

## A level Drama and Theatre 2016 FAQ\*

- If my school has decided to teach the A level only, do I need to do the AS components?
  - No. If you are teaching the A level across the two years, then you just need to do the 3 components in the A level specification.
- Do the texts need to be contrasting like GCSE?
  - No. Students should study a range of performance texts. For more details please see page 35 of the A level specification.
- I am looking for a definition of 'performance text' as used in the A Level specification. I can see that on page 10 of the A level specification, there are bullet descriptors but can you define more clearly what a performance text must be?
  - A performance text is something that has been written and/or created for theatrical presentation. It will provide the structure for the performance and might include, for example, dialogue, stage directions and design considerations. The other considerations as set out in the specifications must also be taken into account when selecting an appropriate performance text.
- Do I need to submit my text choices to Pearson for approval?
  - Yes. The choices need to be submitted by the end of January in the year of certification. There will be a form you can use to submit your text choices available on our website [here](#) from October 2017.
- Can I please confirm that if a text is on a set text list e.g. Equus then it cannot be used in any of the other components even if it is not my chosen set text (I am using Colder Than Here as my set text for List A) but was hoping to use Equus as my text for component 2.
  - You cannot use any of the performance texts from the set text list for any of the other components in the qualification. You also cannot use them for your Live Theatre Review.

### Component 1

- Can there be a different choice of key extract and practitioner for each group?
  - Yes. There can be a different choice of key extract and practitioner for each group for the exploration and devising.
- Can the teacher direct the devised piece?
  - No, but the teacher can help facilitate.

- What is the difference between facilitating and directing?
  - Further information about the differences can be found on pages 37 and 38 of the A Level specification.

#### **Performance:**

- When students need to perform to an audience, but the performance is also being recorded, where should the student focus?
  - The focus of the student should be appropriate to the performance style selected. If they just focus on the camera this could create an audition tape quality to the performance, which is not the aim of the component.
- As a set designer or lighting designer can I use projection?
  - Yes, the use of projection could be a feature of your overall design. It is not possible to be assessed solely on the use of projection as this is not a specified design role as outlined on page 10 on the A level specification.

#### **Portfolio:**

- Does the portfolio need to be written like an essay or can you use the statements that are in the specification as headings which the students answer?
  - There is no requirement to write the portfolio like an essay; students can use the statements as headings. The statements are on page 17 of the A level specification.
- The specifications states a recommended word count of 2500 to 3000 words or a time limit of 12 to 14 minutes, does that mean if the students go over it will still be marked?
  - No. Students will need to stay within the recommended word/time limit. The teacher assessor must not mark beyond the maximum word/time count.
- What format can the portfolio take, especially if it is a combination of written and video, will a blog suffice, written logs, etc.?
  - It is necessary that students meet the minimum requirements as stated in the specification i.e. the minimum and maximum word limits, the minimum and maximum recorded limit, or the combination. We are clarifying all of the possible format options and this will be included in the ASG in autumn 2016. You must ensure that your students respond to the statements included in the specification, to meet the assessment criteria.
- If a student submits recorded evidence for the portfolio, does it have to be recorded in one take or can it be edited?
  - Yes. It can be edited and it can be recorded in many short takes. However, to ensure parity with the written evidence, feedback from the teacher can only be given once to the student.

- Is it possible for my students to submit their portfolio electronically or does it have to be a hard copy? Some of my students want to combine both written work and audio.
  - There are multiple options described in detail in the Administrative Support Guide. You must also refer to the JCQ Guidance for Non-examined assessment.
  
- Are students assessed on their presentation skills if they are submitting audio-visual evidence?
  - No. Students are not assessed on their presentation skills, they are assessed on the content of what they are saying. It is possible for students to use flashcards or notes when they are speaking.
  
- Can teachers annotate the work?
  - In line with the JCQ Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments 2016-2017, teachers are responsible for marking work in accordance with the marking criteria detailed in the relevant specification and associated subject-specific documents. Teacher annotation should be used to provide evidence to indicate how and why marks have been awarded to facilitate the standardisation of marking within the centre, and to enable the moderator to check that marking is in line with the assessment criteria.
  
  - How to annotate the work:
    - Follow guidance in the relevant specification and associated subject-specific documents.
    - Provide evidence to support your marks. Identify the assessment criteria that have been met.
    - Be clear and unambiguous.
    - Use key phrases from the criteria. For example, awareness of values, uses a variety of techniques, selects appropriate data.
    - Insert annotations at the appropriate point in the work - in the margin or in the text – or write comments on the cover sheet to show clearly how credit has been awarded.
  
  - For audio evidence, the teacher can send the transcript and annotate the transcript accordingly.
  - For video evidence, the teacher can add text boxes as annotations.
  
- Are the portfolio questions the same as the AS level questions?
  - No. In the A Level portfolio students will be discussing their devising process whereas the AS portfolio will focus on the development of a text-based performance.

## Component 2

- Can I use the same performance text as used in another component?
  - No. The performance texts used in this component must be different from the texts used in components 1 and 3.
- It says I can use the same playwright I have already used in Component 1 and 3, is that right?
  - Yes. It is possible as suggested on Page 35 of the A-Level Specification. However, it is good practice to offer a breadth of study appropriate to this level.
- Must the narrative arc be maintained in the group piece?
  - No. This is no longer the case. It is possible to edit the text from a longer section, or to edit it for the number of candidates in the group. It is important that the meaning of the text is maintained.
- Is there still a written performance concept?
  - No. Students will need to write an intention for each performance/design which gives them the opportunity to tell the examiner how they have interpreted and will perform the character/realise the design (please see details on page 40 of the specification).
- Does a design candidate have to do a presentation?
  - No. On Page 38 of the A-Level Specification, it is the design skill that is the focus of the assessment.
- For the group text-based performance and monologue/duologue, does every group/student have to perform from the same text?
  - No. Each group/student can design/perform from a different text.
- Do students need to write an intention for both of the performances in this component, the monologue/duologue and the group piece?
  - Yes. It must be completed for both performances.
- Do the monologues/duologues and the group performance have the same weighting?
  - No. The group performance has a heavier weighting. It is worth 60% of the component 2 marks and the monologue/duologue is worth 40%.
- I have read that my candidates will receive 0 marks for performance if they do not meet the minimum performance time in components 1 and 2. Could you clarify this?
  - Yes, this is correct. If you look at page 11 of the specification the information is here. In component 1 for the devised performance there is a regulatory minimum performance requirement of 6 minutes, irrespective of the size of group and your attention is drawn to the recommended minimum and maximum performance times in the grid, depending on the number of students in the group.

- In component 2 there is a regulatory minimum performance time both for the group piece and for the monologues/duologues. These can be found on pages 35 and 36 of the specification. Students must meet the regulatory minimum performance times as indicated in the grid in order to achieve marks in this section.
- If students fail to reach the regulatory minimum performance time, whether in the group text-performance, group devised performance or in a monologue or duologue they must be awarded 0 marks for that section of that component. They may still, of course, access marks for the other performance (in component 2) and for the portfolio (in component 1).
- Are Pearson going to produce a list of suitable texts for Component 2?
  - No. The suitability of the text is the centre's choice appropriate to the cohort.

### **Component 3**

- Do I have to teach from the editions listed in the specification?
  - It is recommended that candidates use the editions listed in the specifications as all extracts and named sections will be taken directly from these specific editions. (Please see page 56 of the A level specification).
- The three set texts on the legacy specification are on this new specification, are they the same versions?
  - Yes. The three set texts from the legacy specification (Woyzeck, Lysistrata and Doctor Faustus) are the same versions and they will still be available to download for free from our website.
- Will Pearson be supplying digital versions of the set texts?
  - No. These will need to be purchased. We have provided the ISBN's of the versions we recommend in the specification. The three carry-over texts will still be available to download.
- What do students have access to in the written exam?
  - Section A: 500 words of notes for the live theatre evaluation on one performance they have seen.
  - Section B: they will be provided with an extract in the exam.
  - Section C: they must take in a clean copy of the set text they have studied.
- For the live evaluation can the student view more than one live production?
  - Yes. There is no limit on how many productions a student sees, however, their notes and answers can only be about one production. Please see page 55 of the A level specification.
- For the live theatre evaluation, can students see one of the other texts they have used in the course?
  - They can see productions of the texts they have performed in/designed for or that have been used as a stimulus in their devising. We would encourage them to see as much live theatre as they can over the course of the

qualification, but they cannot use any of the set texts for their live theatre evaluation. (Please see page 54 of the A level specification).

- Is it necessary to keep the 'Live theatre evaluation notes form' after the exam?
  - Yes, Centres must retain the 'Live theatre evaluation notes form' until after the Post-Results Services deadline. See page 55 of the specification. To ensure adherence to the requirements the notes are randomly selected by Pearson for review during this period.
  
- In the Sample Assessment Materials, Section B of the exam seems to focus on what a performer and a designer might do, while Section C focuses on what a director might do, is this the format future exams will take?
  - Yes. In Section A, the student is an informed member of the audience, in Section B the student is a performer and designer and in Section C the student is a director, working in the light of a chosen practitioner. Further information can be found on pages 54 to 62 in the specification.
  
- Do my students have to make reference to the play as a whole or the extract provided in Section B, Page to Stage?
  - Both. The extract should focus the answer and help provide examples but there should also be a reference to the play as a whole. This is clearly signposted in the mark scheme.
  
- Would a student need to talk about the rehearsal process?
  - No. The focus of Sections B and C is around approaches and intentions; there is no requirement to discuss the rehearsal process.
  
- For Section C students have to interpret a text in light of a practitioner from a director's perspective, what does this actually mean?
  - Students will need to consider the methodology of a practitioner from the prescribed list (see page 59 of the specification). They should consider the conventions and elements that would be expected from that practitioner in a production.
  
- In Section C can a student look at more than one practitioner?
  - No. Students will not be awarded extra marks for referring to more than one practitioner. (See page 61 of the specification).
  
- Will there always be a new extract every exam series, or will they be repeated?
  - The extracts will never be repeated in their entirety, but there may be overlaps between series.

### **Co-teachability**

- In the written exam can we use the same text for AS and A level Section B?
  - Yes.

- Do marks gained in AS Level count towards A Level?
  - No. They are now two separate qualifications.
  
- Can work assessed as part of the AS course be re-used and re-assessed in the A level?
  - Yes. Students can re-use their exploration of a set text, and their monologue/duologue and group performances. Please see more detail in the link below. It should be noted that they will be assessed at a higher standard as part of the A Level.
  
- How is it possible to co-teach these courses?
  - There are a number of ways of teaching the course; we have provided a number of possible ways [here](#).
  
- I am hoping to co-teach the course to AS and A level students. Is it possible that A level students can perform with AS students as non-assessed candidates and vice versa?
  - Yes. You would need to contact drama assessment in advance to request permission. Please email your requests to [drama.assessment@pearson.com](mailto:drama.assessment@pearson.com). A copy of the email from Drama Assessment must be included with the work sent to the moderator/shown to the examiner. Your attention is drawn to pages 19 and 41 of the specification for the regulations governing the use of non-assessed individuals and it is important that these regulations are understood before work on components 1 and 2 begins.