

# 2016 VCE Theatre Studies examination report

## General comments

High-scoring responses to the 2016 Theatre Studies examination generally demonstrated the following qualities:

- detailed knowledge of the prescribed playlist plays in Unit 3 and 4: demonstrated through descriptions of specific examples, explaining how stagecraft was applied during key moments in the productions
- detailed knowledge of at least two areas of stagecraft: demonstrated through sophisticated use of stagecraft-specific terminology, accurately applied to identify specific aspects of stagecraft
- thorough knowledge of production processes: demonstrated through accurate and detailed descriptions of specific activities used at the planning, development and presentation stages of production
- sophisticated understanding of how stagecraft is applied to affect the actor–audience relationship: shown through detailed descriptions of various aspects of particular areas of stagecraft, that demonstrated how those aspects operate and how they are manipulated to create an intended conceptual or emotional response for an audience
- sophisticated creative interpretations of playscripts: demonstrated through clear descriptions of practically achievable and imaginative theatrical possibilities, realised through stagecraft application and specifically linked to the verbal language, the non-verbal language, the context and/or the theatrical style(s) of a playscript
- skills of analysis, evaluation and annotation: demonstrated through responses focused on what the question required and showing an understanding of the differences between analysis, annotation and evaluation, appropriately including key features of each. Responses were appropriately canalised to discuss only what was asked for, including specific descriptions, explanations of how theatre operates and reflections on the effectiveness of particular interpretive choices.

## Specific information

**Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.**

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

## Section A

### Question 1

| Play chosen | none | <i>The Secret River</i> | <i>The Glass Menagerie</i> | <i>Miss Julie</i> | <i>Boy out of the Country</i> |
|-------------|------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| %           | 2    | 26                      | 45                         | 24                | 2                             |

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
|-------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|---------|
| %     | 4 | 2 | 6 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 17 | 15 | 8 | 5 | 3  | 5.2     |

This question required students to show:

- knowledge of the play in performance, demonstrated by the inclusion of specific examples from the performance
- knowledge of the written playscript, demonstrated by the inclusion of specific examples drawn from the script excerpt and other parts of the playscript
- knowledge of the nature and function of acting and one other area of stagecraft in communicating ideas in the interpretation of the written playscript
- use of stagecraft-specific terminology
- a capacity to evaluate a performance (i.e. providing a rationale for what was/was not effective about the interpretation of the written playscript).

The script excerpt in the question prompted students to make direct reference to the prescribed written playscript and the interpretive decisions made in these productions. High-scoring responses showed a thorough and detailed understanding of the play, drawing specific words or phrases from both the script excerpt and other parts of the playscript in their evaluation. High-scoring responses justified interpretive decisions of acting and other stagecraft evident in the performance through direct reference to the written playscript.

Low-scoring responses demonstrated:

- confusion between character and actor, tending to provide a narrative description of the action of the play, with little or no understanding of how one or more areas of stagecraft worked in performance to convey meaning
- few, if any, examples from the script excerpt or other parts of the playscript and few, if any, examples from the play in performance
- limited or no accurate theatrical terminology used throughout the response.

Students were required to evaluate acting and one or more other areas of stagecraft. A common error was responses making little, if any, reference to acting. Students are encouraged to carefully consider the focus of examination questions. Students are advised to avoid using formulaic or learned responses that may not directly address a specific examination question.

Education forum presentations/discussions and education notes are not set texts. They may help to draw students' attention to aspects of the playscript, performance or context but they are not an exhaustive list of 'correct' or 'accurate' readings of the script, performance or context.

Students should avoid providing a literary analysis of the play. The central focus of the question is on evaluating acting and application of other stagecraft. Students are urged to discuss the playscript's language, theme or plot only to the extent that they make direct reference to how stagecraft was applied in the production.

High-scoring responses included skilful and insightful evaluation. However, many included limited or no evaluation and instead presented an analysis of the play. Many responses showed a very limited understanding of the difference between analysis and evaluation. Regardless of the sophistication shown in an analysis, an evaluation must do more than identify what was realised on stage and how stagecraft was applied to convey meaning. Students are urged to better prepare their evaluation of the listed plays for the examination, as specified in the study design.

An inadequate evaluation relied upon generalised judgments about the performance and included no specific rationale; for example, 'The acting in The Glass Menagerie was ineffective.'

A satisfactory evaluation included an identification of what was effective or ineffective, with a justification for why this worked or did not work as an interpretation of the playscript, such as in the following example: 'Pamela Rabe's performance of Amanda in The Glass Menagerie was ineffective because Rabe overplayed the scene, exaggerating her expressive skills, where her character meets the gentleman caller, presenting the character as comedic. This interpretation failed to realise the tragedy intended in Williams' playscript.'

A thorough evaluation included sophisticated evaluative terminology throughout, a strong justification for why an interpretation worked or did not work, and used stagecraft-specific terminology. Students had to justify their opinion about the interpretation presented during the Unit 3 playlist production. The following is an example of a thorough evaluation: 'Pamela Rabe lacked subtlety and sophistication in her portrayal of Amanda in The Glass Menagerie. In the scene where Amanda meets the gentleman caller, her expressive skills were larger than life; she waved her arms in an overstated fashion, overplaying the elongation of vowels in her vocal delivery, and moved in an exaggeratedly clumsy manner, evoking laughter from the audience. The intention in Williams' playscript is to draw us into Tom's (Luke Mullins) tragedy; he loves his mother and, simultaneously, he is embarrassed by her behaviour. Rabe's overblown acting interpretation of Amanda as an object of overt ridicule misses this dramatic tension. Rather than creating pathos for a character who inadvertently discomfits her son, Rabe drew focus on Amanda's lack of grace, presenting the character as clown-like, using aspects of physical comedy; the presentation misses the depth of Amanda and Tom's tragedy. While the playscript cleverly infers the tension of Tom's social awkwardness, we were instead presented with a broad comedic scene that was jarring; the scene's emotional undercurrents were overlooked and the performance cut against the selective Realist style implied in the playscript. Further control and attention to the minutiae of gesture and voice were required to allow greater focus on Tom's experience of the moment. Instead, Rabe upstaged Mullins during this scene. The directorial vision lacked cohesion, as this style was applied more elegantly during other moments in the performance.'

To prepare for a question such as this, students could devise a glossary of evaluative terms and practise evaluating different aspects of a performance, which might include considering:

- fluidity of action
- appropriateness of the interpretation to the specific intention, context, style or language of the playscript
- skill of the production team (including actors, directors and designers)
- clarity and cohesion of the message and the directorial vision
- impact on the actor–audience relationship
- aesthetic considerations, including audience sightlines and production values.

## Section B

### Question 2

| Play chosen | none | <i>The Servant of Two Masters</i> | <i>The Honey Bees</i> | <i>The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui</i> | <i>Jasper Jones</i> | <i>Dangerous Liaisons</i> | <i>Othello</i> |
|-------------|------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| %           | 1    | 25                                | 2                     | 31                                      | 26                  | 2                         | 13             |

### Question 2a.

| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | Average |
|-------|---|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 3 | 14 | 26 | 34 | 23 | 2.6     |

This question required students to show:

- a knowledge of the play in performance, demonstrated by the inclusion of specific examples from the performance
- a knowledge of the stagecraft of acting, described using stagecraft-specific terminology
- an understanding of focus, demonstrated by an example from a specific moment in the performance
- an understanding of the actor's use of the acting space, demonstrated by an example from a specific moment in the performance.

High-scoring responses to this question referred to a specific dramatic moment in the play. This could have included a brief event or a short scene or series of scenes. The highest-scoring responses gave brief and clear descriptions of a time(s) in the play that exemplified the actor's use of focus and the acting space. Low-scoring responses used general terms, showing a limited knowledge of the Unit 4 play. These responses showed little understanding that, in all of the plays, the actor's use of focus and the acting space changed during the performance.

High-scoring responses showed a sophisticated understanding of the concept of focus. These responses tended to discuss how an actor:

- held focus during a specific moment
- gave focus to another actor on stage
- drew the audience's focus to a particular area of the stage.

Low-scoring responses concentrated on focus as being how an actor maintained character without laughing or breaking character. Students who took this tack found it difficult to justify their response without referring to what was not in the performance (e.g. 'the actor didn't laugh'). Students are encouraged to discuss aspects of a performance that are clearly evident, rather than discussing only what was not presented on stage.

High-scoring responses tended to link focus with a specific discussion of the use of the acting space. This might have included a discussion of how the actor used specific parts of the stage such as:

- levels
- proximity to the audience
- proximity to set pieces or other actors on stage
- their orientation in the space
- floor patterns used by the actor
- the amount of space taken up by the actor when moving
- the parts of the auditorium used, including use of the audience space.

Low-scoring responses did not include a discussion of:

- focus
- the acting space
- a specific dramatic moment.

Low-scoring responses tended to present a narrative of the character's story arc, with little understanding of acting stagecraft, reflecting a consistent confusion between 'actor' and 'character'.

### Question 2b.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | Average |
|-------|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 4 | 4 | 13 | 19 | 22 | 20 | 18 | 3.8     |

This question required students to show:

- a knowledge of the play in performance, demonstrated by the inclusion of specific examples from the performance
- a knowledge of one of the characters (and associated characteristics)
- a knowledge of the verbal and/or non-verbal language of the play
- a knowledge of two or more expressive skills and how these are used to realise a character
- use of stagecraft-specific terminology
- a capacity to explain the work of an actor in realising a character (i.e. explaining the link between language, the application of two or more expressive skills and the realisation of a character).

In high-scoring responses, discussion of verbal language made clear reference to specific words that were spoken, or moments when an actor used words. Effective discussion of non-verbal language discussed how messages were conveyed without words. Good examples of non-verbal language included:

- non-verbal vocal gestures
- meanings ascribed to expressive skills (e.g. a nod of a head signifying agreement)
- use of the acting space
- actions within the narrative.

The highest-scoring responses clearly linked the application of expressive skills with how a particular message or idea about the character was conveyed.

Low-scoring responses did not include a discussion of language or a discussion of at least two expressive skills. For example, it was inadequate to describe the use of expressive skills without also discussing how this presented an idea to the audience. Low-scoring responses sometimes discussed an actor other than the actor discussed in Question 2a. Some low-scoring responses provided a narrative of the character's story arc, with little reference to acting stagecraft. This tended to reveal a consistent confusion between 'actor' and 'character'.

The study design uses the word 'realise' to refer to how an actor uses their expressive skills to interpret a character on stage. Many low-scoring responses misinterpreted the term, discussing how one character had a conceptual realisation about another character. Sometimes students misinterpreted the question to mean how one actor's character helped to bring to life or give meaning to another actor's character. These responses reflected confusion between the character and the actor and failed to address the question's focus.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response to Question 2. The student has chosen to use subheadings and dot points, which was an acceptable way of responding.

**Number and name of selected play:** 3. *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*

**Chosen actor:** George Banders

2a.

*MOMENT: Speech in Second Act (as Arturo Ui)*

*FOCUS:*

- *Banders focussed on the audience, breaking the 4<sup>th</sup> wall in his speech, always staring intently into the crowd, drawing focus to himself*
- *He also grew in intensity, eventually running into the audience, ensuring he was the centre of the audience's focus for the entire monologue*

*SPACE:*

- *During the speech, Banders assumed an authoritative position at downstage centre, to demonstrate his power as Arturo*
- *When Banders broke the fourth wall, he physically stepped outside the acting space, enhancing the Brechtian moment.*

2b.

- *Banders used an erratic, child-like voice at the beginning of the play, enhancing the clowning theme of the play, and his character especially, with a high pitch and loud volume, as though throwing a tantrum.*
- *As the play continued, though, Banders' voice grew lower in pitch, more paced, and steady, showing his rise in status*
- *The use of his rapidly clenching and unclenching fist, as though always grasping for power, enhanced the grotesque approach to Ui's character through gesture.*
- *Banders also used the gesture of the Swastika, using his whole body to form the symbol during his acting lesson, to reference Hitler's links to the character.*
- *Banders used his facial expressions to portray Ui with beady, sly eyes, like a fox or a rat, watching everything like an animal ready to seize power*
- *Banders moved like a hunchback, with a twisted, warped body and halting strides, further enhancing his grotesque, freaky, clownish approach to Arturo's portrayal.*

## Section C

### Question 3

| Area of stagecraft chosen | none | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. | 10. | 11. |
|---------------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|
| %                         | 1    | 22 | 22 | 5  | 8  | 2  | 25 | 5  | 6  | 2  | 2   | 0   |

Students were provided with information about the play *Seussical: The Musical*, the style of musical theatre and four stimulus images. Students were not required to have any knowledge of the play or the style of theatre beyond what was presented to them in the examination. This was an

opportunity for students to show their skills (developed through Unit 3, Outcomes 1 and 2, and Unit 4, Outcomes 1 and 2) in stagecraft application and finding theatrical possibilities from a playscript. Students who seemed to have knowledge of the play or the style of musical theatre beyond what was written on the examination had no particular advantage in this task, as what was being tested was their capacity to discuss the application of stagecraft at three different stages of production.

Low-scoring responses sometimes showed a limited understanding of the nature and function of selected stagecraft. For example, it would be unlikely for a sound design practitioner to compose the music in a piece of musical theatre: rather, they may focus on functions such as developing sound effects, creating sound plots, manipulating frequencies or effects such as reverb, amplifying vocalists and musicians, and/or placing speakers through the auditorium (including foldback).

### Question 3a.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | Average |
|-------|---|---|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 2 | 6 | 14 | 26 | 52 | 3.2     |

This question required students to show:

- an understanding of one or two areas of stagecraft during the planning stage of production (i.e. the development of initial ideas and concepts for the production) described using stagecraft-specific terminology
- a capacity to apply the musical theatre style to inform initial concepts in the application of one or more of the selected areas of stagecraft in the production planning stage
- a capacity to justify possible theatrical interpretations using previously unseen stimulus materials from the contextual information provided.

High-scoring responses demonstrated a good understanding of how their selected area(s) of stagecraft might be informed by conventions of a specified theatrical style. They made links between their concept and one or more of the stimulus images. The stimulus images might be similar to the sort of research presented by a director or dramaturg in the planning stage of production to establish the directorial vision. Low-scoring responses showed a limited understanding of their selected area(s) of stagecraft or made no reference to theatrical style or one or more of the stimulus images. The most common error was that students tended to make only a fleeting reference to their selected area of stagecraft.

Low-scoring responses did not discuss:

- theatrical style
- a concept
- one or more of the stimulus images.

### Question 3b.

| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | Average |
|-------|---|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 3 | 17 | 21 | 29 | 31 | 2.7     |

This question required students to show:

- an understanding of one or two areas of stagecraft during the planning stage of production (i.e. the development of initial ideas and concepts for the production) described using stagecraft-specific terminology
- a capacity to identify theatrical possibilities from a playscript (from the excerpt and contextual information provided – no knowledge beyond this was assumed)
- a capacity to justify possible theatrical interpretations from a playscript (from the contextual information provided – no knowledge beyond this was assumed)

- a capacity to identify production planning activities.

High-scoring responses detailed relevant planning activities such as researching, annotating scripts, meeting between different areas of production relevant to the selected stagecraft, auditioning (acting or direction) or auditing production resources (stage management), such as measuring the dimensions of the performance space. Low-scoring responses discussed these activities in limited or general ways, with scant reference to a concept to interpret the playscript.

Low-scoring responses did not mention a planning activity or discuss activities that were relevant to development or presentation stages of production. Inappropriate activities included discussing a rehearsal activity (e.g. 'I would practise speaking the invented words from the script, such as "ga-zat", in different voices') or something that might occur on stage in front of an audience (e.g. 'I would project my voice to the audience to emphasise the invented words in the playscript, such as "ga-zat"'). Low-scoring responses sometimes discussed a planning activity with limited or no reference to a concept that would develop the notion of the 'Seussian world of imagination' (established in the script excerpt). Some responses discussed a third area of stagecraft not discussed in Question 3a.

### Question 3c.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | Average |
|-------|---|---|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 5 | 9 | 25 | 31 | 29 | 2.7     |

This question required students to show:

- an understanding of one or two areas of stagecraft during the development stage of production (i.e. ways production aims and concepts are realised through explorations, experiments and/or trial approaches with stagecraft to achieve production aims) described using stagecraft-specific terminology
- a capacity to develop an initial idea or concept from planning to development
- a capacity to identify theatrical possibilities from a playscript (from the excerpt and contextual information provided – no knowledge beyond this was assumed)
- a capacity to identify production development activities.

High-scoring responses developed a concept that had already been introduced in part b. They showed their practical knowledge of the selected stagecraft area(s) and the process that they would need to undertake to ensure that an idea brainstormed during planning was achievable on stage. High-scoring responses identified an aspect of the stagecraft that needed to be trialled and then explained how it could be trialled. Low-scoring responses sometimes said 'I will trial...', without specifying how a trial could occur.

Low-scoring responses repeated the initial concept from Question 3b. with no process of exploring/trialling. Some of these lower-scoring responses discussed the development of an initial concept not mentioned in part b. Some low-scoring responses showed a good understanding of a way to trial the selected area(s) of stagecraft but made no reference to *Seussical: The Musical*. Students must ensure that they apply their knowledge directly to the stimulus material provided in the examination.



**Question 3d.**

| Marks | 0  | 1  | 2  | 3  | Average |
|-------|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 12 | 25 | 25 | 39 | 1.9     |

This question required students to show:

- an understanding of one or two areas of stagecraft during the development stage of production (i.e. ways production aims and concepts are documented and reflected on to achieve production aims) described using stagecraft-specific terminology
- a capacity to document an initial idea or concept in development
- a capacity to identify and reflect on theatrical possibilities in development.

High-scoring responses demonstrated an understanding that evaluation occurs at each stage of the production process and clearly specified a documentation process and an approach to reflection relevant to the selected area(s) during production development. High-scoring responses included an appropriate documentation strategy, such as photographing a draft of a design. These responses also showed a process of reflection, such as annotating their photograph with ideas for how to improve the design or discussing the photograph of the design with the director to get feedback on how to improve the design.

Low-scoring explanations sometimes referred to documentation that had no reference to a reflective process or that referred to reflection without reference to documentation. Some low-scoring responses referred to documentation and/or reflection during another stage of production, such as presentation stage (e.g. the director taking notes during a performance of the play). Some low-scoring responses referred only to a third area of stagecraft. Some low-scoring responses confused documentation strategies with a development strategy (e.g. building a mock-up of a set).

**Question 3e.**

| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | Average |
|-------|---|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 8 | 10 | 23 | 25 | 20 | 14 | 2.8     |

This question required students to show:

- an understanding of one or two areas of stagecraft during the presentation stage of production (i.e. bump-in, technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, performances to audiences, rehearsals/reworking as required, stage management, stagecraft evaluation review and refinement, repair and maintenance, production team meetings, directorial feedback/notes, seeking and processing audience feedback, publicity and marketing, bump-out, reflection and final evaluation) described using stagecraft-specific terminology
- an understanding of the effect of the selected stagecraft area(s) on the audience (i.e. what the audience thinks or feels)
- a capacity to identify theatrical possibilities from a playscript (from the excerpt and contextual information provided – no knowledge beyond this was assumed)
- a capacity to explain the creation of suspense and humour and impact on the actor–audience relationship.

High-scoring responses discussed how their selected area of stagecraft could affect the actor–audience relationship by making direct reference to the audience’s feelings of both humour and suspense. While students did not have to make direct reference to the script excerpt provided, this helped some students to focus their response. Responses about some areas of stagecraft, such as responses discussing production management: publicity and/or marketing, might have discussed how advertising materials built up the audience’s expectations of humour and suspense in a more general sense, so direct reference to the specific scene provided may not have been relevant.

The highest-scoring responses showed a strong understanding of the selected area of stagecraft by discussing the application of stagecraft during presentation and by using sophisticated stagecraft terminology. Low-scoring responses focused on the description of a concept for how the stagecraft might evoke feelings of humour and suspense, but lacked more detailed description of stagecraft.

Low-scoring explanations failed to discuss humour and/or suspense or made limited if any reference to stagecraft. Some low-scoring responses referred only to a third area of stagecraft.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response to Question 3.

**Numbers and names of both selected areas of stagecraft:** 4. Design: lighting; 6. Design: set

3a.

*In my initial concept for my lighting design, I could possibly incorporate the musical theatre convention of colourful, over-the-top elements. I could possibly use bright, primary colours such as the reds, oranges and yellows seen in stimulus image 1 to inform my chosen colour palette. This vivid colour could also help in my realisation of the joyful, optimistic elements of 'Seussicals' plot and characters. Additionally, I could also consider the artwork of Dr Seuss' books to inform my set design. I could incorporate large ramps and towers that could be used to accentuate the courageous nature of the characters, another convention of musical theatre. The ramps and towers could appear rickety and precarious to the audience, like the chairs in stimulus image 4, highlighting the strength and bravery of the characters.*

3b.

*To assist in my realisation of the 'Seussian world of imagination', I could utilise the stagecraft of lighting to create the bright and idealistic world of the characters. When the Cat is revealed, I could use a warm colour palette that utilises primary colours, as this could possibly enhance the audience's understanding of the bright, imaginative world of the Seussians. To assist in the creation of my initial concepts, I would annotate my script for any entrances and exits such as the Cat's initial reveal, to make note of when a lighting change could possibly occur [...]*

3c.

*In order to trial my initial concept of a bright, primary colour palette, I would experiment with different gels, testing to determine what shades of blue, red and yellow best realised my intention to convey the joy and potential of the Seussian world. I would experiment with different effects, perhaps trialling a strobe effect when the Cat is revealed, to determine whether the lighting effect is disturbing to either the actors or the audience [...]*

3d.

*In order to reflect on my application of lighting, I would collaborate with other members of the design team, such as the set designer, to determine whether my design is effective and not disruptive. I would ask for the set designer's feedback, making notes of any constructive comments or suggestions. For example on the placement of lights, and adjust my design accordingly. I would also sit in on rehearsals, paying close attention to the actors' movements around the stage, to ensure my design effectively manages to clearly show their acting.*

3e.

*In my lighting design, I would use gobos to create shadows and enhance the ominous mood of the scene for the audience. I would utilise a pinspot to create a shadowy effect on the faces of JoJo's parents. The stage would also be darkened, enhancing the suspenseful mood for the audience, as the dim stage and sinister uplighting create a monstrous effect and making the parents appear scary to the audience.*

*I would also employ lighting to manipulate the audience's focus, impacting the actor-audience relationship and highlighting the humorous nature of the scene. I would use a wide, bright spotlight to illuminate the cat, accentuating to the audience the humorous way in which the Cat is invisible to the parents, even though he appears as a beacon of light to the audience. This spotlight also influence's the audience's focus, as the spotlight shows them to look at the cat and enjoy his guilty amusement of JoJo's situation. This again highlights the comedic nature of the scene.*

#### Question 4

| Area of stagecraft chosen | 0 | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. |
|---------------------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| %                         | 6 | 60 | 13 | 3  | 0  | 1  | 7  | 9  |

Students were required to select one area of stagecraft from a specified list. This list reflected the stagecraft choices in Unit 4. Low-scoring responses selected two areas of stagecraft or an area of stagecraft not listed.

#### Question 4a.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | Average |
|-------|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 7 | 5 | 14 | 23 | 23 | 17 | 10 | 3.5     |

This question required students to show:

- an understanding of how one area of stagecraft can be used to realise a playwright's intended meaning, described using stagecraft-specific terminology
- a capacity to annotate (i.e. show how verbal or non-verbal language informs the application of stagecraft)
- a capacity to identify theatrical possibilities from a playscript (from the excerpt and contextual information provided – no knowledge beyond this was assumed).

High-scoring responses made appropriate selections of verbal language (i.e. dialogue) or non-verbal language (i.e. stage directions) to show what words or phrases might inform the application of stagecraft. This was achieved by highlighting, underlining, circling and/or numbering words or phrases in the script provided. The highest-scoring responses described the ways in which these words or phrases could be interpreted through application of a specific area of stagecraft. The most effective annotations described a concept for realising an idea, showing an excellent understanding of the selected area of stagecraft and using theatre-specific terminology. Students were prompted to make direct reference to the intended meaning of the playwright and the highest-scoring responses clearly identified in their annotation a specific intention or idea from the playscript.

Students are urged to develop annotation skills in the lead up to the examination.

The annotations in low-scoring responses contained limited reference to stagecraft decisions or did not refer to stagecraft but rather reiterated narrative aspects of the excerpt. Some responses made limited or no reference to the intended meaning of the playwrights. Other responses contained fewer than three annotations, discussed a second stagecraft area or an area of stagecraft not on the list provided.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response to Question 4a. The student provided three annotations. Two are provided as examples.

Selected area of stagecraft: 7. *Design: Sound*

[student provided a footnote numbering on the stage direction '(THE CAT mischievously lets the WHOS fall a few more feet)'] *These stage directions could be accompanied by a humorous sound effect, such as a cowbell, to reinforce the light-hearted and humorous nature of the scene.*

[student provided a footnote numbering on the line 'Ah...ah.. ah-choo!'] *This line could be manipulated through the addition of reverb and a lowering of the pitch. These two elements could demonstrate the size of The Cat relative to the inhabitants of Whoville, and create an image of him as a mischievous, yet friendly giant.*

#### Question 4b.

| Marks | 0  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | Average |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 23 | 16 | 21 | 22 | 18 | 2       |

This question required students to show:

- an understanding of the context of the chosen scene
- an understanding of how the selected area of stagecraft conveys meaning described using stagecraft-specific terminology
- an understanding of how context informs the application of stagecraft
- a capacity to identify theatrical possibilities from a playscript using previously unseen material (from the excerpt and contextual information provided – no knowledge beyond this was assumed).

High-scoring responses made direct reference to one or more of the contextual facts provided in the question or in the insert, or inferred a contextual feature from the playscript. Some high-scoring responses discussed contextual details such as:

- information about one or more of the characters in the scene
- the setting in the scene
- the imaginative world of the play
- the art and stories of Dr Seuss
- an aspect of the story arc.

The highest-scoring responses discussed two ways the selected area of stagecraft could be applied to communicate one or more contextual features. These responses showed an excellent understanding of the nature and function of an area of stagecraft, using stagecraft-specific terminology. Students justified their decision by making specific reference to one or more of the stimulus images.

Low-scoring explanations contained little or no reference to how context informed the application of stagecraft, did not refer to a stimulus image or context, discussed fewer than two ways that stagecraft could realise context, made reference to a stagecraft not on the list provided or referred to a second area of stagecraft not discussed in part a.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response to Question 4b. The student selected Acting in 4a.

*In the acting of the Cat, the actor would utilise a variation in vocal tones and facial expressions to initially establish the atmosphere of concern and desperation in terms of what will happen to the people of Whoville. When delivering the lyrics "When your life's going wrong," the actor would use an introverted, closed posture, nervous tone of voice and a worried facial expression to confirm the danger that the people of Whoville are in. They would then transition by raising their posture and having a confident facial expression, such as the picture and expression shown by the illustration of the cat in Stimulus Image One, when delivering the lyrics "My philosophy is simple... things could be worse!" This transition would demonstrate the context of the cat's control of the narrative – reassuring the audience. A second manner by which the Cat*

*could represent context would be using gestures, such as by gesturing to the ceiling, the proscenium arch and the audience members to remind them that “we’re here in this beautiful theatre.” This represents the context of a Doctor Seuss story having a plot where good succeeds as the audience and characters on stage are reminded of the solution to the problem that will be discovered in the second act. The cat’s control of the narrative and the context of the play’s current situation of disaster would be communicated through expressive acting skills.*