



Pearson

**Examiner's Report
Principal Examiner Feedback**

Summer 2023

**Pearson Edexcel GCSE
Drama (1DR0/02) Performance from Text**

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Summer 2023

Publications Code 1DR0_02_2306_ER

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1DR0 GCSE Drama Summer 2023

1DR0/02 - Component 2: Performance from Text Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) 20% of the qualification – 48 marks

Introduction

The 2023 exam series was the first that ran the qualification as normal following the reduced content in 2022 and the TAGs in 2020 and 2021.

Despite the joy of this return to normality, it was once again a series where centres had to be resilient. Making the adjustment back to the full requirements of two extracts was a workload increase and I am grateful to teachers for successfully enabling the full assessment opportunity for the students this year.

This report is written as an addition to the previous Component 2 reports; to offer support to centres by highlighting key positives that went well in the 2023 series as well as outlining key areas that can be strengthened for 2024.

The Principal Examiner's report is to be used in conjunction with the other materials documented, which are available on the Pearson website, to best support centres for the 2024 series:

Link to Pearson website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/drama-2016.html>

The examined Component 2, was introduced to centres in 2018 as part of the first year of the revised three Component GCSE specification 1DR0. Following the requirements of the regulator regarding changes to all GCSEs, the Component 2 Exam is worth 20% of the overall marks available for the GCSE.

For the Component 2 exam each centre chooses the performance / design options taken by candidates, the texts and the audience present for the examination performances.

Now, in its sixth year, Component 2 has flourished into a performance exam which offers students the differentiation and variety that is required for them to succeed independently and play to their own strengths. Centres have taken the opportunity to offer a wide pathway of performance and design options and the variation of options taken across the UK and Internationally continues to widen year upon year, proving Component 2 to be successful in its support and variation to suit all students.

A marked consideration for 2023 was the retainment of the support, that was put in place last year, where centres were given the option to choose whether students were assessed in a live exam with the examiner present or with the examiner marking via a recording after the exam had taken place. This option will now be permanently in place for the lifetime of the qualification.

Overview of the 2023 Exam Series

The 2023 series for Component 2 returned to the normal requirements. The reduced content amendments removed from last year and I am delighted to report that all centres enabled provision for all students to be assessed for two extracts for examination. However, perhaps due to the reintroduction of the two extracts it was noted that there were an increased number of below minimum time performances seen this year, particularly so for monologues.

One examiner reported 'It was lovely to see drama students fully engaging with performance work without the constraints that the previous pandemic had wrought – there was a return to more group work - and a sense of joy and confidence in the live visits. Candidates were generally very well prepared to present two extracts, rather than one, and presented an exciting array of an ever-expanding variety of texts. Candidates were frequently enabled to play to their own strengths – and many succeeded in creating highly watchable theatre as a result of their independent and individual approaches.'

All centres must note please that in the normal running of the exam, which was applicable this year and will continue to be going forwards, all performance and design students not present for the Identification line up and performance are marked as absent by the examiner. Special Consideration can be applied for by the School's Exams Officer.

The 2023 series ran from 30th Jan – 31st March in order to allow all entries to be made prior to the LWT opening. Retaining this shorter timeframe was successful in enabling early centres to be examined prior to the half term break but also having gave the provision for sufficient time to be available in the most popular last few weeks of March.

All centres must note please that exams outside of the window are not permitted.

Presentation of Component 2

For the Component 2 exam each centre chooses the performance/design options taken by candidates, the texts (which adhere to the contrast ruling) and the audience present for the examination performances. The return to normal and resulted in the vast majority of centres having audiences with the remainder of the GCSE Drama cohort present. This was a joy for examiners to witness; the buzz that live theatre audiences bring; especially to the performer's peers.

Content of Component 2

Performance from Text, 1DR0/02 is an externally examined Component, with one Assessment Objective. The focus of the Component is: A02 Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance.

Centres are free to cover the performance/design of the two chosen key extracts in any way. This freedom caters for centres with different cohort sizes and allows them to choose group, solo and/or partner-based routes for assessment.

Candidates must perform/design in **two separate extracts, from the same play**. There is no requirement for the whole cohort to use the same play; different groups of candidates may use different plays.

The performance text must have been professionally commissioned or produced and be at least 45 minutes in length.

Assessment of Component 2

Component 2 is marked out of a total of 48 marks. The two extracts are assessed separately with each being worth 24 marks.

The three specific skill areas assessed are:

Assessment criteria for Performers:

- Vocal and physical skills
- Characterisation and communication
- Artistic intention and style/genre/theatrical conventions

Assessment criteria for designers

- Design skills
- Communication and contribution to the performance as a whole
- Artistic intentions and style/genre/theatrical conventions

Intention of Communication

Candidates complete 100-200 words per extract to communicate their intention for the performance/design. These are uploaded to the LWT to be submitted to the visiting examiner 7 days prior to the exam. Candidates are free to structure the Intention of Communication in their preferred style. There are no specific marks awarded for the 100-200 words, however, candidates should demonstrate, through what they write in the responses to the four outlined questions found on page 35 of the specification, what and how they intend to communicate in the performance/design.

Key elements of content

The chosen performance text must contrast in time, genre and playwright with the set text studied for Component 3. The contrast requirement form must be completed, which can be found on the website or by using the link here:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/forms/gcse-drama-component-2-text-choices.html>

Due to the requirement for the texts studied in this qualification to contrast, the choice of text for component is affected by the choice of set text in Component 3. The text you choose for this component must be from a different time from the set text; it must also be written by a different playwright and be from a different genre. In addition, **no Component 3 set text can be used for Component 2 performances**. More detail about text choices can be found on pages 6-7 of the specification. There is a list of plays provided that could be used in GCSE Drama Component 2 on the website. The link can be found below.

Unfortunately, there were some instances this year where centres had not adhered to the contrast ruling, either by performing one of the Component 3 set texts or by not meeting the contrast requirements. Centres should be aware that issues such as this are escalated. All centres must ensure that this requirement is adhered to and should complete the performance text choices prior to the exam series.

Reminders to centres for text and extract selection:

- Candidates must perform/design both Extract 1 and Extract 2 from the same play
- Each extract must adhere to the regulatory time guidelines – undertime performances incur a marking penalty, which is applied after examiner marking
- Each extract should adhere to the recommended time guidelines
- Performances that overrun will only be awarded marks up until the maximum time limit
- Identification of all performance and design candidates must be given before the start of extract 1 and extract 2 for all students
- Extract 1 and extract 2 are assessed separately and must have a clear start and end, with identification before each and a marking break in- between
- Candidates are assessed in two extracts only and can appear onstage for only the two assessed extracts
- It is advised that in order to access all levels of the A02 Criteria, performance candidates should play one role only in an extract

There is essential guidance for all centres about all GCSE Components in the Administrative Support Guide (ASG) document, which is updated for each series. Centres must download this from the website as soon as it is available each Autumn. The Assessment forms for all three Components are available as appendices to the ASG in PDF format and as editable Word documents. The forms can also be downloaded from the Edexcel website, GCSE Drama homepage.

Other details of the Component requirements can be found on the Edexcel website on the GCSE Drama homepage in the Frequently Answered Questions (FAQ) Document and Specification.

The main link to the Drama home page is:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/drama-2016.html>

The website also contains exemplar material for component 2 with the Principal Examiner's commentary and a guide to interpreting text for performance:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/Drama/2016/teaching-and-learning-materials/GCSE_Guide_to_Interpreting_Text.pdf

Text and Extract choice

The majority of centres in 2023 presented extracts that met the requirements of the specification for the recommended timing per extract with one role per candidate per extract. This gave candidates the maximum opportunity to access all levels of the assessment criteria. However, it was noted from the examining body that there were an increased number of undertime extracts that did not meet the minimum time requirements.

A number of examiners reported similar comments to ' Some centres had candidates who were better prepared for one extract over another, resulting in some difference in marks across the

two extracts.' And 'There was a recognition of a notable number of pieces under time.' Another commented that 'It is clear that extract choice is a contributing factor to success; centres that had carefully matched the choice of extract to the student's skill were ultimately more successful. 'And another remarked 'there was a recognition of a notable number of pieces under time in the weaker extracts.

Centres are consequently urged to check that all extracts to be used for assessment meet the minimum time requirement in length. The continued advice from the Principal Examiner is that when appointing extracts, the most straightforward process is to:

- First create a variety of extracts from the centres preferred texts for the chosen performance routes ie; group of 4 (2M 2F), monologue (F), monologue (M), duologue (M, F) etc
- Then group and cast the students into these chosen extracts. It is likely that by casting and editing extracts after creating and/or casting the groups, centres may find they run into difficulties by trying to shoehorn a pre- selected group size into an extract that does not fit. This subsequently results in the shape and meaning of the play being altered and/or students multi-rolling in order to produce a performance of the required length. None of these results benefit students in accessing the higher levels for Component 2.

Examiners reported the vast majority of centres that used monologue and duologue extracts for assessment this year, had provided a suitable extract that maintained the shape and meaning of the play. As previously advised centres are always encouraged to carefully consider that a text contains suitable extracts for the intended options before editing and casting.

Based on the work seen in this component for the 2023 series, centres should consider the following:

- Choice of play-texts and whether students will be best supported by the level of challenge
- **Complete the online contrast checklist** to confirm that all Component 2 performance texts contrast in genre, time, playwright with the Component 3 text studied
- **Not select any of the prescribed Component 3 set texts for candidates to perform/ design for in Component 2**
- Only one candidate for each design option can be attached to any one extract ie one costume designer only per extract.
- All design students must be present for the Identification, provide an Intention of Communication, script extract and be included on the Centre Information Sheet
- When editing the text, dialogue cannot be added but character/content can be edited and removed as long as the meaning and shape of the text is maintained. Adapting references from within the text is not permissible i.e. references in 'Bouncers' and 'Shakers' such as "Mrs Thatcher", "chicken-in- the-basket" and "White City dog-racing" must be performed as written. The adaptation of references would be considered addition of text which does not meet requirements for the component. Unfortunately, in 2023 there were some instances where centres had added to the text with devised dialogue. This is not permitted in the specification requirements.
- Monologue and duologue extracts must not be spliced from different sections of the play. Plays should be chosen that contain suitable monologue and duologue extracts which require limited editing to suit the assessment purposes for component 2. Centres are

strongly cautioned that an extract which has altered the original playwright's intention for shape and meaning is likely to create limits for the candidate in terms of fully meeting the criteria for A02 Artistic intention and style/genre/theatrical conventions.

- Changing the gender of a character is permissible. This can be done while retaining the shape & meaning of the text (for example Malvolia in the 2017 NT *Twelfth Night*) provided no other changes are made. I would like to further this point, that has been made in the PE Report since the launch of the specification; that candidates have always been free to make this choice in Component 2 and I am delighted to have reported from the examining body that they see candidates evidently benefitting from the freedom to creatively explore their character within their chosen artform, just as actors have the freedom to do so in a professional setting.
- Candidates can perform an extract from a piece of musical theatre or a play with music, however the emphasis must be on the delivery of the text and performance. **Please note that songs cannot be spoken for a monologue or duologue extract.** There were some centres that did so from the songs in *Blood Brothers* for 2023 and all cases were escalated.
- Texts must have been written for the intention of performance in the theatre. Radio play scripts and scripts written for film/television are not permitted.
- A02 specifically assesses development of characterisation. Therefore, centres are strongly cautioned that the short length of stage time available for component 2 does not allow for the depth of character to be reached if more than one character is played by one student in any given extract. It is likely that if a student multi-roles as more than one character within an extract, they will fail to reach the upper levels of assessment available for component 2.
- Please note, the exception to this rule is when the playwright's original intention is for actors to multi-role i.e. *Teachers* by John Godber, *Mark Wheeller* plays or plays written in the first voice i.e. *Adult Child/ Dead Child*. In these types of text, the use of multi-role maintains the integrity of the text as written and supports the achievement of candidates within the component. The most straightforward way to check if multi-rolling is the playwright's original intention is to check the cast list. If the playwright has stated actors play more than one character, then this is their intention. If not, then centres are strongly cautioned that multi-rolling is likely to create limits for the candidate playing all affected roles in terms of fully meeting the criteria for both A02 Characterisation and communication and A02 Artistic intention and style/genre/theatrical conventions.
- Centres can use the Ask The Expert service to check specific texts if guidance is required.

Timing

The time limit requirements for both extracts resumed to the normal requirements for 2023 following the reduction put in place for post Covid 2022. A scaled reduction is applied by Pearson after mark entry, to the face value mark awarded by the examiner at the live examination for performances that do not meet the regulatory timing. Unfortunately, there was a rise this year in the number of extracts that required the scaled reduction to be applied post marking.

Based on the work seen in this component for the 2023 series, centres must:

- Ensure extracts will last for the required length

- Ensure that candidates know and plan for the regulatory, minimum and maximum timing guidance for their chosen performance option
- Ensure candidates consider timing issues in rehearsal ie understanding nerves can impact pace and consequently timing
- Ensure that candidates know marking stops at the maximum time
- Ensure that candidates know that a performance may be self-penalising if under the minimum time requirement and a scaled reduction will be applied post exam.
- Know that the timing guidance on page 30 of the specification applies to one extract and must be doubled to cover the two key extracts
- Ensure that candidates know that the timing and assessment of each extract commences when the performance begins, on the first and only attempt. There were a few instances in 2023 where students were seemingly unaware that the first is their only permitted attempt. Centres are urged to inform all candidates of this prior to the exam to ensure they are well prepared.
- To indicate timing, the beginnings and ends of pieces were generally clearly shown, with lights up, lights down in most instances and in others a verbal cue from the teacher to begin and audience clapping to end

Notable comments regarding timing for 2023 from the examining team included:

- Monologues tended to be the most likely performances to fall under the minimum regulatory timings, when students were less well rehearsed.
- There was a rise in the number of candidates who did not meet the minimum timing, which limited their ability to access all levels of the A02 Assessment Criteria.
- Groups tended to be towards the shorter end of the recommended timings, but generally provided sufficient stage time for each candidate to meet the assessment requirements.
- Duologues were the most likely to over-run the timing.
- The vast majority of performance timings adhered to the requirements as set out in the ASG.

One examiner reported 'there were many more undertime performances seen this series. The greatest number of undertime pieces were monologues and to a slightly lesser degree duologues. This was usually the result of the extract being too short, or the student/s 'racing' through it. Centres had sometimes chosen extracts which were likely just over the minimum time in rehearsals; but then became more rushed under exam conditions resulting in a performance which was under the regulatory minimum.'

It was recognised this could also have been due to time pressures as the normal specification requirements return.

Intention of Communication

It is an OFQUAL requirement that an Intention of Communication must be provided for both extracts for all students. The four questions to be answered for each Intention of Communication can be found on page 35 of the specification. Teachers do not mark the

Intentions for Communication; they are uploaded to the LWT for the examiner 10 days prior to the exam to provide an insight into the candidates' intentions for the visiting examiner. Candidates are free to structure the Intention of Communication in their own preferred style. Candidates utilised this opportunity best in 2023 when they made clear, well researched and informed points that demonstrated an understanding of the text and extract and their performance/design intention to the examiner. Although there is no specified layout of the Intention of Communication it was seen as good practice in 2023 when students used the questions as sub-headings.

An Intention of Communication proforma is available on the forms and administration tab within the website support materials. Whilst some centres chose to use the proforma this year it continues to remain a centre/student choice whether to utilise this or to structure the Intention of Communication in their own preferred structure and style.

Examiners commented that in the main the Intentions of Communication were provided for all students, however in some instances the wrong IOC was attached to a student on the LWT. It is vital for this reason and others that file naming is accurate.

Examiners summarised:

- Overall, the Intentions of Communication were well written and showed a clear understanding of characterisation and the intended audience impact.
- The standard of the communication varied greatly from centre to centre, but nonetheless, the layout and structure of the document clearly guided the students to be focused in their responses, which despite not impacting their assessment clearly provided prior focus of intent.
- Few centres provided only one 'umbrella' IOC form covering both extracts, rather than a discrete IOC for each of the two extracts as stipulated in the ASG. This meant that these candidates did not go into very much depth at all and did not make well informed points about their role: a brief overview at best. Centres are reminded it is a Specification requirement to provide one IOC per extract.
- It was notably supportive when a structured format was used (or house style) – covering the questions/areas outlined in the ASG – these candidates were enabled to demonstrate an understanding of the extract and their intentions to the examiner.
- Most centres this year used the proforma supplied by Pearson allowing each area to be addressed effectively.
- Detail and depth varied, which whilst not forming part of the assessment often bore correlation to the final A02 mark awarded.
- Most students completed 100 – 200 words and communicated a clear understanding of their character.
- In most cases these were submitted in advance, although there were a minority of candidates that gave them in on the day for a live exam.

The Intention of Communication should focus on the chosen 10 minute key extract. Where performance times are less than 10 minutes ie, monologue / duologue, students perform a

section from within the 10 minute extract studied. The Intention of Communication must refer to the whole 10 minutes they have studied.

Please note for scanning: It is permissible for centres to only scan the extract to be performed rather than the entirety of the 10 minute extract that is studied. In this instance the student must make note of the page numbers for the full 10 minute extract on the front of the performed extract provided and refer to the full extract within the Intention of Communication.

Exam schedule

The length of the exam schedule is dependent on the number of candidates examined:

- Exam session - 3 hours per 20 students examined
- Sessions can be morning/ afternoon/ twilight/ evening
- The sessions must run consecutively and finish by 9pm
- The centre is free to co-ordinate their exam schedule to best suit the needs of the students. There must be a short break in-between each group for the examiner to mark. The length of each marking break may vary depending on the chosen extract which comes before it, a guide is being Monologue, Duologue – 3–5-minute break, Group of 3/4 – 10 minute break Group of 5/6 – 15 minute break.
- Nearly all centres enable a schedule that ensures examiners can mark in-between performances during the group changeover and for the main part stayed in the examination room. This was best negotiated between the centre and examiner.

Pertinent to the 2023 series it was noted that:

- There were minimal issues with booking exams; the vast majority of centres were accommodated with their first choice of date and preferred method of assessment.
- All exams were completed by the 31st March.
- All live exams adhered to the schedule requirements, and all had an audience
- The most popular time was unquestionably the final two weeks of March, for both live and recorded exams. Centres must note for 2024 that if holding a late exam time for upload for post exam materials to the LWT should be considered and communicated to the examiner. This must be within 7 working days of the examination date.
- Centres must also ensure they have pressed submit when uploading the post exam materials and emailed the examiner to communicate this has been completed
- Most exams started and finished within the school day. Most centres scheduled their examination performances, allowing for a brief marking break in between each.
- Centres are reminded that 20 candidates are examined in a 3 hour AM/PM session with a cohort of up to 40 candidates within a school day (6 hour period).

Identification before each extract

The centre must ensure that **before each extract** candidates identify themselves to the camera. Students are required to identify themselves by name, candidate number and role at the beginning of each extract. All performances, student identifications and designer Additional Documentation must be recorded and uploaded onto the LWT within 10 days of the exam.

Centres are advised to pay particular attention to ensuring all students in a performance group can be easily identified through their costume or physical appearance ie hairstyle. Examiners do not enter into any discussion with students /staff/audience members at the end of the performance. Identification is of course particularly important for a recorded exam. Centres are requested to ensure that Identification notes on the CCIS form are accurate and match the student's appearance on the day of the recording.

Identification was noted as being more robust this year with centres having take note of the advice provide after the 2022 series: Centres must always check that examiners have clearly identified candidates before the examination and before each discreet extract commences. Identification must be clear also on recording with the CCIS ID description matching the exact ID of the student in the recording. There were some issues of the incorrect student work being attached to a student on the LWT. Centres must ensure all students have the correct Intention for performance, script extract and performance recording attached.

Performance/Design pathway

Centre choices from the variety of performance and design options were varied and resulted in centres following a wide breadth of different pathways for Component 2. Following the inevitable trend last year, post Covid, for monologues and duologues, the full breadth of different pathways were utilised once again this year. The most popular choice was a group performance for extract one followed by a monologue or duologue for the second extract. Design lessened in popularity from last year but nevertheless still continues to follow a notable trend in growing preference, which has been a pattern since the start of the specification.

Performance Options

Performers can choose any of the possible combinations;

- 2 monologues
- 2 duologues
- 2 performances in a **group of 3-4**
- 2 performances in a **group of 5-6 Or any combination of the above.**

Once again it was noted that 'it was great to see such a range of combinations at the majority of centres, with candidates opting for the options which were suitable for them allowing for a more varied examination day and personalised experience for candidates.

The Principal Examiner would like to reiterate there is no preferred option/style; and remind all centres that the Assessment Criteria is applied in the same way to all options. Students are encouraged to follow the performance/design pathway that is most suited to them.

Notable characteristics of 2023 achievement

- The key factor for success seemed to be the level of preparation and depth of understanding. Examiners saw some extremely polished theatre and truly outstanding performances. At the upper end, students were very well rehearsed and showed a perceptive understanding of their characters and texts and were creative in their interpretation
- On the whole students were well prepared and well-rehearsed for Component two. There was a good range of texts that met the needs of the students and provided challenge. Where students were less successful, they often did not know their lines and were using scripts or prompts as support. This resulted in flat performances.
- Students were generally very well prepared to present two extracts and were frequently enabled to play to their own strengths – and many succeeded in creating highly watchable theatre as a result of their independent and individual approaches.

Higher scoring work contained features such as:

- Candidates were well prepared, had well-chosen extracts and were able to engage emotionally with the content giving believable and engaging performances.
- Candidates really understood the character they were playing and had a firm grasp of the extract and the text they were performing. Characters were detailed with a clear understanding of how the scene changed and developed during the performance and were able to explore this in the duration of the performance.
- Vocal and physical skills were creative, expressive, and engaging. There was a clear connection and rapport with group members, the audience, and the examiner. Character was assured throughout and the performance had a sustained focus, energy and commitment for top level marks.
- High quality performances tended to reflect the intention and style of the original text successfully with clear understanding of emotional impact.
- Committed performances vocally and physically, with assured and comprehensive characterisation
- Comprehensive characterisation, Voice/ movement was assured – comprehensive understanding of the intentions
- A sustained confidence and understanding of their role, with control over and appreciation of the chosen style, applying it with security and ease, rather than just through rehearsed action
- Communication consistent with the audience and examiner, resulting in an engaging performance that conveys both dialogue and meaning to all throughout
- Vocal and physical skills are fluid and show range and depth and ownership of role/s presented
- Accomplished and skilful voice and physical skills
- Believable and committed characters
- Rapport with peers/audience was outstanding, enhancing the performance
- Complete and sustained control throughout performance
- Absolute understanding of role, style, genre, play
- Complete energy, ease and refined
- Duologues: Where the text had been chosen to suit the pair this resulted in engaging work at all levels. The majority of duologues were consistent in meeting the required

timing requirements. The most successful extracts were those that created some sort of tension or conflict thus allowing the candidate to demonstrate thoughtful characterisation and artistic control as well as varied voice/movement.

- There is no doubt that a carefully chosen text for a student/students allows them to reach their full potential
- Students who had clearly engaged with the extracts and the characters, offering detailed character portrayals and deep commitment when in role
- In many cases monologue students made a concerted effort to deliver meaningful, thoughtful, inventive, powerful, entertaining and engaging pieces of theatre. These students communicated an in-depth understanding of the extract and the play from which it was taken and took advantage of the opportunity to create a strength of connection directly with the audience. The best work was seen where the choice of text was appropriate for those candidates and they shaped the piece in terms of pace and vocal modulation and incorporated some imaginative physicality. At the higher levels monologues were very well-rehearsed and performed with confidence. The most successful students were able to demonstrate the full range of skills/intentions/understanding of form in the short amount of time available
- Where extract choices challenged and extended the students and there was a clear awareness of the scene within the context of the play. Some of the best work was very powerful and clearly fulfilled the playwright's intention, demonstrating careful blocking of movement, gesture, facial expression, shaping of the dialogue, creation of style and understanding of the dramatic context.

Low scoring work contained characteristics liken to:

- Candidates lacked some of the creative ideas of their peers and the performance skills to develop their work in detail. They had sometimes not used all their time and lacked changes in vocal and physical skills to fully develop their character and lacked detail in their performance. These pieces were often under rehearsed and prepared and a lacked confidence in performing
- Poorly prepared performances which fell under the regulatory performance time also fell into this bracket
- Lack of exposure and stage time
- Use of multi-rolling preventing any detail or depth in any one role
- Lack of self-belief in the role – going through the motions
- Students who only demonstrated very basic characterisation – their voice was monotonous, and they had added little or no movement
- Self- penalising short length of extracts
- Lack of confidence in performance
- Loss of focus resulting in lost character / 'corpsing'
- Minor roles played, with less performance time in a group extract
- Lack of vocal projection and obvious self-consciousness in physicality, eg lack of audience awareness
- Staying still / pacing throughout performance due to nerves or lack of rehearsal of physicality and proxemics
- Some performances had a number of blackouts / a rare few had costume changes which slowed the pace of the performance and took up time where candidates could have been performing and be awarded marks
- Lack of understanding of the text / extract which led to work that was at best a hesitant

recitation of words and not a performance

- Misunderstanding of the role
- It can be self-penalising where candidates play multiple roles. Some candidates were placed at a disadvantage if their role had less stage time within a group piece
- Those candidates with minor roles had less opportunities to gain marks or spent much time off stage. Larger groups which failed to reach the minimum recommended timing - these became self-penalising
- Lack of engagement with either the character or the context
- In the few instances where centres had spliced sections of dialogue from a script to create a monologue this did not support the candidate in their performance
- Use of scripts were again seen this series although most commonly for only one extract from the two. It is important that students are aware it is self-penalising if they refer to the script in the exam, either by reading from the script onstage or by requesting prompts. Students who are under prepared for the exam will not be able to access all levels of the criteria for A02. In support for centres where candidates struggled to prepare sufficiently for the examination I would reference back to the Getting Ready To Teach materials and in particular the course planning guidance on the website to best structure the timing and delivery of the GCSE course to ensure students are well prepared for each component:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/Drama/2016/teaching-and-learning-materials/GCSE_Drama_Course_planner.pdf

Design Option

There can be up to one designer per design role (set, costume, lighting, sound) for any monologue, duologue or group extract – maximum of 4 design candidates attached to any one extract.

Additional Design candidates' documentation must be available to the examiner on the day. See page 33 of the Specification for further guidance.

Design was the lesser chosen option seen this series. Costume was the most popular option with lighting and set also chosen by many. Fewer sound candidates were seen this series.

Additional Documentation was notably varied in its content and support. The strongest Additional Documentation illuminated the creative process and drew attention to specific design decisions. It was noted by some of the team that it was often the case that the documentation surpassed the actual design seen in performance, in its quality, which was able to communicate the intentions to the examiner. However, it is important to note that this does not impact marking as such as the Additional Documentation does not form part of the A02 criteria. The most comprehensive documentation often contained more detail and content than was required, commonly consisting of portfolio level work, or a full PowerPoint presentation and the least seen, was nothing, or very minimal.

Centres that had thought carefully about the design opportunities in an extract provided designers with opportunities to demonstrate the design skills across the two extracts.

In some cases, designers presented the same design twice with only minor adjustments - notably in set and costume. Whilst permissible, centres should be aware this did not always allow the student to flourish in the design criteria for both extracts as the one design would be more readily applicable and suitable to one extract more than the other.

Centres are reminded that the Additional Design documentation must be provided for the examiner on the exam day and recorded by the teacher for the LWT. The design candidate must not be included in the recording of the Additional Documentation. Centres are reminded that where design candidates Additional Documentation is not recorded and provided to the exam along with the performance recordings a RoMM is potentially not possible.

Centres are reminded that:

- Only one candidate for each design option can be attached to any one extract ie; one costume designer only. Therefore, a maximum of four design candidates can be attached to the same extract ie; one set, one lighting, one costume, one sound
- The Additional Documentation must be given to the examiner at the start of the exam day, recorded and uploaded to the LWT along with the performances. The Additional Documentation must then be retained in the centre.
- Designers must work collaboratively within a group of performers within their chosen area of design
- Where a candidate is assessed in a design role, it is their design skill that is the focus of the assessment, rather than their technical competence in the operation or use of equipment
- Designers are assessed on the realisation of their design, A02
- The Intention for Communication questions (specification pg 35) must be uploaded to the LWT with the pre exam materials
- Designers must be in the identification line up before both extracts
- There is no requirement for design candidates to realise the design themselves however students are assessed on the realisation of their design, therefore candidates should be involved in the process of realising the designs in a supervisory role, at the very least

High scoring work had some of these characteristics:

- Imagination and detail in the completion of the design
- clearly made this a positive choice and had worked with the performance candidates
- detailed and subtle lighting and sound used to create atmosphere, costumes that showed clearly creative approaches to character enhancement and sets which really added something extra to performances

Low scoring work had some of these characteristics:

- The costumes lacked the detail and historical and social context of the play
- Occasionally text/extract choices for Sound did not always demand sound, so sound choices were quite simple
- Poor design examples included rudimentary lighting, obvious sound choices, costumes not fitting the context and set being the use of unchanged stage blocks
- The lighting choice did not always seem justified by the text.
- The IOC did not illuminate the design decisions

Administration support

Centre Initial Contact and Communication

The Component 2 Exam Window from 1st February – 31st March. Exams outside of the window are not permitted.

Opportunity was again provided for centres to opt for an early date in the first two weeks of the examining window which some centres chose to do this year. The link to the form is below:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/Drama/2016/teaching-and-learning-materials/GCSE%20Drama-Summer-2022-early-visit-form.pdf>

The large majority of exams were organised quickly and efficiently between examiner and centre. However, there was a delay in some live centres receiving their allocated examiner. Pearson apologies for this inconvenience and frustration to the centres who experienced this. Recording centres are reminded that they must also complete the initial contact communication to confirm when the date of the exam is to be held and materials uploaded post exam.

The Initial Contact email was well utilised by centres which helped enormously with administration.

The provision of three preferred centre exam dates was again successful in the organisation of the exams. Centres must please ensure they have complete their preferred dates as soon as possible in the Autumn term and where possible offer a variety of options of different days or weeks. Centres that requested early exams in the first two weeks of the window were able to be allocated their preferred preference in all cases. It is often not possible to fulfil the preferred dates if there is a limited flexibility of dates/days proposed or if they all fall at the end of March, as this is the preferred option for a large proportion of centres.

For recorded centres this year examiners reported that these varied in submission time, with some centres promptly uploading their work after the date they identified, and others waiting until the end of the submission window, and a few exceeding that. Centres must upload their recordings as soon as possible after a recorded exam to prevent a backlog in

marking at the submission deadline, particularly in light of looking ahead to the early Easter break calendared for 2024.

Learner Work Transfer Portal

The platform was in its second year of use this year and whilst some centres had difficulty with upload speed; the overarching workings of the platform was reported to work well from both sides.

The Principal Examiner would like to send sincere gratitude to teachers for their patience and for ensuring the Pearson support team were contacted for technical assistance in the cases where there were glitches again this year.

I would like to highlight the importance of the correlation between following the instructions as laid out in the Administration Support Guide to the smooth running of the LWT. It is vital that the following guidance is adhered to:

- Submission deadline
- Document file naming requirements
- Pre and post exam material guidance and deadlines
- File naming requirements
- Formatting of recordings
- File size requirements

In addition I would like to add the following support tips that became pertinent advice during the 2023 series.

- The portal often says that it is 'Down for Maintenance' when this is not actually the case – you just need to go back to the previous page and come back in or log out and in again a few times.
- When uploading materials please ensure the Submit button is pressed and contact your examiner to inform them this has been done to speed up the communication process
- After Live exams your VE will return the LWT to the centre for post exams materials to be uploaded
- Centres are advised to save and build a bank of extracts once they have scanned each year to reduce the scanning time required if using the same extract for future cohorts

Overview of Examination conditions 2023 – Live and recorded

- Centres generally scheduled live exams well, taking into consideration school timings to avoid interruptions.

- Some candidates costumed all in black, which does not aid the identification for the exam. Centres are reminded that a different coloured plain T Shirt offers the most helpful support for identification purposes.
- Centres assessed by recording are requested to also provide an exam schedule as this is extremely helpful for the marking of the exam.
- All used suitable spaces prepared for live examining with stage lighting.
- Recording quality was mostly excellent, for recorded exams. Centres are reminded that most students should be in view for most of the performance and that panning/zooming is not advised.
- In the majority of live exams, the candidates were performing to an audience which was helpful for candidates performing. Mostly the audiences were made up either of their peers or Year 10 GCSE drama students.
- Some centres only filmed one Candidate identification or edited the same one on to each extract rather than filming them each time for the recorded exam. Centres are reminded that all candidates must ID prior to each extract.
- Most centres had a clear, well-paced identification and whilst not a requirement it was noted that having printed signs for each candidate also aided identification, particularly where candidates were dressed in a similar manner.

Centre Information Sheet

This document was deemed to be user friendly and straightforward. The large majority of centres completed the Excel version of the form containing information for the whole cohort. Some centres reported that for live exams the CCIS was not provided in advance of the exam; please note that all pre-exam materials including the CIS must be provided 10 days prior. **Centres must ensure that Extract 1 and Extract 2 are completed in the correct order as performed on the CCIS please.**

Non-assessed candidates

All centres are reminded that non-assessed individuals should only be used in extreme circumstances when permission has been granted by Pearson. Please email requests to use non-assessed candidates to drama.assessment@pearson.com

A hardcopy of the permission email must be provided to your examiner. The specification states that students must perform two separate extracts from a text, this is an OFQUAL requirement. Therefore, it is not permissible for a non-assessed candidate to be used in a performance they are not being assessed for. If the centre's chosen text does not meet the requirements for the group, the centre must choose a different text that does fit the groups/individuals preferences for the two extracts. As previously stated in this report it is more logical to slot the required number of students into a prepared extract rather than organising the cohort into groups first and then trying to squeeze / stretch them into extracts that don't fit.

Conclusion

2023 was a joyful year that enabled the full return of the normal requirements for the Component. Whilst this brought challenge it also brought success. Students had clearly enjoyed their time rehearsing in the practical space to bring their performance to their audience; all things which were impossible only a year ago. The flexibility of the recorded assessment option, now embedded in its second year, proved to be a welcome choice for some centres who selected to record. The overriding accomplishment for centres this year was enabling the provision for the wide breadth of pathways that Component 2 offers to again be open to all students. As one examiner put it 'the buzz was back'.

Appendix A: 2023 Popular Centre Playlist

It was lovely to see a return to larger groups – these tended to be very well rehearsed with some great movement and ensemble sections. Stylistically, candidates performed ensemble pieces with confidence and included moments of physical theatre movement which was effective. There were more long extracts this year and fewer edited versions of the entire plays. All centres met the requirements of the examination, enabling candidates to access the full range of assessment criteria. These tended to be well-cast and played to the strengths of the cohort rather than ‘one-size fits all’. Candidates appeared to have ownership of their work and deepened characterisation as a result.

Group Performances beginning with the most popular:

Missing Dan Nolan by Mark Wheeler
Metamorphosis by Stephen Berkoff
Too Much Punch for Judy by Mark Wheeler
4:48 Psychosis by Sarah Kane
Five Kinds of Silence by Shelagh Stephenson
Girls Like That by Evan Placey
Blood Brothers by Willy Russell
Bouncers by John Godber
The Long Road by Shelagh Stephenson
Teechers by John Godber
The Pillowman by Martin McDonagh
Shakers by John Godber and Jane Thornton
The 39 Steps by Patrick Barlow
One Man Two Guvnors by Richard Bean
Lord of the Flies by Nigel Williams
The Memory of Water by Shelagh Stephenson
The Curious incident of the Dog in The Night-Time by Simon Stephens
What the Butler Saw by Joe Orton
Bald Prima Donna, by Eugene Ionesco
Bed by Jim Cartwright
Colder Than Here by Laura Wade
Daisy Pulls It Off by Denise Deegan,
Find Me by Olwyn Wymark
I’m a Minger by Alex Jones
Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare
Heroin Lies by Wayne Denfhy
The Long, The Short and The Tall by Willis Hall
Island Town by Simon Longman
Us/Them by Carly Wijs
Duck Duck Goose by Caitríona Daly
Be My Baby by Amanda Whittington
Sisterly Feelings Alan Ayckbourn
Art by Yasmina Reza
Birthday by Jo Penhall
Journey to X by Nancy Harris
Accidental Death of an Anarchist by Dario FO

Pool No Water by Mark Ravenhill
The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband by Debbie Issitt
Kindertransport by Diane Samuels
Chatroom by Enda Walsh
Girls by Theresa Ikoko
Immaculate by Oliver Lansley
Wolf Lullaby Hilary Bell
Girls and Dolls by Lisa McGee
The Hound of the Baskervilles Steven Canny and John Nicholson
The Danny Crowe Show by David Farr
The Last Laugh by Richard Harris
That Face by Polly Stenham
Abigail's Party by Mike Leigh
Dunsinane by David Greig
Monsters by Niklas Rådström
Penelopiad by Margaret Atwood
Emilia! by Morgan Lloyd William
Things I Know to be True by Andrew Bovell

Monologues (male) beginning with the most popular:

Five Kinds of Silence by Shelagh Stephenson
Macbeth by William Shakespeare
Too Much Punch for Judy by Mark Wheeller
Teechers by John Godber
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Simon Stephens
Chatroom by Enda Walsh
Blood Brothers by Willy Russell
Lord of the Flies adapted by Nigel Williams
Find Me by Olwen Wymark
The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband by Debbie Issitt
Our Country's Good by Timberlake Wertenbaker
Educating Rita by Willy Russell
Dead Funny by Terry Johnson
The Long, The Short and The Tall by Willis Hall
Brassed Off by Paul Allen and Mark Herman
Monster by Duncan Macmillan
Private Peaceful by Michael Morpurgo
Bluebird by Simon Stephens
The Pillowman by Martin McDonagh
The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole by Sue Townsend
Bull by Mike Bartlett
Things I Know To Be True by Andrew Bovell
Equus by Peter Shaffer
39 steps by Patrick Barlow

The Pitchfork Disney by Philip Ridley
Dealing with Clair by Martin Crimp
The Last Laugh by Richard Harris
BU21 by Stuart Slade
The Danny Crowe Show by David Farr
Confusions by Alan Ayckbourn
Dunsinane by David Greig
Equus by Peter Shaffer
Bully Boy by Sandi Toksvig
Art by Yasmina Reza
Leaves of Glass by Philip Ridley
Immaculate by Oliver Lansley.
Fences by August Wilson

Monologues (female) beginning with the most popular:

Fleabag by Phoebe Waller-Bridge
Shakers by John Godber
Find Me by Olwen Wymark
My Mother Said I Never Should by Charlotte Keatley
Five Kinds of Silence by Shelagh Stephenson
The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband by Debbie Isitt
4.48 Psychosis by Sarah Kane Prima Facie by Suzie Miller
Too Much Punch for Judy by Mark Wheeler
Adult Child; Dead Child by Claire Dowie
Girls Like That by Evan Placey
Duet for One by Tom Kempinski
Art by Yasmina Reza
Steel Magnolias by Robert Harling
Shirley Valentine by Willy Russell
Educating Rita by Willy Russell
Bluebird by Simon Stephens
People, Places and Things by Duncan Macmillan
Bull by Mike Bartlett
Like a Virgin by Gordon Steel
Prima Facie by Suzie Miller
Teachers by John Godber
Hard To Swallow by Mark Wheeler
Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare
Our Day Out by Willy Russell
Things I Know To Be True by Andrew Bovell
Half Breed by Natasha Marshall
Hundred Words For Snow by Tatty Hennessy

Pool No Water by Mark Ravenhill
Breathing Corpse by Laura Wade
Orphans by Lyle Kessler
Agnes of God by John Pielmeier
How to Disappear by Morna Pearson
Medea by Brendan Kennelly
Chatroom by Enda Walsh
How to Make Friends and Then Kill Them by Halley Feiffer
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime by Simon Stephens
Destiny by David Edgar
Confusions by Alan Ayckbourn
Every Brilliant Thing by Duncan MacMillan
Emilia! by Morgan Lloyd William
The Age of Consent by Peter Morris
Macbeth by William Shakespeare
Dead Funny by Terry Johnson
Wit by Margaret Edson
The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde
The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams
Belong by Bola Agbaje
Road by Jim Cartwright
I Think we Are Alone by Sally Abbott

Monologues (unisex or M/F)

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Simon Stephens
Punk Rock by Simon Stephens
The Memory of Water by Shelagh Stephenson
The Pillowman by Martin McDonagh
Us/Them by Carly Wijs
The 39 Steps by Patrick Barlow
Too Much Punch for Judy by Mark Wheeller
Confusions by Alan Ayckbourn
Macbeth by William Shakespeare
Dead Funny by Terry Johnson
Two by Jim Cartwright
Too Much Punch for Judy by Mark Wheeller

Duologues (male) beginning with the most popular:

Blood Brothers by Willy Russell
Pass It On by Renée
Blackout by Davey Anderson

Blue/Orange by Joe Penhall
Love Song by Abi Morgan
Milked by Simon Longman
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Simon Stephens
Accidental Death of an Anarchist by Dario Fo,
Zoo story by Edward Albee
Things I Know To Be True by Andrew Bovell Blood Brothers by Willy Russell
Too Much Punch for Judy by Mark Wheeler
The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband by Debbie Issitt
BU21 by Stuart Slade
My Mother Said I Never Should by Charlotte Keatley
The Pillowman by Martin McDonagh
Mudlarks by Vickie Donoghue
Teechers by John Godber
The 39 Steps by Patrick Barlow
Dunsinane by David Greig
Lord of the Flies by William Golding
The Dumb Waiter by Harold Pinter
Bully Boy by Sandi Toksvig
Blue Remembered Hills by Dennis Potter
Journey's End by R. C. Sherriff
The Late Henry Moss by Sam Shepard
Fences by August Wilson

Duologues (female) beginning with the most popular

Too Much Punch for Judy by Mark Wheeler
Top Girls by Caryl Churchill
Road by Jim Cartwright
Like a Virgin by Gordon Steel
Be My Baby by Amanda Whittington
Girls Like That by Evan Placey
My Mother Said I Never Should by Charlotte Keatley
The Long Road by Shelagh Stephenson
The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband by Debbie Issitt
Lit by Sophie Ellerby
April in Paris by John Godber
4:48 Psychosis by Sarah Kane
Morning by Simon Stephens
Five Kinds of Silence by Shelagh Stephenson
Citizenship by Mark Ravenhill
Punk Rock by Simon Stephens
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Simon Stephens
Holloway Jones by Evan Placey
I Think We Are Alone by Sally Abbott
The Wasp by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm

Find Me by Olwen Wymark
Teechers by John Godber
Playhouse Creatures by April De Angelis
Things I Know To Be True by Andrew Bovell
Pool No Water by Mark Ravenhill
That Face by Polly Stenham
How to Disappear by Morna Pearson
No one Sees the Video by Martin Crimp
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead by Tim Stoppard
How to Make Friends and then Kill Them
The Girl's Guide to Saving the World
Push Up by Roland Schimmelpfennig
Fire Bird by Phil Davies
The Wardrobe by Sam Holcroft
A Dolls House Part 2 by Lucas Hnath
Happy Now? By Lucinda Coxon
Baby Girl by Roy Williams
Two by Jim Cartwright
Shakers by John Godber
BLANK by Alice Birch
Penelopiad by Margaret Atwood
Consensual by Evan Placey
One For The Road by Harold Pinter
Taking Breath by Sarah Daniels
Memory of Water by Shelagh Stephenson
Blood Brothers by Willy Russell
Colder Than Here by Laura Wade
Hard to Swallow by Mark Wheeler
Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman
Pitchfork Disney by Philip Ridley
Low level Panic by Clare McIntyre
Yard Gal by Clare McIntyre
Detaining Justice by Bola Agbaje
The Dumb Waiter by Harold Pinter
A Taste of Honey by Shelagh Delaney
People Places Things by Duncan Macmillan

Duologues (M/F)

Two by Jim Cartwright
Chatroom by Enda Walsh
That Face by Polly Stenham
The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband by Debbie Isitt
Agnes of God by John Pielmeier
Lovesong by Abi Morgan
The Gods Weep by Dennis Kelly
Our Country's Good by Timberlake Wertenbaker
Five Kinds of Silence by Shelagh Stephenson
Bluebird by Simon Stephens

4:48 Psychosis by Sarah Kane
Posh by Laura Wade
KES by Robert Alan Evans
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead by Tim Stoppard
Measure for measure by William Shakespeare,
Richard III by William Shakespeare
Attempts on her life by Martin Crimp
The Pitchfork Disney by Philip Ridley
Medea by Brendan Kennelly
BU21 by Stuart Slade
Abigail's Party by Mike Leigh
Penelopiad by Margaret Atwood
Mugged by Andrew Pane
Taking Breath by Sarah Daniels
Tusk Tusk by Polly Stenham
Blood Brothers by Willy Russell
No Exit by Jean-Paul Sartre
Oleanna by David Mamet
Educating Rita by Willy Russell

Popular texts used with designer attached beginning with the most popular

Girls Like That by Evan Placey
Five Kinds of Silence by Shelagh Stephenson
Like a Virgin by Gordon Steel
That Face by Polly Stenham
Metamorphosis by Stephen n Berkoff
Chatroom by Enda Walsh
Jekyll and Hyde by Nick Lane
Shakers by John Godber
Bouncers by John Godber
Private Peaceful by Simon Reade
4:48 Psychosis by Sarah Kane
Blue/Orange by Joe Penhall
War Horse by Nick Stafford
Be my baby by Amanda Whittington
Blood brothers by Willy Russell
Missing Dan Nolan by Mark Wheeler
Things I Know To Be True by Andrew Bovell
The Woman Who Cooked her Husband by Debbie Issitt
Abigail's Party by Mike Leigh
Too Much Punch For Judy by Mark Wheeler
Journey's End by R. C. Sherriff
Educating Rita by Willy Russell
No Exit by Jean-Paul Sartre

