



Pearson
Edexcel

GCSE (9-1) Drama

Component 1: Devising

Guidance for centres on
portfolio evidence

Issue 3



Introduction

This guidance is written by the Principal Moderator and is intended to support teachers delivering GCSE Drama 9-1 (1DR0) Component 1.

This component is internally assessed and externally moderated.

Further details on how to send this work to your moderator is published in the [Administrative Support Guide](#) (ASG).

We hope that the following advice will help your students to engage with the demands of each portfolio question as outlined on page 15 of the [specification](#).

General approaches to the portfolio

- Portfolios can include; extended written responses, annotations, notes, drawings, sketches, annotated photographs, audio and/or video evidence.
- All annotations do count towards the total word count of 2,000 words.
- The portfolio may be written or verbally recorded, or a student may choose to use both formats in order to present their work. There is no preferred format, and a centre may wish to use a range of formats.
- A personal response is best. It is far more engaging for a teacher and a moderator to read about personal intentions, investigation, discovery and reflection. Writing in the first person is a useful way to keep the individual voice of the student at the heart of the document.
- Students should be reminded that it is important to use a subject-specific vocabulary in their portfolio.
- It might be useful to keep a working diary of the process so that the answers to early questions can be logged and then used in the final portfolio. Blogs and video diaries can also be used to track the students' ideas.
- Students may wish to write or record their portfolio evidence through the process, rather than leaving all six questions until after the final performance.
- The six questions have been designed to track the students' progress from the early stages of the process (questions 1 and 2), to the middle of the devising process (questions 3 and 4), to the end of the process (questions 5 and 6).
- Students may feel that it is relevant to discuss any research in the initial sections of the portfolio, for example, considering how research contributed to the creation of ideas during the beginning of the process.
- All discussion of research should be 'rooted' in the drama. How did students use their research to further explore their intentions for the audience using explorative strategies and drama techniques?

Designers

- Designers should have a full input into the devising process.
- Design portfolios will focus on the student's chosen skill, for example, by researching the way that they want to explore the theme in terms of their design skill. This could include:
 - historical/cultural research of costume, music, context
 - use of their design skill in live theatre about similar themes/issue.
- Designer's must ensure that their design enhances the performance and is instrumental in supporting the communication of intentions to the audience.
- Designers MUST ensure that they include all 'additional documentation' as explained on page 14 of the specification.

- The 'additional documentation' should not be included in word count for the portfolio evidence but should be included as an appendix.

Question 1: What was your initial response to the stimuli and what were the intentions of the piece?

In response to this question students should explain what the stimuli was, and what initial themes, ideas and issues the stimuli inspired. This will need to be kept brief, students could include the following:

- an annotated copy of the stimuli
 - mind-maps and spider diagrams
 - flow charts or tables.
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- Evaluation and analysis: in this question performers and designers can analyse the group's initial thoughts and feelings from the stimuli, as well as how and why they arrived at their final intention.
 - As well as how and why they arrived at their final intention, students can refer to any changes of intentions here and they may briefly evaluate their contribution to developing the intention.

Question 2: What work did your group do in order to explore the stimuli and start to create ideas for performance?

- This question focuses on how the performers and designers move beyond the discussion of ideas and the research of ideas, and how they began to practically explore the ideas from the stimuli.
- Students should use their diary/ blog/ devising process notes to allow them to write about their contribution to the start of the creative journey, for example:
 - taught lessons on skills/ stimuli that developed ideas within their piece of drama
 - workshops that they ran to further explore the stimuli/ research
 - explorative strategies that they adopted to explore the stimuli, research and or their intentions for the audience
 - their first rehearsals
 - moments of work/ performance created early in the process.
- Students must analyse and evaluate moments of work/performance that the group created or completed that was later discarded, as this still forms part of the devising process; however, all decisions made should be fully evaluated and justified.
- **Performers may wish to discuss:**
 - how their role(s) emerged and developed
 - how they used explorative strategies and drama techniques to explore aspects of character, genre, structure, language, style and form.
- **Designer may wish to explain:**
 - how and why they chose their design role
 - how they contributed to the creation of ideas for performance
 - how their initial design ideas helped to develop ideas for the performance
 - how they explored their initial design ideas in order to support the communication of intentions for the audience.

Question 3: What were some of the significant moments during the development process and when rehearsing and refining your work?

- This question is designed to move the students away from the early stages of the process and to engage them in reflecting on, analysing and evaluating, the middle of the devising process.
- Helpful ways to support students in choosing significant moments could include setting evaluation/ review tasks based on the sharing of 'work in progress' at set stages in the process, for example:
 - the first version of any scene
 - the first sharing of the complete piece of drama
 - the dress or technical rehearsal
- As part of this question, students may reflect on why and how they improved specific scenes or moments.
- It may be useful for students to think about the aim and intention of each individual scene or moment of drama created, in order to answer the question and stay focused on the improvements.
- Students may wish to consider moments during the devising and refining process in which they had a 'light bulb moment' and the work therefore, moved in a different direction.
- Students **MUST** keep the intentions for performance at the forefront of this question, ensuring that they analyse and evaluate how effectively the 'significant moments' contributed to their intentions.
- Students must refer to significant moments – this question requires analysis of more than one moment.

Designers may wish to discuss:

- their first designs, improvements made and reasons for these improvements (linked to the intentions for performance)
- how they got from their initial designs to their final designs
- any refinements that the performers made that directly impacted their design
- how they ensured that their design supported the performers in their role and enhanced the performance overall, clearly communicating the intentions.
- significant moments in their role as a designer such as purchasing or constructing costumes, sourcing sounds, rigging/plotting/focusing of their lighting design, construction of their set
- the importance of the technical rehearsal and dress rehearsal in their role as designer and any refinements that were made during or after these processes.

Question 4: How did you consider genre, structure, character, form, style and language throughout the process?

- Students should aim to cover all the areas above in response to the question; however, the depth required under each part of this question will vary according to the student's role and the nature of the devised performance.
- There are significant areas of overlap between some of the following; the way that students respond may reflect this overlap, as they may choose to write about some areas together, for example, genre and style.
- Students must analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of each area; therefore, they may prefer to analyse key moments and scenes in their performance, rather than approach the question as a list of ideas.

The following definitions may be useful for students:

- genre: the type of drama chosen for the performance e.g. comedy, tragedy, docu-drama, etc.
- style: the approach to performance chosen; this may link to practitioners, for example Brechtian, naturalist, minimalist, TIE etc.
- form: the shape of each individual section or scene e.g. movement/ mime based, ensemble scene, duologue, advert, naturalistic scene with moments of thought-tracking etc. (It may support students to think of form as the techniques that they adopt to shape their work)
- structure: the overall shape of the performance reflecting the order that scenes are put together, for example linear, narrative, cyclical, episodic, play within a play etc.
- language: the kind of language chosen, for example contemporary, formal, colloquial, rap etc.
- character: the students should focus on their character and roles in most cases, a character is an imaginary person within the play. An actor can play a role in the play which incorporates one or more characters.

Designers should cover all areas of the question as they should be instrumental in all the decision-making during the devising process. The role of the designer does not sit outside of this process.

How designers can respond to all the areas in question 4

Costume

- Costume designers would need to select styles, colours, fabrics etc. that matched the time period and the style of the performance.
- Costume decisions for naturalism would be very different to a performance in which the work is Brechtian with lots of multi-role, this is for both practical and creative/ symbolic reasons.
- The structure of the performance can influence the costume design decisions; something linear may require costumes that reflect a change in time periods or the age of characters
- If the performance used lots of mime, movement sequences (form) etc. this would need to be supported by the choice of costumes such as the length, the cut and the ability to move freely in the costume
- Costume is instrumental in communicating and supporting characterisation and

this should be discussed and evaluated.

- Costume can be used to support language. For example, a character may dramatically remove a cape on a key line to emphasise what they are communicating. Or a character who speaks formally and is of high status, would need a costume that supports this characterization and use of language.
- Costume designers may choose to use and design masks as part of their costume design to support form, structure, genre and characterisation.

Lighting

- If the work or a scene is naturalistic then the lighting is likely to be for illumination purposes only with general cover or straw gels used to create warmer washes to represent electric lighting in a house.
- If the work is more episodic or abstract, then colour washes may be used to create atmosphere and add symbolism to the performance.
- If the work is horror or tragedy, then there may be a significant amount of up-lighting or back-lighting adopted to create tension and add to a sinister atmosphere.
- Profile spotlights may be adopted to highlight a monologue, thought track or a moment of narration.
- Split stage lighting could be used to support a split stage scene
- Colour washes or gobos for 'chairs duet' moments, or sections of ensemble movement and mime could be adopted to change atmosphere.
- Repeated lighting states may be chosen to highlight cyclical moments in the structure, such as a repeated colour wash, or gobo.
- Lighting states could be created to support transition in episodic performances ie. The same lighting for each transition or for a flashback.
- Lighting could be used to support character development with the use of profile spot lights for thought tracks, red washes to support the increasing anger in a character or blue washes to support character isolation.
- Lighting can support language with changes to the lighting state to highlight lines or words that are instrumental to the communication for the audience. For example, in a Greek Chorus moment / choral speak – the lighting may support the key messages.

Set design and props

- A set design for a piece of naturalism will be very different to the set created for a piece of minimalism or a Brechtian performance.
- Set designs may be very complicated for certain styles and far simpler and more symbolic for other styles.
- If the work is a tragedy or a comedy how does the set support this? A piece of 'farce' may require several doors as part of the set design to support the blocking of the action and to support the comedy.
- Is the set fixed or does it move? How does this support the genre and style of the performance?
- Set designers could consider levels to support characterisation through the introduction of status and hierarchy.
- The set designer should consider how their set design supports the structure. If there are scene changes then these should be considered as part of the design to

support the structure and flow/ pace of the performance.

- If the set is a character's home, place of work or favourite place to be – then this is instrumental in supporting characterisation.
- The set designer may design personal props to support characterisation.
- Is language/ writing used on the set – if so, how and why was this used, how does it link to the overall intentions?
- Projections could be used to support the communication of intention for the audience.
- Set designers should consider the staging type to support the communication of intention and the genre and style of the performance.

Sound

- Sound decisions for naturalism would be very different to the symbolic sound and music that may be included in an abstract performance.
- In work that is more realistic sounds such as door bells, telephones ringing etc. may be required to move the narrative on.
- Is the sound recorded, diegetic, non-diegetic? Different genres and styles would require a different approach.
- Sound can support 'form' as sequences of movement such as 'chairs duet', mime, dream sequences etc. may require sound and music to support the atmosphere and the timing of these sequences.
- Sounds can be used as introductions for characters and repeated for characters.
- Sounds and music can be used to support the emotions that a character is feeling in a scene or a monologue.
- Sounds can help to support the structure of a performance with a repeated sound for transitions in an episodic performance or with sounds that support a change in time or location such as sirens, bird song etc.
- Sound designers should consider the language and lyrics in any songs that they chose – how does this language choice support their intentions?

Question 5: How effective was your contribution to the final performance?

This section is about the individual contribution of the student. There may be references to their contribution as a group/ ensemble; however, students must ensure that they analyse and evaluate their own contribution (their chosen skill or role) in the **final performance**.

Student might want to approach this area of the portfolio by evaluating:

- their contribution to the final performance in a chronological order
- their contribution to key scenes in any chosen order
- their contribution to the final performance in terms of their role or role(s).

- A large proportion of this question requires the students to evaluate how **effective** their role as **performer/designer** was during that **very last performance**

- **Performers** may wish to analyse and evaluate the following:
 - characterisation and how effectively they created a role or role(s)
 - use of performance skills: voice, movement, space, communication with other performers and/ or the audience (in the FINAL performance)
 - their understanding and application of genre, style, form structure, characterisation and language.

- **Designers** may wish to analyse and evaluate the following:
 - use of design skills in performance to create character, location, mood, atmosphere, style and genre.
 - how their design supported the structure and form.
 - whether design ideas worked in practical terms.

Both performers and designers may wish to offer speculative evaluation, for example *To improve my contribution, I could have...*

Question 6: Were you successful in what you set out to achieve?

This question asks the student to look back on the creative choices they have made as **performer/designer** and evaluate their success in front of a live audience

- This statement encourages students to outline the aims of the final piece and then measure the success of their artistic intentions.
- Students can evaluate their contribution in both positive and negative forms. Each are valid choices if supported with detailed examples.

In this section, students may wish to consider:

- the initial intention for performance and whether they achieved this.
- how they know that this was understood or achieved.
- Did this piece of theatre aim to shock, distance, educate, confuse or amuse the audience?
- If the initial intention changed or developed, how and why? Was this a successful change?
- the impact of the chosen genre, style, form, structure and language, and whether these were successful in communicating the intention.
- For **performers**, did the characterisation and roles contribute effectively to the final performance, helping to create the intended impact?
- For **designers**, did the design ideas and realisation contribute effectively to the final performance, helping to create the intended impact?

This question also encourages reflection, and there is an opportunity in this response to consider ways in which the final piece might have been improved or developed.

As with all previous sections, the best responses will be personal.

As the questions do not have to be addressed separately, some students may wish to respond to question 5 and 6 together to allow for more depth of analysis and evaluation of key moments in the final performance.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety is not part of the mark scheme; however, it is detailed in the specification as an 'essential' area that students must cover; therefore, it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all students are aware of this and do incorporate this into their Portfolio Evidence.

Health and Safety aspects should be considered throughout the devising process, this applies to students who take on the role of performer as well as those students who decide to be a designer.

Health and Safety could include the following:

- rigging of lights with the use of safety chains etc.
- storage of props and set safely
- storage of paints and other toxic/ chemical substances
- the length of costumes and fit
- fireproofing of materials used
- taping down of all electrical cables
- use of blackouts and safety on-stage and back stage
- warm up (vocally and physically)
- technical rehearsals to walk through all transitions, technical aspects and potential hazards.
- awareness of trip hazards and precautions taken
- appropriate footwear and clothing when rehearsing
- procedures and safety when choreographing physical theatre.

These ideas do not form an exhaustive list, but hopefully give some ideas with regards to how to approach this compulsory element of the Component 1 Portfolio.

Health and safety must be referenced in the Portfolio Evidence and it does form part of the total word count – 2,000 words maximum.

Health and safety can be addressed in any section of the portfolio, or as a separate section; however, as it is not part of the mark scheme it only needs to be referenced to demonstrate that students have considered health and safety as part of their working practices.

If students chose to discuss the technical rehearsal as part of their Portfolio Evidence, then this may be a good place to reference health and safety considerations.

Other tips from the Principal Moderator

- Make sure students document their work within the agreed word and/or time limits. Where portfolios do exceed the word maximum, all work above the upper limit of 2,000 words will be disregarded by the moderator.
- When presenting portfolio work to camera, students must introduce themselves by candidate name and number. More guidance on recordings can be found in the Administration Support Guide (ASG). This document can be found on the Pearson website.
- Each question should enable students to access marks across both Assessment Objectives.
 - AO1 (create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance)
 - AO4 (analyse and evaluate own work).
- Whilst the last three questions in the portfolio naturally allow for explicit analysis and evaluation, students must analyse and evaluate across all the portfolio questions if choosing to use the questions to structure the work.
- Responses that demonstrate isolated analysis without leading to evaluation can achieve a maximum of 5 marks only, out of the 15 marks available for AO4.
- If a student chooses to prepare a vocal portfolio, portfolio questions may be asked by the teacher- assessor or used to provide the same level of structure to the student's response as the written portfolios.
- Students must stay focused on their chosen skill when responding to all the questions.
- Students should use the portfolio evidence to track their journey and to evidence the progress that they made at each stage of the process.
- Teacher-assessors may only offer students feedback once before the portfolio evidence is submitted. All feedback must focus on meeting the requirements of the assessment criteria.
- Teacher-assessors must justify the marks that they award; therefore, teachers must either annotate the work as they mark it, or add comments to the authentication form which is attached to the portfolio evidence before it is submitted to the moderator.