

## TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-15	16-30	31-46	47-59	60-71	72-84	85-100

- This was another largely satisfactory year, though again with a slight sense of marking time. There may still be a few technical problems to be ironed out, but essentially the course now has a clear educational integrity, offers much that is enriching and is clearly much appreciated by the majority of the students who follow it. And yet it is not growing and being taken up in the numbers that one might expect. Clearly, the possibly complex reasons for this need to be considered at the proper time in the proper circumstances.
- On the negative side, it should certainly be noted that a number of candidates again demonstrated language skills which would not have made them viable for SL English A.
- None the less, the majority of candidates produced work which ranged from good to outstanding across the whole range of the syllabus and clearly derived a great deal of benefit from it in terms of education, personal development and sheer pleasure.

### Standard level internal assessment

#### Oral presentation

#### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-14	15-16	17-18	19-20

- The standard of presentation was generally good to very good, with most candidates speaking confidently and intelligently. This no doubt stemmed from the attention given beforehand to good preparation and clear structuring of their work.
- In a few cases, poor structure and uncertain delivery prevented candidates from full realisation of their potential.
- Only very rarely were language problems serious enough to inhibit communication significantly.
- At one school, candidates were eloquent to the extent of sounding over-prepared. It must be remembered that they are required to improvise from notes.
- Knowledge and understanding of the chosen text was generally very satisfactory, with many candidates showing good personal insights into relevant details and drawing upon these in order to argue persuasively for the proposed transformation.
- Only in a few cases was there a need for more illustrative detail.
- Candidates at one school showed a particularly impressive ability to begin by situating the

text clearly and relevantly in its cultural and/or historical context, thereby ensuring that the ensuing analysis was well grounded. This is an approach which is well worth encouraging.

- In choosing raw material for transformation, the interpretation of the word “text” at one school was somewhat over-liberal. It must be remembered that candidates are required to base their transformation piece on a text which is substantial and literary in nature.
- At some schools, candidates drew impressively upon several texts for their transformation, grouping them around a single unifying theme and often finding interesting and unexpected connections between them. This is certainly an approach well worth considering.
- Many accounts of the transformation process struck a good balance between intellectual, aesthetic and practical considerations. The best showed an awareness of the importance in theatre of practical matters in relation to meaning, especially in visual terms. Some otherwise good accounts gave insufficient prominence to these practical aspects.
- The relationship between individual and collaborative effort was impressively noted by several candidates. At two schools in particular there was a strong sense that they had learnt a great deal about how the individual imagination can be best freed and stimulated by a full commitment to collaborative work.
- At one or two schools, candidates showed a very clear and definite sense of how their ideas could be realised through use of a particular performance style. This is certainly worth considering, though one should perhaps beware of trying to find an all-purpose approach.
- Most accounts were narrative in nature, drawing attention to the essentially evolutionary and somewhat chaotic nature of the transformative process. The few who focused instead on the finished product as presented to an audience lost something of this, though they may have gained a certain tidiness.
- Evaluation varied somewhat. At its best, it was honest, observant, specific, clear and comprehensive, but in many cases it was short on detail and needed to be much more thorough and searching.

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- Apart from a few candidates being slightly under-recorded, there were no significant technical problems apparent in the recordings. However, several tapes had not been properly rewound before being despatched; this can itself lead to technical problems, and in any case slows down the moderation process.
- Most teachers provided very helpful detailed comments justifying the marks awarded; in a couple of cases one could have wished for rather more.

## Performance

### Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-20

- The range of transformations and the means used to convey them were again splendidly varied, the common features being the limitlessness of the imagination and the unfailing concern for finding the most appropriate theatrical means for telling a story and telling it clearly.
- It was good to see many candidates taking imaginative risks rather than merely opting for a

ploddingly naturalistic presentation, which was sometimes the case.

- At many schools there were highly committed performances which captured the full attention and emotions of the spectator. This was obviously most likely to happen when proper attention had been given to the different elements of performance and the various essentially practical ways in which meaning can be condensed and expressed in theatre.
- In most cases, characterisation had been given appropriate consideration; to a slightly lesser extent, the same was true of vocalisation. There were also some splendid examples of imaginative use of space, music, movement and physicalisation, though in general these matters could still be more carefully considered.
- Pace of performance tended to be slow in many instances. This is arguably the most important factor to be considered in live performances.
- The camera is present at the candidates' performance merely to record it for assessment purposes. Quite a few candidates seem to think it dictates their style of performance. It does not. It is essential that they understand the essential difference between stage and screen performance. This subject is transdisciplinary between English A and Theatre Arts, not Film; it is therefore concerned with live performance to an audience, with all that that implies.

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- There were still technical problems this year with visibility and audibility of the videos. Particular attention needs to be given to avoiding using rooms with over-resonant acoustics.
- There are also still problems with identification of candidates. It should be borne in mind that the moderator has never seen them before, knows them essentially through their numbers not their names, and needs to see them standing still displaying these numbers for a good number of seconds before they launch into action.

## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-7	8-14	15-22	23-28	29-35	36-41	42-50

- **Question 1** presented a paradox which was not easily understood or embraced by most candidates. There were attempts, some successful, to associate “sweetest” with what was poignant or beautiful. Almost all candidates could write about what was “sad”.
- **Question 2** focused on the issue of structure. This was well or ill-handled depending on the amount of instruction given to candidates. Some were clearly well-prepared, while others could only talk vaguely about stanzas and climaxes and sometimes resolutions.
- **Question 3** elicited a mixed response depending on whether candidates had a notion of listening to poetry or whether they wanted to talk about auditory imagery. Very few had any sense that “poetry is speech framed to be heard”, but there were some satisfactory answers from those who had been taught the sound elements of poetry.
- **Question 4** was not very popular but proved to be a haven for candidates who were tempted to write generally about their sense of the poems they had studied.
- **Question 5** proved to be something of a pitfall, though there were some successful essays in the cases where candidates had a strong sense of the writer’s biography. Those who inferred “outlook” from materials in the texts were given credit for these ideas as long as they were supported in a detailed way.

- **Question 6** was often chosen by candidates who seemed unable to deliver a clear answer, merely providing lists of who and what was described or writing about many different and often irrelevant features of their texts. Only a few recognised the importance of considering “contribute” as a way of providing a focus to their observations.
- **Question 7** was very popular, most successful when candidates chose either social or psychological conflicts and made clear how they understood the terms. There were some very good answers, and there were others which were weaker than they might have been through having failed to be clear from the beginning as to focus.
- **Question 8** elicited answers in which a precise address of the prompt was seldom a factor. “Emotions” often got mixed up with “attention”, and rarely did candidates consider the word “first”. Still, many were able to see where writers tried to evoke emotions, and in some cases wrote credible discussions about this.

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- None of the questions presented serious difficulties as though candidates did not expect either the format or the topics.
- With some exceptions, candidates generally showed good knowledge and understanding of the texts they had studied.
- In a few cases, candidates did not have a Language A1 level of competency in written expression.
- In some schools the nature of a critical essay in literature was not a concept that had been understood by the candidates, who simply presented a collection of assertions or observations, apparently expecting their relation or function as an argument to be supplied by the examiner.
- In a number of cases it appeared that candidates simply delivered what they knew of the works studied, whether or not that was relevant to the topic of the question.
- One prevailing weakness in less successful responses was the failure to support assertion with details from the texts. The descriptors make very clear this demand; where performance was poor, its absence was always apparent and possibly the most significant factor.
- One particular strength which was evident is that students have been made aware they must consider literary features. Not all discuss or exemplify them, but they at least use the relevant terms or point to them.
- Most candidates need to learn to be much more diligent about reading and considering the question in all its detail before embarking upon an answer to it.

## Written coursework

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-3	4-6	7-10	11-13	14-16	17-19	20-25

### The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

**Task 1** (account of participation in rehearsal and performance of a play text):

- The work produced gave evidence of satisfactory exposure to a good range of practical

performance activities; generally speaking, candidates appeared to have benefited significantly from the experience, especially in terms of personal development.

- The work was generally written in a relatively informal style, appropriate enough given the personal nature of the report, though a very small number of candidates strayed a little too far in the direction of the casual and colloquial.
- Candidates at two or three schools had language problems which seriously interfered with clarity of expression and communication.
- Work was usually given a satisfactory structure, typically narrative in form, but it did sometimes tend to be slack, rambling and repetitive.
- Retrospective reflection on the experience and the lessons learned from it was generally rather bland, with a tendency towards self-congratulation rather than self-assessment.
- There was a fairly common tendency towards excessive self-absorption, with candidates often overly wrapped up in their own experiences at the expense of the broader picture. To benefit fully from the experience there is a need to look outward as well as inward, to try to complement the inevitably powerful subjective response to involvement in performance (in many instances for the first time) with a more detached objective view of how it functions. This is perhaps the most difficult area of the task for most candidates, but it is an important one.
- Though candidates often showed a perceptive intuitive grasp of the nature of the rehearsal and performance experience, there was generally more need of analysis and of precise supporting detail as well as clearer evidence of a proper understanding of how the various elements of performance can work upon the audience.

**Task 2** (critical analysis of a significant feature of a play text):

- Because this exercise is short, there is perhaps a temptation for some candidates to think it is therefore relatively easy. The reverse is true; it requires very sharp focus and succinctness of expression. Candidates who understood and applied this were those who achieved the best grades.
- At two or three schools, language problems were severe enough to prevent clarity of communication.
- Some work suffered from an unsatisfactory initial choice of subject, with candidates trying to cover too many issues or opting for too big a topic; the best work came when the subject was significant, well defined, precise, and capable of being supported with detailed evidence.
- Some candidates eventually produced good work after a slow start, but with such a tight word-limit it is essential to waste no time in generalities and to get down to details as soon as possible.
- Organisation and structure are even more essential than usual; candidates who had given due thought and attention to this were certain of achieving satisfactory grades at the very least.
- Some otherwise good candidates lost marks through slipping from an analytical to an essentially narrative approach.
- Whatever the quality of their work in other respects, most candidates showed fair knowledge and understanding of their chosen texts.

## **Conclusion**

- Among the candidates who follow the course, it still clearly provokes not merely interest but the thrill of genuine educational discovery as well as personal development; this is evidenced by the overwhelming sense of commitment and imaginative enterprise among both students and teachers. By all of them it is clearly perceived as an extremely worthwhile pursuit. It is a pity and a puzzle that this is not by now being shared by many more schools throughout the world.