

# 2019 VCE Theatre Studies monologue examination report

## General comments

The Theatre Studies monologue examination (its preparation and execution) requires students to think analytically, imaginatively and creatively. There are specific requirements for interpreting the monologue whether the student chooses to use acting and directing or designing. The specifications are different for each option. Students are advised to become familiar with and adhere to these specifications. Students should also follow the 'Guidelines for students and teachers', as printed on the examination, and note that the content of the guidelines may change from year to year. Additionally, the examination gives instructions as to which lines of dialogue and which stage directions are to be included and which are to be omitted from the interpretation of the prescribed monologue. The interpretation of deleted passages/lines is not examinable.

In 2019, the Theatre Studies stagecraft examination comprised 10 monologue choices covering a range of theatre styles, forms, contexts, themes and cultural origins. Students chose one monologue from the prescribed list. In 2019, some monologues were reproduced in their entirety (as they appeared in the original script), while others were formed by cutting and pasting passages from one or more parts of the script to form the monologue, thus allowing students to address the challenge of shifts in time, persons and places that this requires. Students could choose to interpret their selected monologue using either acting and directing or designing (any two of costume, set, properties, sound, lighting, make-up).

Re-contextualisation of the monologue (that is, changing details such as the time, given circumstances and/or setting of the original script) was permissible for this task. However, any re-contextualisation decisions for the monologue should also be appropriate for the scene in which the monologue is embedded, and the script as a whole, including its intended meanings. Students could also change the theatre style(s) of the monologue and, if so, the same considerations (above) should apply.

Students should be aware that the rooms used for the examination are not necessarily dedicated theatre performance spaces and that their dimensions, acoustics and lighting conditions may vary. Students should plan for their interpretation to be flexible enough for a variety of room sizes, acoustics, lighting conditions and floor coverings. In 2019, students were required to present their monologue interpretation in a 5 metre × 5 metre space, which was delineated in the examination room. Designers were required to design for that size performance space, not a larger sized stage area. Students were permitted to set up lighting and sound materials outside of the 5 metre × 5 metre area, but such equipment had to be operated from within the designated space. Students should be aware that some venues have standard-sized doors/doorways (some venues have a single, not double, doorway) and that items to be used for the examination need to fit through this opening (height and width). It is advised that students make judicious decisions about the materials/items they bring into, and set up in, the room. Students should note that they have a **maximum** of two minutes to set up their materials before commencing the examination.

All electrical equipment was required to be tested and tagged, including extension cords. Students were permitted to bring a laptop, an MP3 player, a mobile phone, a tablet or other such portable electronic device into the examination room. Recording functions on any electronic devices/equipment had to be disabled during the examination. Where a laptop was used, the student was required to direct the screen of the device towards the assessors and students were not permitted to access the internet during the examination. A mobile phone or other smart device such as a tablet was permitted in the examination room if it was to be used as a prop or as an audio-video replay device. However, the phone, messaging and wi-fi functions had to be disabled **before** the student entered the room.

For students choosing the Acting and Directing option:

- Students should ensure that, as well as acting, they demonstrate their application of **directing** to interpret the monologue; both are assessed.
- It is a requirement of the examination that students convey a theatre style(s) and that it is **consistently** applied throughout their performance.
- Students will **not** be prompted. If a student forgets their lines, they should pick up the monologue where they can and continue with their performance.

For students choosing the Designing option:

- According to the examination specifications, students are to design for an actor (one actor only) performing the monologue (not the whole play) to the intended audience within a single clearly lit space, and within the designated performance space of 5 m × 5 m. It is important that designers work within these parameters.
- In the examination specifications document, there are specific instructions regarding what designers should include in their interpretations. Students are advised to adhere to these requirements.
- Designers should be mindful that any symbolic intentions conveyed in their design should be clearly evident to, and would be understood by, an audience watching the performance.

## Specific information

The first assessment criterion is quantitative rather than qualitative – it assesses whether the student has met the requirements of the task, rather than considering how well the monologue was interpreted. To achieve full marks for Criterion 1, students needed to adhere to **all** of the requirements of the chosen area (Acting and Directing or Designing), as outlined in the VCE Theatre Studies performance examination specifications.

In 2019 the examination was divided into two stages: Stage 1 – Interpretation and Stage 2 – Interpretation Statement. Some students rushed through their oral interpretation statement. In rehearsing their statements, students should ensure that the information they wish to impart can be fitted into the allotted time.

### Stage 1 – Interpretation

Most students followed the examination specifications with regard to the interpretation stage of the examination.

In preparing for Stage 1, students should ensure that:

- they make a clear distinction between the completion of their interpretation and the commencement of the Interpretation Statement.

- their interpretation contains all of the required elements as contained in the specifications for this examination. In 2019 the use of 'elements of theatre composition' was a new requirement of the examination. Most students conveyed one or more of these elements in their interpretation, and some of the higher achieving students made particular mention of their use in the Interpretation Statement.

## Stage 2 – Interpretation Statement

The examination concluded with students delivering an oral interpretation statement. They were permitted to read from notes written on, or attached to, the Interpretation Statement pro-forma, which was part of the examination and which they were allowed to bring into the examination room. Students should be mindful that assessors base their assessment on what is **said**, not what is written on the form. Following the oral presentation, a single hard copy of the Interpretation Statement was handed to the assessors. Some students memorised their interpretation statement, which was permissible. Some students did not justify their interpretation decisions. Justifying interpretative decisions is a key aspect of the oral Interpretation Statement.

## Transition between Interpretation and Interpretation Statement

It was the student's responsibility, without instruction by the assessors, to move from the Interpretation (Stage 1) to the oral interpretation statement (Stage 2), and the transition time was part of the time permitted for Stages 1 and 2 combined. Some students took a short break after Stage 1 to prepare themselves for Stage 2. This break was permissible, but was included as part of the eight minutes of total time for the delivery of parts one and two of the examination.

## The 2019 monologues

The popularity of each monologue is indicated in the table below.

Number	Monologue chosen	Total (% of students)
1	Mrs Lovett	17
2	Nina Zarietchnaya	7
3	Elizabeth Appleyard	15
4	Alice	14
5	Todd	10
6	Trigorin	5
7	Loren and Barnacle (Loren voice-over)	5
8	King (George III)	11
9	Hoods	12
10	Chorus	5

In 2019 79 per cent of students selected the Acting and Directing option and 21 per cent selected the Designer option.

### Characteristics of high-scoring responses

- the interpretation (Stage 1) was highly consistent with the directorial/design vision articulated in the oral interpretation statement (Stage 2)
- the interpretation was creative and imaginative in its vision, planning and execution
- the interpretation conveyed a strong understanding of the intended meaning(s), the plot, themes and context(s) of the play and its structure
- evidence that high-level research both within and outside of the script (analytical thinking) had been conducted and applied to the interpretation
- strongly conveyed/referenced theatre style(s)
- strong, cohesive and clearly evident directorial **or** design vision
- well-conceived and well-executed directorial and acting **or** design choices
- the elements of theatre composition were applied and their use referenced in the oral interpretation statement
- a high level of understanding of the interrelationships between the selected production role (acting and directing or designing), the actor and the intended audience
- a strong sense of the character's(s') role and function in the monologue and the wider play
- judiciously chosen, and effectively applied, materials to enhance the application of the selected production role (acting and directing or designing)
- information was clearly and concisely delivered, including the use of a range of theatrical terminology and expressions.

### Characteristics of low-scoring responses

#### Acting and Directing

- very limited application of acting skills
- a superficial interpretation of character
- very limited evidence of directorial decisions and application of dramaturgy
- little understating and demonstration of theatre style(s)
- little to no understanding of the elements of theatre composition, with no explanation as to why these were being used, their intended impact and effect on the interpretation to the intended audience
- little to no understanding of the intended audience and how their interpretation was geared towards it
- the oral Interpretation Statement was brief and/or **described** the student's interpretation process rather than **justifying** it

#### Designing

- little understanding that the design was to be for a single actor performing the monologue (not the whole play) within the 5 m × 5 m designated performance space
- little to no use of, or reference to, the elements of theatre composition
- the oral Interpretation Statement was brief and/or described the student's interpretation process rather than justifying it
- little to no awareness of the intended audience for the interpretation.