21st century
- cleverly explored the fatal flaw using humour and pathos.

Weaker work:

- simply 're-told' the Achilles story focusing on the 'good looking' aspect
- demonstrated poor choices in the use of stagecraft
- contained little research into the different eras
- had no sense of the fatal flaw.

Sylvia

The best work:

- clearly demonstrated a sophisticated use of the film stimulus
- offered substantial and appropriate parallels between *The Truman Show* and *1984*
- managed the continuous shifts between characters well
- established highly effective pathos
- confidently explored the darker implications of controlling society.

Weaker work:

- tended to rely on the film, with a lot of talking and not much dramatic action
- failed to establish varying dramatic intensity
- had difficulty in locating the performance at the 10th anniversary and spent too much time on characters other than Sylvia
- struggled to find connections between the game show and Orwell's novel.

Norman

The best work:

- easily established the interrogation and introduced a range of characters from the stimulus
- effectively used comedy, particularly caricature and satire, as well as heightened language
- presented a sophisticated understanding of political intrigue
- demonstrated strong expressive skills, especially with accent and physicality
- cleverly linked the poem with the monarch's management style.



Weaker work:

- showed little or no understanding of the different social classes and the idea of political intrigue
- avoided referencing the Larkin poem
- failed to demonstrate caricature or heightened use of language
- made poor choices in the use of costume.

Anastasia

The best work:

- integrated thorough research on the Romanovs, and their times, into the performance
- inventively dealt with life after the escape from the Bolsheviks, incorporating great choices with exaggerated movement
- skilfully used lightning transitions to transform character
- used stillness and silence simultaneously to create intense focus and a feeling of introspection
- presented a sophisticated view on the role of royalty.

Weaker work:

- tended towards creating stereotypical characters
- spent too much time creating scenes at the Bank of England
- lacked research, relying on the Disney version of history
- made poor use of costume and props.

Dennis

The best work:

- resonated with the tone of the stimulus using clever comic timing
- contained highly sophisticated writing in the performance text
- demonstrated great use of non-naturalistic techniques, particularly satire and mood
- explored the 'staff best suited' through effortless transformations from character to character
- presented strong performance energy in the vision for the future of the funeral business.

Weaker work:

- inappropriately focused too much time on characters other than Dennis
- contained no sense of mood or satire
- showed little evidence of the stimulus, often presenting Dennis as American or Australian rather than British
- showed little understanding that the two separate funeral parks, animal and human, were merging into one, in some cases referring to the park as a 'skate park'.

The Spirit of the Painting

The best work:

- successfully embodied the Spirit throughout, using lyrical physicality
- demonstrated sophisticated and appropriate language through an imaginative performance text
- transformed easily between the three additional specified characters maintaining a sense of intrigue and mystery
- made imaginative choices in relation to the significance of the clues incorporated into the painting.

Weaker work:

- contained little sense of the Spirit and presented 'whinging' as pathos
- struggled to present the three distinctly different characters
- demonstrated poor choices in content, especially with the Sitter's life
- failed to dramatically explore the mysterious parallels between the two paintings.

Little Edie

The best work:

- presented a mature understanding of the relationship between mother and daughter
- captured the eccentricities of both Bouvier women but presented them with affection rather than turning them into caricatures
- wove the Tennessee Williams's character effortlessly throughout the performance, establishing very powerful pathos

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- was very inventive in the exploration of fatal flaw and mood
- integrated aspects of Cabaret brilliantly, making excellent physical and appropriate musical choices.

Weaker work:

- was characterised by a simplistic view of the mother/daughter relationship
- struggled to establish any sense of time, place or audience
- failed to demonstrate an understanding of Cabaret, often using inappropriate musical choices
- made poor costume choices which impacted on dramatic timing, tension and belief.

Albert

The best work:

- contained a strong understanding of the Australian feel of the stimulus
- presented a sophisticated performance text with excellent use of language and song
- engaged with a darker tone in the material and an imaginative use of the fable
- employed excellent stagecraft, especially props
- was flavoured with high-level performance energy and an appropriate sense of fun.

Weaker work:

- showed little or no understanding of the era in which Albert was located
- made clumsy and inappropriate stagecraft choices
- struggled with song and heightened language
- failed to effectively explore the fable.

The British Explorer

The best work:

- clearly demonstrated the eccentric qualities with sophisticated use of caricature and satire
- used excellent editing to help create effective comic timing
- presented clever lyrics in the use of song, thoughtfully referencing the stimulus and then going beyond it
- found sensitive and appropriate ways of exploring aspects of British Colonial history
- cleverly established the 'inept' quality of the character.

Weaker work:

- focused almost entirely on the main character at the expense of exploring additional characters
- involved a lot of talking and very little dramatic action
- showed little evidence of an understanding of the use of song, often moving into inappropriate choices
- struggled with the use of rhythm and failed to establish any sense of the character.