

## GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2014 Drama written examination was based on the new *VCE Drama Study Design 2014–2018*. The examination covered Outcomes 2 and 3 of Unit 3, and Outcomes 1 and 3 of Unit 4. All the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes were examinable.

A total of 50 marks was available, and the majority of students answered all questions. The highest-scoring students were able to draw on a sophisticated understanding of the practical and theoretical aspects of the concepts and processes relevant to the Areas of Study in the study design. Their responses were clearly expressed, well supported by pertinent examples, and explained using appropriate drama-specific language and terminology. Furthermore, the highest-scoring students used the number of marks and the lines allocated to each question as an indicator of the appropriate length and detail required in their response.

### General approaches in allocating marks

- If contradictory answers were given, full marks were not awarded.
- If a student crossed out parts of their response, that material was not assessed.
- If a question asked for a specific number of examples (for example, one expressive skill) and a student provided more than the required number (for example, two expressive skills), only the prescribed number of examples in the order they were written was assessed (that is, only the first one of the two expressive skills given).
- Responses that did not address the subject of a question were not awarded any marks.
- If a response required a particular focus and that focus was not addressed (for example, if the question asked students to ‘analyse and evaluate’ a performance and a student only ‘analysed’ it), full marks were not awarded.

### Areas of strength and weakness

High-scoring examination papers demonstrated:

- a high level of skill in applying practical and theoretical knowledge from the study to the stimulus material presented in the examination
- a high level of skill in analysing and evaluating a performance from the 2014 Drama Playlist
- the ability to address the specific type of response required by each question, as indicated by keywords such as ‘describe’, ‘explain’, ‘analyse’, ‘discuss’, ‘select’ and ‘evaluate’
- a clear understanding of the characteristics of the work of drama practitioners who use non-naturalism and non-naturalistic performance styles and the associated theatrical conventions
- a thorough understanding of how the actor–audience relationship can be deliberately manipulated to be consistent with a specific non-naturalistic performance style
- a high level of skill in analysing the ways in which conventions, dramatic elements, stagecraft, and expressive and performance skills can be manipulated in non-naturalistic performances
- a thorough understanding of the ways in which the conventions of transformation of character, time, place and object can be manipulated by the actor(s)
- a clear understanding of the difference between the ‘development’ and ‘presentation’ stages of performances
- clear and concise responses
- use of pertinent examples to support answers
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring examination papers demonstrated:

- a limited or inadequate understanding of how to apply practical and theoretical knowledge from the study to the stimulus material provided in the examination
- a limited or inadequate understanding of a performance from the 2014 Drama Playlist
- a misunderstanding of keywords or concepts; for example, for Question 2a., discussing how a ‘dramatic element’ rather than ‘convention’ would be used to explore one of the listed themes during the development of the ensemble performance
- a limited or inadequate understanding of aspects of the key knowledge, such as the differences between non-naturalistic performance style(s), drama practitioners and their associated theatrical conventions
- a definition rather than an explanation of how a key concept would be used; for example, for Question 1b., giving a definition of the play-making technique of brainstorming rather than using brainstorming to explain

how gesture and the dramatic element of sound would be used to explore the dramatic potential of the character of The Bush

- inadequate understanding of the techniques that can be used to demonstrate transformation of character, time, place and object
- confusion about what an expressive skill is
- confusion about the difference between dramatic elements, stagecraft, play-making techniques and conventions
- an inability to allocate time appropriately, according to the mark allocation for each question
- an over-reliance on work prepared in detail prior to the examination
- inappropriate or irrelevant examples used to support responses
- perfunctory answers
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Some common weaknesses displayed by students included:

- misunderstanding key terminology in a question; for example, for Question 1b., explaining how the stagecraft of sound production instead of the dramatic element of sound would be used to explore the dramatic potential of the character of The Bush
- missing the keyword of the question; for example, for Question 2a., explaining how the group would manipulate one convention to explore one of the listed themes in the ensemble performance, without discussing how it would be done during the development
- limited understanding of how to apply knowledge to the stimulus material provided; for example, for Question 2b., describing the symbol of a prop without explaining how it would be used to create the opening dramatic moment of Scene 1 – Arrival in the ensemble performance
- difficulty in following the requirements of the question; for example, for Question 2e., identifying how the group would use focus and movement in the ensemble, without analysing how this would be done to manipulate the actor–audience relationship
- confusion between the expressive skills of gesture and movement
- ‘analysing’ rather than ‘analysing and evaluating’ a performance from the 2014 Drama Playlist.

### Advice for students and teachers

- Students should attempt to answer all questions.
- Questions may be answered in any order.
- Students should read each question carefully, paying particular attention to words that are highlighted in bold.
- Students need to look carefully at the relationship between questions that are linked; for example, a question with multiple parts.
- Students should take careful note of the particular type of response required in each question, as indicated by keywords such as ‘describe’, ‘explain’, ‘analyse’, ‘discuss’ and ‘evaluate’.
- Students should ensure they know the difference between non-naturalistic performance style(s), drama practitioners who use non-naturalism, conventions, play-making techniques, dramatic elements and stagecraft.
- Students should recognise the difference between what occurs during the ‘development’ and ‘presentation’ stages of performance.
- Students need to have a clear understanding of ways in which the conventions of transformation of character, time, place and object can be manipulated by a solo actor; for example, through use of morphing expressive skills, symbolic gesture, snap transitions, use of an action and reaction, use of a sound or word, giving and receiving, hiding and revealing, repetition of dialogue, and symbolic use of stagecraft.
- Students must understand the difference between analysing and evaluating. When analysing, students need to examine in detail to discover the meaning of something. When evaluating, students need to make a judgment about or critique something.
- Student responses should be clear and concise. The space provided on the examination paper and the marks allocated should be used as a guide to the required length of their answers.
- When using the extra space provided at the end of the book, students should carefully label their response as being continued at the back of the book.

## SPECIFIC INFORMATION

**Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.**

This report provides sample answers, or an indication of what the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

## Section A

### Question 1

For Question 1, a detachable insert containing a triptych of images – some with accompanying text and contextual information – was provided as stimulus material to develop and perform the character of The Settler for a non-naturalistic solo performance.

To answer this question, students needed to draw on the key knowledge and skills acquired through the development and evaluation of their own solo performance work in Unit 4, Outcomes 1 and 3. Within this solo performance, students were required to transform between two characters. Students needed to ensure their discussion was focused on a single actor performing as more than one character, rather than multiple actors performing, so there was no confusion about it being a solo performance.

#### Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	4	28	68	1.7

Students were asked to describe how the stimulus material could be used to develop one expressive skill for the characterisation of The Settler. This idea could be conceptual, thematic or literal. It could be a description of an element from one of the images or accompanying text, or it could be some more complex lateral thought. The focus of this question was on how this idea would be used to develop one expressive skill.

Most students were able to discuss an idea taken from the stimulus material and relate this to the development of one expressive skill. Those students who discussed ideas not related to the stimulus material or the context of the solo performance and those who did not discuss an expressive skill were not awarded any marks. Weaker responses redescribed the images or were confused about what an expressive skill is (voice, gesture, movement, facial expression). Instead they incorrectly identified an expressive skill as body language, gait, weight, stance and posture.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- a concise response that described how an idea (conceptual, thematic or literal) taken from the stimulus material would be used to develop one expressive skill for the characterisation of The Settler
- a description that incorporated ideas about symbolism and character/narrative development from the stimulus material.
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- referencing an idea that was not from the stimulus material
- a limited understanding of what an expressive skill is
- a discussion of multiple expressive skills
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The slow, sustained heavy manner of movement for the character of The Settler would be improvised, based off the poses seen from 'The Pioneer' and the type of movement they connote, I would improvise moving between the different poses of the man in the image with a slow, sustained and heavy manner of movement.*

#### Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	2	12	32	30	24	2.7

Students were informed that during this solo performance the actor would transform into the secondary character of The Bush, who is unfamiliar and unwelcoming to The Settler. For this question, students were required to use the play-making technique of brainstorming to explain how gesture and the dramatic element of sound would be used to explore the dramatic potential of the character of The Bush.

High-scoring students took inspiration from the stimulus material in making thoughtful choices about who the character of The Bush would be; for example, custodian of the land, mother nature or the pristine environment. They then explained how they would use gesture and sound to explore the dramatic potential of The Bush being unfamiliar and

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unwelcoming to The Settler. They provided clear examples of how the actor would use their body to communicate symbols and create sound through the use of voice, body percussion and objects to create an effect and to enhance meaning in the performance.

Low-scoring students took the character of The Bush quite literally, as a small shrub, or made poor choices about how they would use sound and gesture to demonstrate the character. Some mistakenly discussed the characterisation of The Settler instead. Weaker responses often demonstrated confusion about what gesture was, instead discussing facial expressions, movement and voice. The most common error that students made in this question was giving examples of pre-recorded sound, which is the stagecraft area of sound production. Some students provided a definition of what brainstorming is instead of actually giving a brainstorm of how gesture and sound would be explored.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- reference to choices derived from ideas inspired by the stimulus material
- a clear and concise explanation of how gesture and sound would be used to explore the dramatic potential of The Bush being unfamiliar and unwelcoming to The Settler
- clear and pertinent examples of how the actor would manipulate their expressive skills to create the gestures and sounds
- an imaginative understanding of how the gestures and sounds would be used to create a contrasting character to The Settler
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- limited or confused understanding of the expressive skill of gesture
- mistakenly discussing sound production instead of the dramatic element of sound
- poor choice of examples, which limited the student's ability to respond in detail
- providing a definition of brainstorming instead of using a brainstorm to explain how gesture and sound would be used
- discussing the wrong character, The Settler instead of The Bush
- a generalised description of the character of The Bush, rather than a specific explanation of how gesture and sound would be used to explore the dramatic potential of the character.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Gesture: Arms outstretched, fingers open like claw – shows animosity. Arms vertical, hands draped like leaves – seems harmless, could create suspense by suddenly changing gesture. Hands moving in a wave-like motion to connote flood – makes audience feel fearful.*

*Sound: Sound of birds crowing and cawing menacingly – creates fearful mood. Sound of fire crackling created with voice – connotes danger. Slapping parts of body in a rhythm – shows wild nature, confusing to audience. WHOOSH sound with mouth to connote a flood – can make audience feel fearful.*

## Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	2	12	33	34	19	2.6

Students were informed that, in this solo performance, there would be a conflict between The Settler and The Bush. They were asked to analyse how the actor would use transformation of object and movement to transform from The Settler into The Bush in order to highlight this conflict. It is anticipated that a range of techniques or methods of transformation would have been explored during students' work in Unit 4 as part of their study of how the conventions of non-naturalistic performance styles can be manipulated to develop and enhance performances of devised drama.

It was pleasing to see a continued improvement in students' understanding of the ways transformation of character can be achieved, with many responses discussing the use of snap and morph transitions. Other popular methods of transformation that students discussed included the symbolic use of stagecraft or gesture, use of dialogue, use of a sound, use of an action, calling and answering, hiding and revealing, and action and reaction.

Higher-scoring responses demonstrated a clear sense of how a seamless character transformation would be performed, through the application of transformation of object and movement. They succinctly explained how the transformation from The Settler into The Bush would highlight the conflict between the characters.

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A common error in weaker responses was only discussing the transformation of the object or the use of movement. Some students made poor choices about the object they would transform, for example, a gun or a stick with fire. Some students mistakenly discussed the wrong character transformation, instead discussing the transition from The Bush into The Settler. In these cases they were not awarded full marks.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- a clear sense of how the character transformation from The Settler into The Bush would be performed
- pertinent examples of how transformation of object and movement would be used to create a seamless character transformation
- a clear sense of how the transformation would occur in a solo performance
- an explanation of the intended meaning behind the application of transformation of object and movement
- a clear sense of the impact the character transformation would have on differentiating between the two characters to highlight the conflict
- a sense of what impact this would have on the actor–audience relationship
- an imaginative approach that used appropriate, drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- misunderstanding terminology, particularly what the expressive skill of movement is (that is, the use of posture, gait and stance, and the way the actor moves through the space to communicate character)
- only discussing transformation of object or movement
- discussing how an object would be used by each of the two characters without describing how it would be manipulated to transform between the characters
- reference to only one character
- a description of the roles of the two characters with little or no discussion of how the actor would use an object and movement to transform between the two characters
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*'The Settler', using a large piece of lycra pulled taught and held at either ends as if it were an axe, would lift the axe slowly above his head in stylised movement and strike down swiftly as though cutting a tree in front of him. The transformation will be punctuated by the impact, 'The Settler' crumpling onto the ground with hands outstretched, unfurling the piece of lycra. In slow motion, 'The Settler' will raise the lycra in front of him as he is standing up, stepping into the piece of lycra outlining his body with muscles tensed and a scream like expression on his face, accompanied by the verbal gesture of heavy panting to denote 'The Bush', a predator posing a threat.*

## Question 1d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	8	22	24	21	15	7	3.2

Students were instructed that the final dramatic moment in the solo performance would be a transformation of time and place that manipulates the audience's emotions. This transformation of time and place will reflect the contrast in mood that is implied in the third panel of the triptych. Students were required to explain how the actor would apply one area of stagecraft non-naturalistically and different levels of energy to create this transformation and contrast in mood. Higher-scoring responses provided a clear and succinct explanation of how the actor would perform this transformation and create a contrast in mood. The higher-scoring students clearly demonstrated how this would be done in a solo performance. They explained how the actor would integrate their application of one area of stagecraft (often sound production, prop set design or costume) and different levels of energy (varying levels of intensity to create different dynamics) to create a seamless transformation of time and place.

Most students understood how to discuss the application of one area of stagecraft in two different timeframes and places, but many did not explain how the transformation of time and place would be shown to an audience. Weaker responses often merely provided a narrative outline, at times as though it were a scene straight from a movie, often with no sense of how the scene would be performed by an actor. A common error that students made was to discuss the use of multiple areas of stagecraft and the performance of multiple actors. Lower-scoring students discussed the moment after the transformation rather than how the actor would create the transformation. A surprising number of students discussed the application of lighting, which posed a challenge when explaining how the actor would apply it in the context of a solo performance. These students could not be awarded full marks.

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High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- a thorough understanding of how an actor can apply one area of stagecraft and different levels of energy to demonstrate a transformation of time and place
- a succinct explanation with pertinent examples
- a discussion of how the transformation/transition would be achieved to show that time had shifted (for example, use of techniques such as freeze-frames, slow motion, morphing, montages and split stage) and when these techniques would be used to denote a change of scene and contrast in mood
- imaginative ideas about how the transformation in time and place would have an impact on other aspects of the performance such as the narrative resolution, themes, dramatic elements (tension and climax) and the actor–audience relationship
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- a limited understanding of how the actor would demonstrate a transformation in time and place
- a limited discussion of how one area of stagecraft would be used
- a limited discussion of how different levels of energy would be applied
- discussing multiple areas of stagecraft and multiple actors
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The use of prop will be used to create this transformation. The 50cm steel rod previously mentioned will be two halves connected by a magnet. The moment will begin as the actor walks solemnly and slowly from upstage to centre stage holding the prop close to their chest. They will stop, look directly forward in an emotional and sorrowful expression, then place the two halves of the rod down on the ground as a cross. Transformation of time and place then occurs through transformation of character as a young child picks up the rods energetically, the actor looking to the left crying "Tell us what happens in the story! You promised!" The prop is transformed into the book as the actor moves one stick to the left from the right, as if opening the book. This moment of child-like behaviour contrasts the stillness and silence from the moment before with a joyous and happy young child. The energy in the first moment is grieving and solemn, the next moment sees happiness and energy through a young child and spirit. This sees the audience's mood change as the performance does, from sorrowful and empathetic, to happy.*

## Question 2

This question required students to consider how they would use the stimulus material provided in the detachable insert to develop and present a devised non-naturalistic ensemble performance. The stimulus material contained two triptychs of images and contextual information about an ensemble group who were to devise, develop and present an ensemble performance called 'New Home, Different World'.

The images, text, themes, scenario and characters provided were intended to evoke particular moods and implied styles. Most students embraced these ideas and wrote about concepts and situations that were clearly linked to the stimulus material. It was pleasing to note that many students were able to relate to, and empathise with, the themes of the material: the hardships experienced by immigrants, displaced people and asylum seekers making a new life in a strange land.

To answer this question, students needed to draw on the key knowledge and skills acquired through the development, presentation (Outcome 1) and evaluation stages (Outcome 2) of their ensemble performance in Unit 3. Students needed to consider the whole question before they began responding in order to identify the relationship between the questions and were advised to use their reading time to do this. It should be noted that non-naturalistic performance styles and techniques used by drama practitioners to develop non-naturalistic performances are part of the key knowledge for Outcomes 1 and 2 of Unit 3. Students, therefore, need to have a thorough knowledge of these concepts.

## Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	10	15	48	27	2

Students were instructed to select one non-naturalistic performance style as the basis for this ensemble performance. They were then asked to explain how the group would manipulate one convention from the selected performance style to explore one of the listed themes during the development of the ensemble performance. Most students correctly identified an appropriate non-naturalistic performance style, such as those listed in the *VCE Drama Study Design*. Students were not awarded any marks if they identified a convention that did not belong to their selected non-

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naturalistic performance style. Some students identified Realism or Naturalism as a non-naturalistic performance style. Others mistakenly discussed a dramatic element.

Most students selected Epic Theatre, Poor Theatre, Theatre of Cruelty or Absurdism as their performance style. Some other choices included Musical Theatre, Physical Theatre, Black Comedy, Cabaret Voltaire, Expressionism and Beijing Opera. The highest-scoring students made a thoughtful choice about one convention that was relevant to both the selected performance style and the theme to be explored, and concisely explained how this would be manipulated during the development of the ensemble performance.

The most common error made by students was neglecting to mention how the convention would be manipulated during the development of the ensemble performance, instead referring to how it would be applied in the presentation. Another mistake that some students made was to use a convention of transformation from the solo performance exam, either transformation of character, time, place or object, without selecting a specific non-naturalistic performance style that the convention was relevant to. Lower-scoring students discussed a convention that was not relevant to the chosen non-naturalistic performance style; for example, discussing pathos as a convention of Epic Theatre.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- a clear understanding of one convention from the selected non-naturalistic performance style
- a good explanation of how the convention would be manipulated to explore one of the listed themes during the development of the ensemble performance
- a pertinent example used to support the response
- an understanding of how the convention would help to convey ideas inherent in the stimulus material
- imaginative ideas expressed with appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- an inability to correctly identify one convention from the selected non-naturalistic performance style
- discussing a dramatic element instead of a convention
- a limited understanding or confusion about one convention
- neglecting to discuss a theme in the ensemble performance
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Epic Theatre. The theme of being a 'stranger in a strange land' will be explored through the use of song; we will first research on Youtube 'Famous Australian Folk Songs' and 'Australian Folk Tunes' – then during the scripting stage we will write new lyrics to the songs, about what it is like to be a stranger. Lyrics will include, 'A land so different, a land so strange' and 'Nobody here knows his face or his name'.*

## Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	3	11	37	31	18	2.5

This question informed students that Scene 1 – Arrival would explore the confusion felt by the family members in their new environment. Students were asked to describe how the group would create the opening dramatic moment by using one prop as a symbol and manipulating sound and/or sound production. Higher-scoring responses explained how this scene would be created by the ensemble members, and there was a clear sense that it would be an opening dramatic moment. These students made thoughtful choices about their use of sound and/or sound production and clearly explained how the chosen prop would be applied as a symbol to create the opening dramatic moment.

Weaker responses struggled to explain how a prop would be used as a symbol, instead merely stating that it would be symbolic. Others were confused about the difference between sound and sound production. Lower-scoring students' responses tended to be narrative-driven and missed the requirement that they were meant to describe how the group would create the opening dramatic moment of Scene 1 – Arrival.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- a clear and concise description of the use of a prop to create symbolic meaning and the manipulation of sound and/or sound production
- pertinent use of examples

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- an understanding of how this scene would help to convey other elements of the ensemble performance, such as creating mood, developing tension, creating a sense of time and place, narrative and character development and the intended actor–audience relationship
- references to choices that were inspired by the stimulus material
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- poor choice of examples that limited the student’s ability to respond in detail
- a limited understanding of symbolic use of prop and/or sound and/or sound production
- a generalised description of the scene, rather than specific examples of how the opening dramatic moment would be created in the final performance
- a perfunctory description
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The actors would huddle together, tightly packed around a ring of barbed wire reminiscent of a life buoy, and shuffle forward, indicating they were on a boat. The sounds of the sea would be played in the background, such as the creak of floorboards and gull cries. Then one actor will cast off the ring, as if they are coming in to dock, and the other actors would burst out, all showing the different ways they saw Australia. The sound of hundreds of different people speaking in a hundred different cities would then give way to silence, as the barbed wire is unrolled in front of them, showing they are in a detention centre.*

## Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	7	20	40	34	2

This question instructed students that the next scene was Scene 2 – Survival. They were asked to discuss how the group would use one play-making technique to explore how tension would be explored in a dramatic or comedic way. It was pleasing to see that most students were able to correctly identify a play-making technique. Improvising, researching and rehearsing were the most popular play-making techniques discussed. The most common error that students made was not giving an example of how tension would be explored in Scene 2. Some students mistakenly discussed a convention instead of a play-making technique. Weaker responses often made a perfunctory reference to a play-making technique, or an associated activity, without discussing how tension would be explored. Or they discussed a moment of tension, such as an argument between characters, without discussing a play-making technique.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- a concise discussion of how the group would use one play-making technique to explore how tension would be developed in Scene 2
- a good discussion of how the play-making technique would be used to explore tension in a comedic or dramatic way
- reference to the development stage of the ensemble performance; for example, using terms and phrases such as ‘experimenting’, ‘trailing ideas’ and ‘during rehearsals’
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- a limited understanding of a play-making technique
- discussing an activity that is relevant to a play-making technique without correctly identifying a play-making technique
- a limited discussion of how tension would be explored
- no reference to Scene 2
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The playmaking technique of research will be used to explore the reality of immigration. The actors will interview and discuss with asylum seekers in order to discover real events faced by people, particularly conflicts encountered. These conflicts will be implemented into the development as stimulus for moments of dramatic tension, eg. An abusive, racist encounter between an immigrant and local.*

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## Question 2d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	13	36	33	14	2.4

This question asked students to explain how they would use one idea from the stimulus material to develop one character's role and attitude for either Scene 1 or Scene 2. Higher-scoring responses had a clear sense of how the character's role and attitude would be explored during the development of the ensemble, rather than an outline of a narrative for the character. A common error that students made was a response that was too narrative driven with too much description of ideas from the stimulus material. Weaker responses had trouble identifying the character's role and attitude and made little or no reference to either Scene 1 or Scene 2. Some students discussed multiple characters or merely gave a general character description.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- a clear explanation of how one idea from the stimulus material would be used to develop one character's role and attitude for the chosen scene
- reference to how this would be explored during the development stage of the ensemble
- clear choices about the character's role and attitude that were appropriate to the selected non-naturalistic performance style
- a concise description of this character's relationship with the audience in terms of how the character is involved, narrative consequences and/or character status development
- a clear sense of how the character might be portrayed to help to convey other elements of the narrative such as pathos, tension and the intended actor–audience relationship
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- difficulty identifying one character's role and attitude
- merely describing the narrative arc for the character
- describing an idea from the stimulus material without relating it to a character
- not referencing either Scene 1 or Scene 2
- discussing multiple characters
- not referencing an idea from the stimulus material
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*One idea I gain from the stimulus through the black and white style photos is the theme of acceptance and how we live in a multicultural world that is more than just black and white. The character of the mother is inspired by the bottom image on page 2 as the woman is holding her baby. In the improvising stage, the process of 'hot seating' is done to find her role. The ensemble will ask the actor playing the mother how she wants to change racial acceptance in her new home and her motivations, thus developing this character's role as the hero of the ensemble who aims to squash racism in her new home. Her attitude towards finding peace will also be developed through research and interviewing ex-refugees on how they felt about coming here thus developing the positive and optimistic attitude the mother character has in Scene 2 where she is on the cusp of survival and her family is starving and poor.*

## Question 2e.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	8	12	29	26	16	8	2.6

Students were instructed that in the presentation of Scene 3 – Optimism, the group would deliberately manipulate the audience's responses to be consistent with the group's selected performance style. Students were asked to analyse how the group would use movement and focus to manipulate this actor–audience relationship. Popular choices discussed by students were direct address, creating pathos, audience interaction, breaking the fourth wall and alienation. Many students gave a general discussion of how focus and movement would be used without linking it to the performance style. Some students also seemed to miss the instruction that this scene was entitled Optimism.

Higher-scoring responses provided a clear sense of how the actors would manipulate an actor–audience relationship that was appropriate to their chosen performance style, through the integrated application of movement and focus. They explained tangible ways that the actors would manipulate the actor–audience relationship – for example, through eye contact, rhythmic movement, and positioning within the acting space – and the impact that this would have on the audience. Furthermore, more successful students often discussed the nature of and political and/or social motivation

behind the chosen performance style, for example, the impact on the audience when using direct address in Epic Theatre. Weaker responses often did not make reference to the impact this scene would have on the audience and did not seem to understand what an actor–audience relationship is. A common error made by students was to discuss the emotional impact of pathos as a convention used in Epic Theatre or to speak in general terms about Brechtian alienation.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- an analysis of clear and pertinent techniques that would be used to manipulate the actor–audience relationship
- a good understanding of the chosen performance style
- a clear sense of how the actors would manipulate the actor–audience relationship through the integrated application of movement and focus
- a good understanding of how this scene would fit in with the description of Optimism
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- poor choices about the actor–audience relationship that were inappropriate to the selected performance style
- limited understanding of the actor–audience relationship
- limited understanding of the selected performance style
- generalised ideas about how movement and focus would be used by the actors, rather than specific ways the actor–audience relationship would be manipulated
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*In an attempt to alienate the audience to think critically about the necessary action of accepting others, the ensemble will move around the space holding hands rotating in a clockwise direction showing the importance of acceptance. Then focus will be directed to the actor playing the mother by the ensemble all snapping their heads towards her who is standing centre stage holding up a sign which is the image of the Yin-Yang sign, which forces the audience to critically think about how the world is a blend of cultures but we can all live in harmony together. The ensemble will then circle the mother character while still maintaining intense focus on her. In a stylised way they will move towards her while raising their hands towards her which are palms open which once again symbolises acceptance and creates a tender and optimistic mood. This mood in the audience is then further enhanced by the ensemble singing Peter Allen’s famous song “We are one, but we are many...”, this Brechtian use of song will add to the social message of acceptance and devise a beautiful, hopeful mood in the audience.*

## Section B

Play chosen	None	<i>Scattered Lives</i>	<i>Stray</i>	<i>Neighbourhood Watch</i>	<i>The Parricide</i>	<i>Yellow Moon: The Ballad of Leila and Lee</i>
%	0	16	15	30	5	33

This section related to the Unit 3 analysis of a play from the 2014 Drama Playlist. Students were required to select one play from the list and answer the three questions that related to their chosen play. Parts a. and b. were the same short-answer questions for each play, while part c. of the question differed for each individual play and was an extended-answer question.

### Question a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	2	18	35	44	2.2

Students had to describe how one actor used one expressive skill to represent a character in the performance. Most students handled this question well. Lower-scoring students confused the actor with the character or were confused about what an expressive skill was. Some students mistakenly discussed body language or talked about multiple expressive skills or multiple characters. These students could not be awarded full marks.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- a good understanding of how one actor used one expressive skill to represent a character
- use of pertinent examples to support the response
- a concise description of how one expressive skill was used to represent a character and give meaning to other aspects of the play such as the themes, character and narrative development, or the actor–audience relationship
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

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Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- confusion between the actor and the character
- a limited or confused understanding of one expressive skill
- a discussion of multiple expressive skills and/or multiple characters
- a limited discussion of the character in general terms
- incorrect references to other aspects of the play such as the themes, character and narrative development, or the actor–audience relationship
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

## Neighbourhood Watch

*Robyn Nevin used a stooped posture and shuffling gait to portray her character's, Ana's, movement. She took fast, small but lively steps showing that she was still energetic and full of life despite her age. However, as the performance progressed her movements became slower, less lively, showing the decline of her health to cancer. This was most evident in the scene where she delivered her "Solo in Ana" speech, where her movements were lethargic and slow.*

### Question b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	3	17	39	42	2.2

This question asked students to explain how one area of stagecraft was applied as a symbol in the performance. Most students handled this question well. Higher-scoring responses made a good choice of the stagecraft to discuss, clearly explaining how it was applied as a symbol to elucidate a key theme or moment in the performance. Weaker responses were either confused about what the areas of stagecraft were or could not discuss how one was applied as a symbol.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- an appropriate choice of one area of stagecraft and how it was applied as a symbol
- a good understanding of the play
- a clear discussion that was well supported by pertinent examples
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- limited or confused understanding of stagecraft
- limited or confused understanding of symbol
- limited understanding of the play
- discussing multiple areas of stagecraft
- limited or incorrect use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

## Yellow Moon: The Ballad of Leila and Lee

*The costume pieces of Lee's hat and Leila's hijab were a symbol of identity. Leila's hijab symbolised her religion which explains her silent and conservative demeanor. Lee's hat of a stag is a symbol of his overt sense of masculinity. This was established in the fight scene when the character of Billy knocked Lee's hat off his head thus challenging his masculinity. This became the catalyst for the violent physical fight sequence that followed. Furthermore in the 'fire scene', in the climactic moment in which Lee dives into the implied fire to rescue his hat it symbolised his desperate need to hold onto his macho façade. In this moment of stillness and silence, Ryan as Lee is in a frozen position holding the cap forcefully, clenching it into his chest.*

### Question c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	2	3	8	17	18	16	15	10	7	5	4.8

The final question on the examination assessed students' higher-order thinking skills. Many students wrote very strong analyses of the plays, but if they did not evaluate the performance they were not awarded more than the medium category of marks, which was up to a maximum of six out of nine marks.

The key word 'evaluate' was the discriminating factor for students in this question. To 'evaluate', students needed to make a personal judgment about or critique the performance. They may have referred to this by discussing the play's

effectiveness, success and weaknesses, or what worked and what didn't, etc. Higher-scoring students referred to this in terms such as 'the props were used effectively to convey the themes in the performance through...', 'the transformation of character was ineffective because...' or 'the use of space worked well to create an intimate actor–audience relationship by...'. Lower-scoring students demonstrated a limited understanding of the play in performance, made poor choices of examples and had limited or confused use of drama-specific language and terminology.

## Question 1c.

Students were required to analyse and evaluate how props and transformation of character were used in the performance of *Scattered Lives*. Most students were able to correctly identify several moments within the performance where props and transformation of character were used. Higher-scoring responses evaluated how the application of props and transformation of character illuminated the themes of migration, loss, fear and barriers. Weaker responses reflected a limited understanding of the play in performance and made perfunctory references to the application of props and transformation of character.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- an analysis and evaluation of how props and transformation of character were used in the performance
- a thorough and insightful understanding of the play
- clear and perceptive explanations
- pertinent examples
- accurate and appropriate reference to characters, plot, actors, theatrical conventions, etc.
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- limited or no evaluation
- limited understanding of the play
- limited or confused understanding of the use of props and transformation of character
- a discussion of only props
- a discussion of only transformation of character
- limited use of examples
- limited or inaccurate references to characters, plot, themes, actors, theatrical conventions, etc.
- limited or confused use of drama-specific language and terminology.

## Question 2c.

Students were asked to evaluate how transformation of character and space were used in the performance of *Stray*. The higher-scoring students evaluated how successfully the three actors used the space to create transformations of time, place and character, and how this created shifts in the mood and pace of the performance. They also evaluated how effective the actors were in using a variety of techniques to transform and differentiate between characters. The lower-scoring students struggled to identify how the space was used in a variety of ways and demonstrated a limited understanding of how the actors transformed characters.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- an analysis and evaluation of how transformation of character and space were used in the performance
- a thorough and insightful understanding of the play
- clear and perceptive explanations
- pertinent examples
- accurate and appropriate reference to characters, plot, actors, theatrical conventions, etc.
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- limited or no evaluation
- limited understanding of the play
- limited or confused understanding of the use transformation of character and space
- a discussion of only space
- a discussion of only transformation of character
- limited use of examples
- limited or inaccurate references to characters, plot, themes, actors, theatrical conventions, etc.
- limited or confused use of drama-specific language and terminology.

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## Question 3c.

Students had to analyse and evaluate how space and transformation of time were used in the performance of *Neighbourhood Watch*. High-scoring students demonstrated a thorough and insightful understanding of the performance, particularly how the use of the double-stage revolve, lighting changes, sound and sound production were manipulated to demonstrate the transformations in time from Mary Street to Ana's childhood in Hungary. They also clearly explained how the themes of life and death, the past, the present and imagination were conveyed through the use of space and transformation of time. Low-scoring students struggled to explain how the space was used and had a limited understanding of how transformation of time was demonstrated in the performance.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- an analysis and evaluation of how space and transformation of time were used in the performance
- a thorough and insightful understanding of the play
- clear and perceptive explanations
- pertinent examples
- accurate and appropriate reference to characters, plot, actors, theatrical conventions, etc.
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- limited or no evaluation
- limited understanding of the play
- limited or confused understanding of the use of space and transformation of time
- a discussion of only space
- a discussion of only transformation of time
- limited use of examples
- limited or inaccurate references to characters, plot, themes, actors, theatrical conventions, etc.
- limited or confused use of drama-specific language and terminology.

## Question 4c.

Students needed to analyse and evaluate how mood and transformation of place were used in the performance of *The Parricide*. Most students understood how mood was created in the performance, although some did not understand how the transformations in place occurred. Higher-scoring responses evaluated how effective the transformations of place were in creating shifts in the mood and in communicating the parallel story in the performance. High-scoring students used examples of how the space, lighting and sound were manipulated to create the transformations of place. Low-scoring students showed limited understanding of the play, in particular the parallel story of Dostoyevsky writing his book and his imaginary characters coming to life.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- an analysis and evaluation of how the mood and transformation of place were used in the performance
- a thorough and insightful understanding of the play
- clear and perceptive explanations
- pertinent examples
- accurate and appropriate references to characters, plot, actors, theatrical conventions, etc.
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- limited or no evaluation
- limited understanding of the play
- limited or confused understanding of mood and transformation of place
- a discussion of only mood
- a discussion of only transformation of place
- limited use of examples
- limited or inaccurate references to characters, plot, themes, actors, theatrical conventions, etc.
- limited or confused use of drama-specific language and terminology.

## Question 5c.

Students were required to evaluate how tension and transformation of place were applied in the performance of *Yellow Moon: The Ballad of Leila and Lee*. High-scoring students evaluated how effectively the actors used timing, space and the set pieces to create transformations of place, and how this built tension and created shifts in the mood and pace of

the performance. They also evaluated how successful the actors were in using a variety of techniques to transform and differentiate between characters, time and place. Low-scoring students struggled to identify how tension was applied and demonstrated a limited understanding of how the actors transformed place.

High-scoring responses were characterised by:

- an analysis and evaluation of how tension and transformation of place were used in the performance
- a thorough and insightful understanding of the play
- clear and perceptive explanations
- pertinent examples
- accurate and appropriate references to characters, plot, actors, theatrical conventions, etc.
- appropriate use of drama-specific language and terminology.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by:

- limited or no evaluation
- limited understanding of the play
- limited or confused understanding of tension and transformation of place
- a discussion of only tension
- a discussion of only transformation of place
- limited use of examples
- limited or inaccurate references to characters, plot, themes, actors, theatrical conventions, etc.
- limited or confused use of drama-specific language and terminology.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

## **The Parricide**

*In The Parricide, mood was created with the different lighting states – the red lighting state used during both acts of parricide created a tension-filled mood as they witnessed the brutal and shocking murder of the father, the combination of these keeping the audience fearful and on edge. This proved effective in creating a tense mood, the audience having been shocked by the violent act and the connotations of blood that came with the lighting state.*

*The blue lighting state that was often applied during scenes of Fedya's book gave a dreamy mysterious mood, the cool blue giving the characters a distinct unusual glow, making the scenes feel strange, like a dream. The mysterious dreamy mood was conveyed effectively here as the characters appeared very ghost-like under this light, making these scenes feel particularly non-naturalistic.*

*The sparseness of the real world was conveyed through the use of a bright, natural wash, creating a mood of bleakness, illuminating the characters and the set in an unflatteringly bright light that highlighted how ordinary and hopeless their day to day lives seemed. The bleak mood was created well as it was similar to the way lights are used in naturalistic dramas, creating no illusions of grandeur and highlighting the ugly imperfections of the actors.*

*Mood was also created through the expressive skills of the actors; during a heated argument between Anna and Fedya, a tense mood of desperation was created as the actors spoke at increasingly louder volumes, with more carrying power and at a quicker pace – the negative energy being emitted by the actors making the mood seem tense. The audience was kept on their edges during this argument, caring about the characters as they argued – showing the tense mood created was very effective.*

*Transformation of place was also utilized through changes in lighting states – the moment when we moved from the real world to Fedya's mind was accompanied by the lights slowly morphing, the bright wash fading out, revealing the cool blue glow of Fedya's dream world. This transformation may have been a bit unclear for audience members who had not realised the convention of the lighting changes coinciding with transformation of place, therefore being somewhat ineffective.*

*Other times, transformation of place would not be so slow – as Fedya is writing his book, his scenes are interrupted by an outside sound, such as a knock at the door, or a broom hitting the ceiling (created with sound production), the characters in Fedya's mind would quickly exit the scene, the lighting change would quickly switch to the natural wash – after this snap transition we would be in Fedya's office again. The snap transitions were more clear and therefore more effective than the morphs, as the audience could identify the transformation of place that was happening more easily.*

*Transformation of place was also aided by sound production – from a dream sequence the natural coloured lights would open on the figure of Fedya looking at a table, while the sound of a spinning roulette wheel plays, connoting to us the space has been transformed into a casino where he is gambling. This use of sound made the transformation especially clear, thus making it an effective transformation.*