



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Drama

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

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General marking principles for Higher Drama

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) For **describe** questions, candidates must provide a statement or structure of characteristics and/or features. This is more than an outline or a list; they may refer to, for example, a concept, process, situation, experiment or facts.

For **explain** questions, candidates must relate cause and effect and/or make relationships between things clear.

For **analyse** questions, candidates must identify parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole; and draw out and relate implications.

For **identify** questions, candidates must provide a brief outline. The answer could come from a number of possibilities.

- (d) To gain marks, points must relate to the question asked. Always award marks according to the accuracy and relevance of an answer.

Section 1 – Theatre production: Text in context

- (a) Candidates answer one question from a choice of six. There are two questions each from the perspective of a director, an actor, or a designer. Each question is divided into two parts; candidates must demonstrate knowledge of a selected text, and how they would use their chosen concepts to achieve dramatic impact.
- (b) Some candidates may prefer to answer the first part of the question (knowledge of text) point by point, followed by their explanation of their production concepts, point by point. Other candidates may prefer to describe all of their knowledge of text in one go, followed by details of all of their production concepts in one block. Accept either approach.
- (c) To gain marks, points must relate to the question asked and each part of the response must relate to the other.
- (d) Textual references can include relevant quotes and/or stage directions.
- (e) For section 1, candidates must answer on their selected text from the prescribed list (Course Specification: Appendix 3).

Section 2 – Performance analysis

- (a) Candidates produce a written analysis of a performance that they have seen. The play must be different from the text selected for Section 1.
- (b) The performance analysis may be of a live performance, a live-streamed performance, a recorded 'live' theatrical performance.
- (c) The performance must be a play, not a musical, pantomime or movement piece.
- (d) Candidates select a minimum of **two** aspects from the following list of performance analysis areas:
 - choice and use of the performance space
 - director's intentions and effectiveness
 - acting and development of characters
 - design concepts and their effectiveness.

Marking instructions

Section 1 – Theatre production: Text in context

Range of marks	20-18	17-14	13-10	9-7	6-3	2-0
Knowledge and understanding: Candidates demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the selected text with use of appropriate quotations and/or textual references.	Demonstrates an excellent knowledge and understanding of the selected text, with highly relevant and accurate quotations and/or textual references.	Demonstrates very good knowledge and understanding of the selected text, with relevant and accurate quotations and/or textual references.	Demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the selected text, with appropriate and mainly accurate quotations and/or textual references.	Demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the selected text, with basic quotations and/or textual references and some inaccuracies.	Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the selected text, with limited or inaccurate quotations and/or textual references.	Demonstrates little or no knowledge and understanding of the selected text, with little or no quotations and/or textual references.
Contextual Analysis: Candidates analyse the selected text in the context of theatre production.	Detailed, relevant and insightful analysis which fully considers the implications of the question.	Detailed, relevant and effective analysis which considers the implications of the question.	Good and mostly relevant analysis which mainly considers the implications of the question.	Basic analysis and relevance which considers some of the implications of the question.	Limited analysis and relevance, with limited consideration of the implications of the question.	Little or no analysis and relevance, with little or no consideration of the implications of the question.
Acting/Design/Directing Concepts: Candidates show an understanding of how the selected text could be communicated to an audience through performance from the perspective of an actor or director or designer.	Detailed, creative and fully justified performance concepts with highly accurate use of terminology.	Detailed, effective and justified performance concepts with accurate use of terminology.	Good and mostly justified performance concepts with mainly accurate use of terminology.	Basic performance concepts with some justification and some accurate use of terminology.	Limited performance concepts with limited justification and mainly inaccurate use of terminology.	Little or no performance concepts with little or no justification and/or use of terminology.

Section 2 – Performance analysis

Range of marks	20-18	17-14	13-10	9-7	6-3	2-0
Identify: Candidates demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a performance they have seen.	Demonstrates an excellent knowledge and understanding of a performance they have seen, with highly relevant and appropriate examples.	Demonstrates very good knowledge and understanding of a performance they have seen, with relevant and appropriate examples.	Demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of a performance they have seen, with appropriate examples.	Demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of a performance they have seen, with basic examples.	Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of a performance they have seen, with limited or inaccurate examples.	Demonstrates little or no knowledge and understanding of a performance they have seen, with little or no examples.
Describe: Candidates describe the use of a minimum of two production areas from the given list in a performance they have seen.	Highly detailed description of the use of a minimum of two production areas from the given list, with highly accurate use of terminology.	Detailed description of the use of a minimum of two production areas from the given list, with accurate use of terminology.	Good description of the use of a minimum of two production areas from the given list, with mainly accurate use of terminology.	Basic description of the use of a minimum of one production area from the given list, with some accurate use of terminology.	Limited description of the use of a minimum of one production area from the given list, with mainly inaccurate use of terminology.	Little or no description of the use of a minimum of one production area from the given list, with little or no use of terminology.
Analyse: Candidates analyse the chosen production areas and their impact on the audience.	Detailed, relevant and insightful performance analysis which fully considers the implications of the question.	Detailed, relevant and effective performance analysis which considers the implications of the question.	Good and mostly relevant performance analysis which mainly considers the implications of the question.	Basic performance analysis and relevance which considers some of the implications of the question.	Limited performance analysis and relevance, with limited consideration of the implications of the question.	Little or no performance analysis and relevance, with little or no consideration of the implications of the question.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]