

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY



**Victorian Certificate of Education
2006**

DRAMA

Solo performance examination

Monday 2 October to Sunday 29 October

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

Performance examination conditions

1. The examination will be set and marked by panels appointed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
2. Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*.
3. The performance venue is set annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
4. The solo performance must not last more than **SEVEN MINUTES** and will be presented as a single uninterrupted performance.
5. If a performance goes over the **SEVEN MINUTES** time limit the student will be asked to stop. A timing device will indicate when the **SEVEN MINUTES** are over.
6. A total of ten minutes per student will be allocated for preparation, performance and clearing the space. **No additional time can be allowed.** When preparing stagecraft for the solo performance, students should be mindful of these restrictions.
7. The performance will use a single clearly lit space. No changes to the lighting grid are allowed.
8. One table and two chairs will be provided in the examination room for students to use in performance if they wish. Any additional props, if required, must be carried in and out of the examination space by the student **alone**, and within the allotted time.
9. Students are **not** permitted to bring any objects or substances deemed hazardous or illegal into the performance examination venue. All actual and imitation weapons are prohibited. The use of such items is **not** permitted in the performance.
10. The use of open flames including candles and matches is not permitted in the performance.
11. Only the panel of assessors and any personnel authorised by the VCAA will be allowed in the examination room with the student during the examination.
12. Students may choose to perform to the assessors as audience or to an imagined audience, or both.
13. Students must not walk behind and/or touch assessors during the examination.

Statement of Intention

1. A pro forma for the Statement of Intention will be published annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
2. Immediately prior to performance students are required to present three copies of the Statement of Intention to the panel of assessors. The Statement should not exceed 100 words.
3. The purpose of the Statement of Intention is to highlight aspects of the student's interpretation that they would like to bring to the assessors' attention, for example:
 - explanation/clarification of decisions made in their interpretation of the prescribed structure
 - give reasons for choices made (for example, for use of costume, prop, accent, symbol).
4. Students should not simply describe their character by rewriting the performance focus.
5. The Statement of Intention will not be assessed.

Prescribed structures

1. Students are required to prepare a solo performance using **one** of the following ten prescribed structures. Marks will not be awarded for performances that do not use one of the prescribed structures.
2. Each prescribed structure is made up of the following: character, stimulus, performance focus, performance style, theatrical conventions, dramatic elements, reference material. The following explanations should be used when preparing the solo performance.
 - **Character:** the main character to be depicted in the performance.
 - **Stimulus:** the source of information which **must** be used in the development of the character.

- **Performance focus:** information about the character that **must** be portrayed in the performance. This information is given in opening sentences and a series of dot points. **ALL ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE FOCUS MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE PERFORMANCE.** Each aspect of the performance focus does not have to be given equal emphasis during the performance. Unless otherwise indicated aspects of the performance focus may be performed in any order.
 - **Performance style:** the prescribed performance style is explained in the Terminology section of the examination paper. The prescribed style must be used throughout the performance.
 - **Theatrical conventions:** two theatrical conventions are given for each prescribed structure and they must be used during the performance. Additional conventions may be added as appropriate.
 - **Dramatic elements:** the following dramatic elements will be assessed in all performances: focus, space, tension and timing. An additional two dramatic elements will be specifically **prescribed** for each character. These additional dramatic elements will be selected from climax, conflict, contrast, mood, rhythm, sound and symbol.
 - **Reference material:** resource(s) are provided as recommendations. This list is not exhaustive and students should undertake research in developing their character(s) for performance. **Please note:** if a resource is also listed under **Stimulus**, it **must** be used in the development of the performance.
3. When a prescribed structure includes the term **creates** and/or **recreates**, students are required to enact and/or re-enact situations and conversations for an audience. The emphasis in the creation and/or recreation must be on **action** rather than narration; **doing** rather than telling. (See Terminology)
 4. A Terminology section is provided. Students should consult this for explanations of performance styles and theatrical conventions as prescribed in the examination.

Note: Schools should check local availability of required stimulus material and resources prior to beginning Unit 4. Some materials may not be immediately available.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 1**Character**

Doctor Watson

Stimulus

The novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of Doctor Watson.

Having recently helped Sherlock Holmes solve the case of ‘The Exploding Snuff Box’, Doctor Watson and Holmes return to the Houses of Parliament in Westminster where this case took place. In an attempt to prove to Holmes that he is ready to solve cases on his own, Doctor Watson

- creates two or more ways early twentieth century forensic science is assisting detectives to solve crimes
- recreates how he would have solved the case of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* on his own had he been given the opportunity
- recreates two or more key events in The Gunpowder Plot of 1605, and the way in which they mysteriously connect with the case of ‘The Exploding Snuff Box’.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Transformation of object, transformation of character

Dramatic elements

Conflict, climax

Reference material

Any edition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctor_Watson

<http://www.gunpowder-plot.org>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunpowder_plot

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 2**Character**

Mary Mallon

Stimulus

The life and times of Mary Mallon, known as Typhoid Mary

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the person Mary Mallon, also known as Typhoid Mary.

In quarantine on North Brother Island, New York, in the early 1930s, Mary Mallon takes part in a cabaret performed for staff and patients at the Riverside hospital. In her performance she

- recreates two or more examples of how Irish immigrants adapted to the living conditions of New York in the 1800s
- recreates two or more examples of how she was relentlessly pursued by public health officials who believed her to be a typhoid carrier, and how she thwarted their efforts to stop her working
- creates a prophetic prediction of two or more pandemics occurring between 1940 and 2006, and issues which will prevent their effective control.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic including aspects of cabaret

Theatrical conventions

Exaggerated movement, song

Dramatic elements

Mood, climax

Reference material

<http://www.snopes.com/medical/disease/typhoid.htm>

<http://www.kinsella.org/history/histira.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandemic>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 3**Character**

The Gossip

Stimulus

The life and times of Catherine II, Empress of Russia

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of the Gossip in the court of Catherine II, Empress of Russia, known as Catherine the Great.

While working alongside other servants at a royal garden party to celebrate Catherine's thirtieth year on the throne, the Gossip, a trusted employee

- recreates two or more examples of how his/her actions assisted in Catherine's transition to the throne, and how this assistance was rewarded in return
- recreates two or more examples of the Empress's social and/or political and/or economic reforms which contributed to her being known as Catherine the Great
- recreates how he/she recently uncovered a plot to overthrow Catherine, and two or more examples of how the plotters were thwarted in their efforts.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic including aspects of comedy

Theatrical conventions

Satire, transformation of object

Dramatic elements

Contrast, symbol

Reference material

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catherine_the_Great

<http://members.tripod.com/~Nevermore/CGREAT.HTM>

<http://www.alexanderpalace.org/palace/catherine.html>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 4

Character

Violet Baudelaire

Stimulus

The novel *A Series of Unfortunate Events – Book the First – The Bad Beginning*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of Violet Baudelaire.

Having outwitted Count Olaf’s plan to marry her to gain access to the family wealth, Violet, her brother and sister are now ‘between relatives’ and staying at a place for the hopelessly homeless with fellow orphans, known collectively as a ‘misery of orphans’. While there, Violet Baudelaire

- recreates her attempt to rescue Sunny from Count Olaf’s forbidden tower, and two or more events which made this rescue necessary
- recreates two or more examples of how she used her inventive thinking to save her siblings from an unfortunate event when they were sent to live with a distant relative in India
- recreates this relative’s involvement in Mahatma Gandhi’s strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience to bring about India’s break with British rule.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic including aspects of black comedy

Theatrical conventions

Pathos, transformation of place

Dramatic elements

Sound, conflict

Reference material

A Series of Unfortunate Events – Book the First – The Bad Beginning by Lemony Snicket, Published by Harper Collins ISBN 0 7322 8165 2

The film *Lemony Snicket’s A Series of Unfortunate Events*, 2004, starring Jim Carrey, directed by Brad Silberling [PG]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence_movement

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 5**Character**

The Accused

Stimulus

The play *The Crucible*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance character called the Accused. The Accused must be **one** of the characters in the play *The Crucible*.

In 1692 while warning a gathering of local folk outside the meeting house in Salem that ‘It were better that Ten Suspected Witches should escape, than the Innocent Person should be condemned’, the Accused identifies themselves by name and

- recreates a montage of images and vignettes showing the spread of the hysteria in and around Salem in the 1690s, and its impact on village life
- recreates three key events that led to him/her being accused
- creates a warning through dramatic metaphor of the potential for witch hunts in the 20th century and beyond.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Heightened use of language, pathos

Dramatic elements

Mood, contrast

Reference material

Any edition of *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_witch_trials

The film *Good Night, and Good Luck*, 2005, directed by George Clooney [PG]

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 6

Character

The Detective

Stimulus

The novel *Picnic at Hanging Rock*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of a Detective working in a ‘cold case’ police department in 2006.

New evidence, presented by a descendant of Michael Fitzhubert, has led to an investigation into the mysterious events of 14 February 1900 when three people disappeared at Hanging Rock. At a meeting with the descendant to close the case, the Detective

- recreates two or more images from the world of Appleyard College in 1900
- recreates two or more significant incidents from the chain of events that was established by the original investigators, and how the incidents are linked to the new evidence
- recreates what actually happened and how he/she used modern detection methods to solve the mystery.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Heightened use of language, disjointed time sequences

Dramatic elements

Mood, symbol

Reference material

Any edition of *Picnic at Hanging Rock* by Joan Lindsay

<http://www.mck.com.au/users/brett/theSecretOfHangingRock.htm>

<http://www.mck.com.au/users/brett/picnicSolution.htm>

The film *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, 1975, directed by Peter Weir [PG]

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 7**Character**

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Stimulus

The novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the characters of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

Mr Utterson meets with the reclusive Dr Jekyll after becoming suspicious of his behaviour and demands an explanation. Upon this confrontation Dr Jekyll reveals himself as Mr Hyde and

- creates two or more examples of how he conceals Mr Hyde from society and why he continues to become Mr Hyde
- recreates a montage of images of the world of London as seen through the eyes of both Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde
- recreates two or more examples of parallels between his life and the life of Deacon William Brodie.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Fatal flaw, transformation of character

Dramatic elements

Mood, conflict

Reference material

Any edition of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr._Jekyll_and_Mr._Hyde

<http://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/Scotland-History/DeaconBrodie.htm>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 8

Character

The Pirate

Stimulus

The film *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of the Pirate.

While engaged in a competition of swapping tales of adventure on the high seas with sailors, brigands and buccaneers at a dock-side inn, the Pirate surpasses all other stories by

- recreating three or more examples of cunning and/or ingenuity demonstrated by Elizabeth Swann and/or Captain Jack Sparrow, in dealing with Barbossa and his band of cursed cut-throats
- recreating how the Spanish Conquistador, Hernando Cortes, obtained Aztec gold and treasure, and the impact this had on the Aztecs
- creating two or more images of piracy in the twentieth and/or twenty-first centuries.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic

Theatrical conventions

Transformation of object, exaggerated movement

Dramatic elements

Climax, rhythm

Reference material

The film *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, 2003, directed by Gore Verbinski [M]

Any edition of the novel *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson

<http://www.jsri.msu.edu/museum/pubs/MexAmHist/chapter4.html>

<http://historicaltextarchive.com/print.php?artid=445>

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04397a.htm>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 9**Character**

Wu Zetian

Stimulus

The life and times of Wu Zetian, Empress of China

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the person Wu Zetian, Empress of China.

Wu Zetian, aware that her hold on power is weakening, and determined to ensure that details of her reign are recorded accurately, summons her royal biographer and

- recreates two or more tactics she used to gain power and two or more tactics she used to hold on to control of China
- recreates two or more examples of her reforms as Empress, and how they impacted on the lives of the people
- creates a montage of images that capture the spirit of the Qianling Tomb and show how future generations will interpret the ‘Wordless Tablet’ as a symbol of her reign.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic including aspects of Peking Opera

Theatrical conventions

Exaggerated movement, heightened use of language

Dramatic elements

Symbol, sound

Reference material

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empress_Wu_Zetian_of_China

http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/history/tang/emperor_wuzetian.htm

<http://china.tyfo.com/int/ent/opera/peking/peking-index.htm>

<http://www.silkroadguide.com/xian/xian19.htm>

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 10**Character**

The Spirit of the North American Wild West

Stimulus

The life and times of William F Cody, known as Buffalo Bill

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of The Spirit of the North American Wild West.

In attempting to convince a group of investors of the benefits of developing a frontier town in Wyoming during the 1890s, the Spirit

- creates three or more characters in a series of vignettes, showing the characters' motivation(s) in opening up the Wild West
- recreates two or more examples of the hardships and/or challenges faced by pioneering settlers in developing a town, and how they overcame the hardships and/or challenges
- recreates William F Cody's contribution to two or more social and/or political and/or economic issues of the times, and Cody's vision for the future development of Wyoming.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic including aspects of the Western Film

Theatrical conventions

Song, caricature

Dramatic elements

Symbol, rhythm

Reference material

The film *Blazing Saddles*, 1974, directed by Mel Brooks [M]

<http://www.filmsite.org/westernfilms.html>

<http://www.americanwest.com/pages/buffbill.htm>

TERMINOLOGY

The explanations listed below provide direction for teachers and students in the development of the Drama Solo Performance examination.

Non-naturalistic

This term is a broad category for all performance styles that are not dependent on the lifelike representation of everyday life. Non-naturalistic performance styles are not dependent on naturalistic characteristics to establish meaning. In non-naturalistic performance, the actor does not attempt to recreate, on the stage, life as it is lived. Non-naturalistic performance is characterised by a manipulation of time and space as well as manipulation of the narrative elements of the drama.

Create

To enact for an audience situations and conversations taking place in the present or which may/will take place in the future. The emphasis in the creation must be on action rather than narration; doing rather than telling.

Recreate

To re-enact situations and conversations which took place in the past. The emphasis in the recreation must be on action rather than narration; doing rather than telling.

Cabaret

An intimate style of performance for the ‘common man’. It is often performed by both trained performers and other members of a local community in non-traditional theatre spaces. The performance incorporates a number of elements including, song, enacted scenes, movement, dance, comedy and satire. While the content is entertaining, it is often intended to communicate an important social and/or political message. Topics may include romance, love, relationships, injustice, discrimination and/or the plight of the underprivileged. The costumes and props are often kept simple due to the multiple roles the performers portray.

Comedy

A dramatic style associated with such notions as amusement, jollity, gaiety, fun and humour. May include complex and sophisticated techniques sometimes referred to as ‘high’ comedy, or ‘low’ comic aspects such as slapstick and bawdiness.

Black comedy

A particular style of comedy, where events that are normally treated seriously are presented in an ironical or satirical manner. Often what happens to the characters in relation to the serious events is bizarre or out of keeping with the ordinary; the characters may or may not realise or acknowledge this. The acting can often be deadpan and farcical; the character appears to be reacting to the events in the play seriously but the effect on the audience is humorous. For an audience, some moments of black comedy can be simultaneously comical and sombre, and evoke pathos.

Peking Opera

A pantomimic style of presentation incorporating stylised acting, singing/chanting, dialogue, mime, acrobatics and dancing. The performance is often accompanied by music. The content of the operas may include historical events such as the life and times of emperors/empresses. Costumes used in the performances symbolise characters types and/or particular images. Facial make-up is also used symbolically. Set and props are kept to a minimum and so object transformation is a key convention. Gesture, like all other movement on stage, is stylised and purposeful.

Western Film

A genre that depicts the conquering of the American wilderness and/or the removal of the territorial rights of the Native American Indians, by settlers from the mid-1800s to 1900. The characters are stereotypically good or bad and of a stock type such as outlaws, sheriffs, the hero/heroine, cattle drivers, cattle rustlers, saloon girls. Costumes incorporating such items as cowboy boots and Stetson hats are typically used and symbolically represent the character of the wearer, such as a white hat for the hero or a black hat for the villain. The acting style incorporates parody, slapstick, asides, the sidekick, song, satire, accent and heightened use of language.

Montage

In contemporary theatre a montage is a juxtaposition of dramatic images and vignettes, often presented in rapid succession. The dramatic images and vignettes are closely linked and presented to create an overall impression, and/or a summary of events/actions, and/or an introduction to events/actions.

Transformation of character

The actor manipulates expressive skills to create characters in performance. A change in character therefore requires modification of the focus and manner of use of expressive skills by the actors. Additions of mask or costume may enhance the character transformation but does not constitute transformation unless accompanied by communicable changes in the use of expressive skills.

Transformation of place

The actor creates more than one place or setting during the performance and does so without the use of scenery. The actor can communicate transformation of place to an audience through the context they create for the performance and through the use of objects and space in symbolic ways. Transformation of place can be achieved through the transformation of properties (real and imagined) and/or through the use of expressive skills alone.

Transformation of object

An object(s) is endowed with a variety of meanings by the actor.

Song

Musical interpretation of text using the actor's own voice at the time of performance (not pre-recorded).

Disjointed time sequences

Dramatic structure that does not unfold chronologically. Past, present and future events in the plot are performed in a non-sequential order.

Pathos

Pathos is a state which evokes a feeling of pity or sadness in the audience, for example the power of stirring tender or melancholy emotion. Pathos may be associated with comedy and tragedy.

Heightened use of language

Heightened use of language is poetic and exaggerated use of language. It includes the deliberate choice of words whose syntax, alliteration and rhyming patterns enhance the dramatic statement. Intended meaning is enhanced through the use of non-conventional and non-naturalistic dialogue.

Exaggerated movement

Exaggerated movement includes action that is overstated, drawn larger than life; often for the purposes of ridicule.

Satire

The use of sarcasm, irony and ridicule in denouncing, exposing or deriding vice, folly and abuse. Can be achieved through gesture, tone, word.

Caricature

Caricature is an exaggeration of a character that is often ludicrous or grotesque. It can be comic, at times derogatory, and with the intention of ridicule.

Vignette

A short scene or sketch based around a character.

Fatal flaw

An imperfection, shortcoming or weakness in a character (for example, excessive pride or ambition) which leads him/her to make a certain choice(s) in a given situation. The choice(s) made results in the character's downfall.

Dramatic metaphor

The endowment of a word, object or feeling with an intensity of meaning other than the literal. Emphasis is on isolating specifics within the performance that best provide an enhancement of meaning for the work, or at least indicate the complexity of the intended meaning.



VCE Drama

Solo Performance Examination 2006

STATEMENT OF INTENTION

Student number

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Prescribed structure number

Name of character (from prescribed structure)

Comment *Use the space below to highlight aspects of your interpretation that you would like to bring to the assessors' attention, for example:*

- *explanation/clarification of decisions made in your interpretation of the prescribed structure*
- *give reasons for choices made (for example, for use of costume, prop, accent, symbol)*

DO NOT SIMPLY REWRITE THE PERFORMANCE FOCUS

These comments should not exceed 100 words

3 copies of this completed form must be handed to the assessors on entering the examination room.

