



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Drama and Theatre (9DR0)
Component 2: Text in Performance

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This component is externally assessed.

In this component students are asked to develop and demonstrate theatre-making skills, working from two key extracts. The key extracts must not be taken from any of the Component Three set texts, regardless of a centre's chosen 2 set texts. They will explore how they realise artistic intentions in performance. Students can enter as either a **Performer or a Designer** or as a combination of these roles. There are two areas of focus.

- 1) A monologue or a duologue performance/design realisation from one key extract from one performance text.
- 2) A group performance/design realisation of one key extract from a different performance text.

Students may complete this component either as a performer or as a designer or combine these roles.

The design roles are:

- costume design
- lighting design
- set design
- sound design.

Drama assessment is looking to add puppetry design as a fifth role for candidates to offer.

Centres wanting to offer design roles to students should refer to the specification on page 40, as well as Appendix 3: Design roles minimum resource guidance for centres to support candidates.

Centres are asked to include a Statement of Intention for the monologue/duologue and the group performance for each candidate. Centres are advised to check that they are using the most current and up-to-date CCIS form on the Pearson website, administrative details have evolved almost annually during the life of this specification. This is not an assessed part of the NEA. The SoI provides a dialogue between the candidate and the examiner of their intentions behind the portrayal, chosen style/genre and decisions made regarding the design or performance that may be pertinent to assessment.

Whilst this carries no discrete marks of its own, examiners report that the SoI offered insight into the chosen portrayal or design in context, supporting the examiner in placing the work in the correct level. Guidelines are set out on page 40 of the AL specification.

Students must work alone or in a pair on either a monologue or a duologue. Time limits for each are clearly detailed on page 35 of the specification. Performers are assessed out of 24 on Vocal and Physical Techniques, Characterisation, Communication, Interpretation and Artistic Intention. **(A02)**

Designers are also assessed out of 24, on Design Skills, Application of Materials, Creative Choices, Understanding of Design Function and Purpose and Creative Intent. **(A02)**

The Designer has a choice of either Set, Costume, Lighting or Sound for both the Group Performance and the Monologue or Duologue.

Students work on a group performance. Time limits and group sizes are detailed on page 36 of the specification.

Performers are assessed on 3 assessment areas, each worth up to 12 marks, up to a maximum of 36. The assessment areas are Vocal and Physical skills, Characterisation and Communication and Interpretation and Realisation of Artistic Intentions. **(AO2)**

Designers are also assessed on 3 assessments areas - their design Skills using materials within time and resource constraints, Design in Context and Communication as well as Interpretation and Realisation of Artistic Intentions. **(AO2)**

Marks for this NEA component are awarded as follows:

Monologue/Duologue/Design - 24

Group Performance/Design - 36

Total marks for Component 2 - 60

Students are assessed as **performers/designers in a text in performance (AO2)**. Marking criteria is set out on pages 42-53 of the A Level specification.

Centres must refer to the **Administrative Support Guide** for guidance in completing preparation of their candidates and the paperwork for this component. All the requisite forms are available on the AL section of the Pearson website. It is required for all components and includes information about all the assessment procedures. It is updated annually with forms and deadlines that apply to the administration of all three components.

Additionally, centres are reminded that there are several resources available to support centres delivering the 2016 specification. Online support material and resources are also available through the Pearson/Edexcel website.

Subject specific content and teaching queries including *Ask the Expert* queries: [Drama, Theatre and Performing Arts | Pearson qualifications](#)

Assessment administration including request for permission for non-assessed candidates, digital theatre, extension requests: drama.assessment@pearson.com

General centre related queries including reporting lost coursework, requesting special requirements, queries regarding entries and results: [Pearson Qualifications Support - Contact Us](#)

Centres are also advised that the FAQ page is updated regularly and designed to answer questions regarding the delivery of the specification. It is important centres look at support materials, as this will help them gauge the expected standard and requirements of this component.

The web address is: [Edexcel A level Drama and Theatre \(2016\) | Pearson qualifications](#)

This report is designed to feedback to centres on the delivery of Component 2 and address some of the issues encountered by both centres and examiners. It will report on the successes in this series, as well as celebrating the work of candidates.

We are pleased to report once again both domestic and international centres had the choice of a visit by an examiner or a digital submission. **Examiners reported there was an increase in larger centres, and those with more than 10 candidates, choosing to have a mix of live visit for groups and digital submission for monologue/duologues. It was reported this made booking dates much easier for larger centres.**

Examiners reported seeing a full range of marks this series. There were instances of full marks being awarded for both the group performance and the monologues/duologues, as well as candidates receiving marks in the limited level. Proportional time penalties were applied to a few monologue/duologue marks where work fell under the regulatory minimum time limit as set out on Appendix 8 of the specification.

Centres must complete a form regarding text choice, as detailed on page 7 of the specification, this is then checked by Drama Assessment. It was made clear on the new form on the Pearson Website that any texts which did not appear could not be selected, and permission must be sought directly via Drama Assessment. Where appropriate permission was granted swiftly for new texts which have been added to the approved list for 2025 where appropriate. Examiners reported a small number of centres still selecting 'forbidden' texts, i.e., texts offered for Component 3 in both Section B and Section C. **This includes any and all versions of Antigone or Dr Faustus.** It was reported by the examining team that some centres changed to 'forbidden texts' following their initial submission or had not completed the text submission form.

Each of these centres were reported to either the Maladministration or Malpractice teams depending on the circumstances and were followed up where necessary with the Heads of Centre.

Most centres had read the specification for A Level and the ASG and had therefore prepared candidates appropriately for assessment. Centres are reminded that it is important that:

- the required forms are downloaded each series
- the correct paperwork is uploaded on time
- the guidance in the Specification, resources on the Pearson/Edexcel website and ASG are used for preparing for Component 2
- forbidden texts or any versions of these are not used

It cannot be stressed enough how important it is for centres to read the specification and support materials each year, creating work that meets the criteria for assessment first and foremost.

There now follows some specific observations from the examination team, based on the observations of Visiting Examiners and the Senior Team in 2024.

Text Extracts

Students must study 2 key extracts from 2 different performance texts. A key extract in this case is an act or scene, moment or collection of moments significant to the text. Centres may select a continuous dialogue or scene or edited extracts for the group performance. Examiners reported some centres still believe they must include the 'narrative arc' in a group performance, this is not the case in the 2016 specification.

All requirements for this component are detailed in the A Level specification. See pages 34 – 38 for further details.

The text extract must be provided as a copy or scan of the original text to support the examination process. **A typed version is not helpful to examiners, who reported that understanding genre and context in an unfamiliar text sometimes required further research.**

For the monologue/duologue the extract can be edited to provide the right amount of material and remain a coherent performance. The performance texts selected by Centres must differ, either in terms of era, convention or genre, themes, form/structure or style, playwright(s) and/or context. Centres are not required to retain the 'narrative arc' in a group performance. Examiners reported many centres successfully performed a section or act.

Centres are permitted to choose different performance texts for each group and each monologue/ duologue. Candidates do not need to all study the same texts or extracts. The teacher-director is the expert in the centre, this was borne out where teachers had selected material that inspired and engaged their cohort. There were outstanding examples seen that the examiners noted they would have 'paid to see'.

The holistic approach to the specification means that the knowledge and understanding acquired through the study of one key extract from a performance text in Component 1 can be applied to assist in the interpretation, development and realisation of key extracts from contrasting performance texts. Similarly, the understanding of creating a performance can inform Sections B and C in Component 3.

The teaching hours spent directing the group performance or time spent facilitating monologues/duologues and wider reading on the texts from which the chosen extracts have been selected should address the implication and impact of social, historical and cultural contexts on the chosen texts and extracts.

There is a free choice of 2 texts for centres, *within constraints*. The text extracts selected must meet the criteria given on page 34 of the specification. They must be from plays professionally published, substantial and have **a running time of at least 60 minutes to provide sufficient depth** and offer students the opportunity to demonstrate exploratory range and depth that is appropriate to the demands of A Level study.

Examiners report that there were some cases where this was not the case, for example an extract of a novel, a poem and song lyrics from a musical were all offered erroneously this series. **These examples were once again referred to the Maladministration and Malpractice teams for investigation in 2024.**

Similarly, there were instances reported of monologues that had been downloaded/found in anthology books and LAMDA speeches which were stand-alone monologues, for which candidates have not been able to access a full script. Examiners reported this lack of access to the full script did not support candidates in

understanding the context of the play or the style. This can be difficult when a candidate cannot understand to whom they are addressing a monologue, several candidates decided to inappropriately address the audience, which in turn did not allow them to access the criteria available.

The **choice of performance text** must also offer opportunity for students to respond as either performer and/or designer. The requirement is that the texts in Component 2 must be different from the texts studied in Components 1 and 3, the vast majority of centres adhered to this requirement.

Unlike Components 1 and 3, centres do not need to select a specific practitioner or style of performance for this component, but there is an expectation that **interpretations must include placing the key extract(s) in the context of the whole performance text**. Where a performance is reimagined stylistically or to a new setting this can make it difficult for candidates to meet criteria relating to meeting the playwright's intentions.

Popular texts for Monologues or Duologues included Things I Know to be True, Goodbye Charles, Prima Facia, Fleabag, Medea, Frozen, Immaculate, A Streetcar Named Desire, Every Brilliant Thing, A Hundred Words for Snow, a selection of Shakespearean monologues and duologues, 5 Kinds of Silence, The Pillowman, Emma, The Seagull, Boys, BU21, Like A Virgin, People, Places, Things, Posh, The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband, Two, The Almighty Sometimes, Lemons, etc., The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf.

Examiners reported some centres chose monologues which offered little range for the performer. Where a monologue was about depression and candidates remained static, the monologue therefore offered little opportunity for the performer to show a range of voice, physicality or use of stage space.

In 2024 once again almost all the examining team reported that they saw examples of inappropriate direct address. Most of the team reported seeing at least one monologue/duologue that had failed to meet the Ofqual regulatory minimum performance time of 2 minutes for a monologue or 5 minutes for a duologue. More than one examiner reported that a centre they visited had multiple candidates with under time monologues. Centres are reminded that candidates should be preparing sufficient material to meet the minimum requirements for A level, as set out in the specification to avoid incurring a penalty – meaning a percentage of marks are not awarded.

Popular texts for Group Performances included All the Little Lights, Eigengrau, Agnes of God, 100, 2:22 A Ghost Story, 4:48 Psychosis, 5 Kinds of Silence, A Monster Calls, Di, Viv ad Rose, Little Women, Girls Like That, Memory of Water, Metamorphosis, East, Monsters, My Mother Said, Our Country's Good, Pool, No Water, Orphans, Abigail's Party, The 39 Steps, The Pillowman, The Trial, The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband, Things I Know to be True, God of Carnage, Broken Biscuits, Women of Troy, The Trojan Women, The Long Road and Top Girls.

Examiners report that most group performances seem to have been teacher directed or led, examiners reported performances were less successful where the group appeared to have been left to self-direct. Examiners reported that performances, and therefore candidates, were the most effective where teachers had chosen appropriate texts for their cohort – whether that be stylistically, length, edit or roles. Examiners reported that most candidates seen appeared to be fully engaged in their performances.

It is pleasing to report that once again, examiners found no reported cases of students having to be awarded 0 marks for Group work failing to meet the minimum Ofqual regulatory minimum performance time of 6 minutes.

Quality of recordings, group sizes and timings:

Most centres provided recordings that were clear in terms of visual and audio quality. The most effective recordings began with a clear image of the group in a long shot and candidates were then introduced in a mid-shot by name and candidate numbers. Centres that used identification placards or an on-screen sign-system provided the examiner with a helpful visual aid for monitoring purposes. Examiners reported that it was effective when candidates introduced themselves by name, number, character and distinguishing features/costume choices.

Unfortunately, examiners reported that some centres are still dressing candidates in identical costumes, hair and make-up. This makes identification difficult in a short introduction to camera/onstage. It was reported that where there were candidates with identical appearances, these introductions took much longer on a visit. Centres are advised, to avoid long delays identifying candidates, to clearly define each candidate. Examiners reported some centres using small wristbands, these changed colour under the lights or were under long sleeves, which to differentiate did **not** work. Whereas other examiners reported excellent practice of colour coded costumes or a range of coloured items to differentiate quickly.

Examiners reported many instances of prolonged sequences in dim lighting or of dialogue over loud music. Whilst this can be effective, examiners cannot award marks for work they cannot directly attribute to a candidate. Examiners reported they were sometimes unable to see who was speaking or be sure which candidate was where on stage, centres are advised to keep the identification of candidates and the assessment criteria at the forefront of directorial decisions. The recording is essential for monitoring or in case of a Review of Moderation or Marking, centres are advised to do as much as possible to ensure the quality of the recording is as high as possible. The camera should be able to capture the dynamics and details of the performance. Where the camera and the examiners were given 'the best seat in the house' this supported the digital examiners and the monitoring team in seeing the performance as best intended by the teacher-director. Examiners reported there were instances that felt like the examination came second to the performance elements or audience experience.

Examiners reported hearing about best practice in centres where a full mock had been completed previously, including a recording for candidates to review, and where issues had been resolved by the centre prior to the examination.

Centres are reminded that further guidance on 'Best practice when recording performance' is available on page 80 of the AL specification (Appendix 4), to enable them to best support their candidates.

To improve the overall quality of recordings:

- Centres should avoid low-lighting levels where possible. Candidates must be clearly seen on the recording. Examiners reported being unable to attribute marks to candidates as they could not tell who was speaking
- Ensure white light/spotlights do not bleach out facial expressions when recording
- Make sure that music/sound is not played too close to the camera/microphone as examiners report dominated/impaired vocal clarity in performance and digitally
- Check the camera is placed in a central position to capture the performance, usually the 'best seat' in the house

- Use costume to visually distinguish each candidate
- Ensure that the microphone/sound recording is effective, prior to performance if using loud music.

Monologues or Duologues

It was clear many centres had selected text sections for monologues/duologues which well exceeded the maximum regulatory requirements. Any work that exceeded the maximum performance time was not able to be credited by examiners.

A full range of work was seen by the examining team. Lower level work was found to demonstrate some or all the following characteristics:

- Monologue/Duologue is under the regulatory time limit
- Monologue was inappropriately addressed out to the audience or camera, instead of to a 'character' onstage
- There was a lack of vocal or physical technique or variety
- The text selected by the candidate lacked depth, or was too challenging or was too removed from the experience of the candidate for it to be effective
- The candidate was uneasy, lacked confidence or rushed the material

Examiners reported much work that was exciting, engaging and transported them from the exam hall, with candidates fully embracing the challenge of the examination and meeting criteria in creative and exciting ways. Characteristics of top level work included:

- Monologue/Duologue meets the regulatory time limit and does not exceed the maximum
- Monologue, in keeping with the style/playwright's intentions, is addressed within 'the world of the play'
- There was a range of vocal and physical techniques evidenced
- Text selected by candidate/teacher is sufficiently challenging, has depth
- Candidates are confident and appear to enjoy or make the most of their performance time

Inappropriate Direct Address There were still occurrences of monologues performed in a style of 'direct address' usually performed to the audience, camera and/or at the examiner.

There are plenty of play texts where direct address is specified by the playwright. Direct address is rarely found in a scene when there is another character on stage, the obvious exception being a Shakespearian aside, which is not direct address.

Two of the five bullet points within the assessment criteria for a monologue/duologue would effectively not be able to be awarded any marks. When 2 out of 5 of the assessment indicators are not met at all, it would be hard to justify a candidate being marked as Assured or Sophisticated. Candidates were therefore disadvantaged where their performance did not reflect an **understanding of the playwright's intentions** within a performance of the text as a whole piece. Candidates were most successful where the other character(s) being addressed was clearly indicated within the performance space by the candidate. As a rule of thumb – would this work in a full performance?

Group Performances

Examiners reported that Group Performances, and therefore candidates, were most effective where teachers had chosen appropriate texts for their cohort – be that stylistically, in length or in roles for candidates.

There was much variation in style and genre seen by examiners, with the influence of practitioners used in Component 1 and 3 perhaps influencing this.

Lower level work was found to demonstrate some or all the following characteristics:

- The candidate follows the ensemble, lacking attack/purpose/energy

The performance lacks sense of ownership by candidates

- The text selected by the teacher(s) is too challenging or simplistic for the cohort
- There is a lack of vocal or physical technique and/or variety
- The role(s) in the group performance did not allow enough depth of characterisation or the candidate relies on the basic and obvious
- The candidate was not given sufficient stage time or too much stage time and was unable to maintain role, energy or dramatic tension
- The communication with the rest of the cast and the audience is limited
- The candidate lacks confidence or was uneasy and/or performed behind the cast/flow of the performance

Examiners reported that there were many innovative and effective performances, where the focus had been the strength of the cohort, with the candidates understanding the material and engaging with it.

Characteristics of top level work for group work included:

- The candidate could lead the ensemble, with commitment, purpose and energy
- The performance had a real sense of ownership for the candidates, they were engaged with the text, which had been explored and/or was within the sphere of their experience
- The text selected by teacher(s) was appropriate in challenge for the cohort
- There was a real range of vocal and physical technique demonstrated
- Their role allowed depth of characterisation and/or the candidate was able to multi role with confidence and distinction
- The candidates were given appropriate stage time and were therefore able to maintain their role(s), energy or dramatic tension
- The communication within the cast and the audience was sophisticated, and the candidates were well rehearsed and slick
- The candidates were confident and performed with focus

Design Candidates

There were instances of candidates for each design option for both Group Performance and monologue/duologues. Candidates did take the opportunity to both perform and design, in these cases the more common pathway was to design for the group performance and perform a monologue.

Lower level Design work was found to demonstrate some or all the following characteristics:

- The design did not enhance the performance for the audience
- The technical skill is limited and/or feels like it has not been worked on for the length of the rehearsal period
- The Design is not integral to the piece and feels like an afterthought or that the designer has worked in isolation from the performers
- The evidence provided does not support work indicative of the length of the rehearsal period
- The design lacked context, a sense of genre or style and/or link to the playwright's intentions of the piece
- The creative choices were obvious, limited or lack depth and detail

Characteristics of top level Design work for group work included:

- The design fully enhanced the performance for the audience

- The technical skill is sophisticated and has clearly been worked on throughout the rehearsal period, not as a bolt-on
 - The Design is integral to the piece and feels at the heart of the creative process and the designer has clearly worked with the performers
 - The evidence provided by the candidate clearly indicates a breadth of work equal to the rehearsal period
 - The design has context, with a sense of genre or style and/or a link to the playwright's intentions for the piece
- The creative choices are sophisticated, authentic and with depth and detail

International Centres

This year all International Centres were once again offered a visiting examiner as well as the choice to have a digital examiner. These visits were carried out by a small team of examiners, some of whom were trained in both GCSE and A Level examining and were able to work at both levels in the same centre or region.

This team of examiners reported a similar range of text choices seen for both sections of the examination as previously mentioned in this report.

Most centres had accessed the ASG and were able to provide the examiner with the correct paperwork and forms in time for the deadline prior to the visit.

LWT portal

The LWT portal opened late, however examiners with early centres reported that Drama Assessment worked with centres to make materials accessible via secure OneDrive links. Other than this, it was reported that the LWT worked well for most centres and that the Support Portal was able to solve all the issues. Centres reported to examiners that the ability to use a greater range of file formats for videos was appreciated, and this saved conversions or compression in centre. On the other hand, many centres reported they had to spend a lot of time waiting for files to upload. Examiners reported some centres uploaded group pieces in 2 or 3-parts, this is completely acceptable, as examiners can mark in sections as well as a continuous video.

The evidence was that candidates had been well-prepared for the examination and supported through the process by their teacher(s). Where this was not the case, it was for reasons mentioned previously in this report.

The examining team saw much work which reassured them that most centres are putting the cohort of candidates at the forefront of the process.

