

THEATRE

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 11	12 – 22	23 – 36	37 – 50	51 – 62	63 – 75	76 – 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 9	10 – 18	19 – 29	30 – 42	43 – 56	57 – 69	70 – 100

Independent Project Portfolio

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 6	7 – 13	14 – 19	20 – 26	27 – 32	33 – 39	40 – 50

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 14	15 – 19	20 – 24	25 – 29	30 – 40

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The work submitted this session generally represented the intentions and nature of the project and portfolio as outlined in the subject guide. The portfolios submitted were varied in terms of topic areas and imaginative in their presentation. Almost without exception, candidates

pursued a practical realization of their projects. Generally speaking, candidates understood and followed the stages of the creative process in the development of the projects at SL and HL. However, at times the stages were used as sections which tended to allow for overlap in presentation and content. Overall, the work submitted demonstrated a wide variety of projects at both HL and SL. This reflected a clear intent to approach the task with an independent interest and an underpinning in research. There were almost no instances where students misunderstood the demands of options A or B at HL, though what did vary to a large extent was the level of perseverance and commitment demonstrated within the portfolios. Once again it was obvious that this project was seen and approached by students as a culmination and in fact a highlight of a demanding course in theatre.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

The majority of the portfolios submitted showed independent work that indicated a fair amount of initiative and perseverance. Obviously the students fully engaged in the preparation stages of the project tended to do quite well in realization. The relevance of the material presented was generally appropriate, though some students still seem to include non relevant choices and research into the portfolio. Students must strive to edit and select the most relevant choices and descriptions to represent the development of the project.

Criterion B

There was a fair amount of skill evident in the portfolios sampled and in most instances with practical application. This was probably the criterion in need of the most attention as some candidates and centres are still failing to demonstrate skill development in a particular area of theatre. This understanding is integral not only to the course at both HL and SL but the project and portfolio. Students cannot demonstrate evidence of skill development if they are unaware of the specific skills needed in an area of theatre studied during the course or chosen for the project.

Criterion C

Students regularly demonstrated areas of learning and development from the projects and to some extent were able to articulate their own progress in relation to others; however, connections to the course as a whole were not outlined as consistently. Candidates in some instances seemed to miss clear opportunities to analyse and reflect on the process of the project, yet more consistently commented on the outcome and/or impact on the audience. There was far more evidence of reflection throughout the portfolio than in past sessions; this practice is to be commended.

Criterion D

There were still a number of portfolios submitted over the word limit and some, though far fewer, that would have benefitted from submitting work closer to the word limit. Handing work in well under the word limit received no direct penalty, though in most instances was self-penalising. Sources at SL were unfortunately quite often predictable and in some instances

not properly referenced. The formal requirements at both HL and SL were met with far more success than in past sessions. There were various samples from candidates that spent a lot of effort in presenting very visual and ornamented portfolios that did not delve equally in content, yet others that creatively and efficiently used visuals to demonstrate skill development, learning and application of research; this practice is to be commended.

Criterion E (HL only)

The integration and application of research had varying degrees of effectiveness. The majority presented evidence of a theoretical underpinning (theatrically based) against a small number of candidates who neglected to. The ability to integrate and apply the research to the projects was evident, though not as consistently as in the past session. It is worth noting however, that in the instances where candidates and centres understood the concept and skill of integrating and applying research, the results were outstanding and thoroughly enjoyable to read.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

In the future teaching of the candidates the consistent and effective use of journals should be stressed. It was clear from the work sampled that the very best portfolios developed from creative and effective use of the journal. Too often the structure of the project and portfolio did not represent the type of work taking place in centres, or what is outlined in the subject guide. More consistent contributions to, and editing of, the journal would better prepare students for the demands of the portfolio. Also, candidates should choose material that demonstrates more analytical reflection of the process.

There were some instances in the moderation process that raised concern as to the matter of teachers still marking the project rather than the portfolio. Teachers should allocate marks based on the evidence within the portfolio. Generally speaking, the marks allocated were appropriate and the comments indicated teachers' accurate application and understanding of the assessment criteria.

Practical Performance Proposal

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 8	9 – 12	13 – 15	16 – 19	20 – 25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 1	2 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 8	9 – 13	14 – 17	18 – 25

General Comments

The Practical performance proposals (PPP) of the November cohort, as those of last year, offer evidence of a clear general understanding of the requirements of the task viz. of adopting "a directorial perspective and writ(ing) a rationale, outline and detailed description of a proposal for staging a performance" Subject guide (SG) p27. The vast majority of presented material at both SL and HL focused on trying to clearly communicate, with varying degrees of success, a vision of a performance inspired by and developed from one of the set stimuli.

At HL, the most popular choice of prescribed performance stimulus was Jabberwocky, followed by the music stimulus of Mood Indigo. A close third was the Planetary System with the Easter Island Stones and the Yoruba Death Mask being the least popular choices. This reflected the SL choices where the Yoruba Mask was also the least preferred with the Easter Island Stones and the Planetary System map being the most chosen stimuli. There was no correlation discernible between stimulus and awarded marks as all stimuli produced work of high, medium and 'room-for-improvement' quality.

Most proposals at both SL and HL introduced their work with a 'pitch' which offered a concise summary of the proposal with varying degrees of practicality and clarity. However, as the proposals are marked holistically, the weaker pitches neither added to nor incurred penalty in the overall marking process whereas the more dynamic pitches offered an early insight into both product and process.

In Section 2, at both SL and HL, the commonest difficulty appeared to be keeping focus on the dramatic nature of the task. Often the explorative treatment of plot and/or characters was from a **literary rather than a theatrical perspective** e.g. climax/anticlimax described with little consideration as to how this would be achieved onstage in either stage action or using production elements.

At HL, Section 3, the commentary was by far the least understood of the three component parts of the PPP. The greatest difficulty encountered by candidates lies in the innocuous phrase in the marking criteria, 'practical effects'. Many proposals showed clear understanding of the nature of the area researched but did not continue to illustrate their applied understanding of the research/theory with clear examples of how this study had led to **'practical effects' in 'the proposed performance'** (SG p37).

Generally speaking, the majority of the proposals at both SL and HL reflected an **awareness of the overall approach to the assessment task** with aspects such as pitch, exploration of stimulus, onstage action and understanding of production elements usually being considered in the work. Specific requirements, for instance word counts and writing style, were more

often than not adhered to, suggesting that candidates had been well prepared in this aspect of the task.

It was also clear that the **majority of the candidates understood the mise-en-scene process**, albeit at varying levels of competence, intimating that work (practical and/or theoretical) on this process had been covered to some degree within the course.

The area of greatest strength and weakness in **Section 1 - pitch** lay with the **balance between descriptions of the concrete (space, action, design) and the theoretical (concept, themes, intent, target audience) aspects of the proposal**. The stronger candidates created a picture of onstage events in a specific space with a specific design and briefly supported this with some theory. Weaker pitches often turgidly described a plot, themes, intent and a target audience with little indication of a tangible dramatic entity.

The balance, in **Section 2 - supporting materials**, between **reporting on the devising process (research, plot brainstorm, theoretical character development, etc) and describing the mise-en-scene/action choices** was an area of strength and weakness in this section of the work. The higher marked proposals maintained this balance by offering insight into the process of devising then followed this up with detailed explanations and visuals of a practical, theatrical outcome.

Some candidates at both SL and HL presented **many computer downloaded images** in this section of the work as specific examples of set, costume or lighting effects. These generic images (particularly set or costume) serve as important inspirations in the choice process but need elaboration (e.g. detailed annotations or follow up sketches) to be of illuminative value in the process towards specific, justified, artistic choices.

A couple of candidates chose to stage published scripts which had been inspired by the stimulus. However, often the reasons cited for the inspiration did not convince (e.g. nine planets so a play with nine characters) as **the reasoning seemed to be superficial so suggesting limited imaginative interpretation of stimulus**.

The greatest strength and weakness in HL **Section 3 - commentary** lay in the **balance between 'theory to effect' and 'effect to theory'**. Several candidates began by describing a 'practical effect' from their proposed performance e.g. a stepping forward of one character into the audience and then linking this back to a theory or piece of research i.e. breaking the fourth wall. These examples did not show an 'understanding of the practical effects' of the theory/research as they showed no real comprehension of the intent, and thus fundamental reason, for the application of the theory.

Many Section 3 commentaries cited research/theory and **showed an understanding of the concepts explored but lacked clear examples of how this work led to 'practical effects' in their proposed performance**. This was particularly the case when research/theory was not specifically theatre focused e.g. social, historical, ethnic, etc. In these cases, the research often led to plot or character development but the candidate did not then explain how this would lead to a 'practical effect' onstage.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Recommendations:-

Hand-out materials from the Subject guide and classroom opportunity for candidates to:-

- obtain clear understanding of the requirements of the task (structure, content, word counts)
- understand the demands of the assessment criteria

Guidance suggestions:-

Pitch - More frequent opportunities for practising balanced pitch writing (class projects, on viewed performances, of public performances, movies) - could be in the journal.

Supporting materials - introduce a 'Drawing for the theatre' module/workshop in Yr1 (possibly in conjunction with an Art dept) to help theatre candidates acquire the basic skills for design and how to communicate through visuals and annotations.

Commentary (HL only) - Regular sessions on reading, analysing and extracting concepts from articles on different types of research/theory (theatre, social, historical, etc) and activities to explore ways of applying these on stage using action and/or production elements (practical effects). This process also leads to a deeper understanding of the research/theory.

Research Investigation

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 4	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 19	20 – 24	25 – 29	30 – 40

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 9	10 – 12	13 – 16	17 – 19	20 – 30

The areas of the programme in which the candidates appeared well prepared

There was a range of Research Investigations covering a diverse number of theatre practices and plays/pieces of theatre from those practices. Most candidates seemed to understand the requirements of the task with some showing an exceptional skill in meeting these requirements and engaging with the theatre practice and play/piece of theatre from that practice. The most successful candidates were those that obviously enjoyed and were genuinely interested and curious about the practice they were researching. They demonstrated initiative and perseverance, examining a variety of different sources and cross referencing these sources. The depth of research varied but most candidates were able to research and apply research to the play/piece of theatre from the practice selected. Most candidates demonstrated an understanding and knowledge of the theatre practice selected and most candidates were able to formulate a question, though the wording and focus of the question varied. The candidates who were most successful showed an understanding of what was relevant and demonstrated an ability to apply this to the play/piece of theatre. They were able to make observations based on the research and by applying it, they showed how research can inform and give depth and authenticity to practice of staging the particular play/piece of theatre which they had selected from the practice.

Areas of the programme which proved difficult for candidates

Not all candidates are clear regarding the necessity to attribute ALL sources. Some candidates do not understand the fact that inclusion of a source in the bibliography is not enough. The most successful candidates indicated clearly the source of every one of their observations and research. The attribution of sources can be through parenthesis, as a footnote or endnote, or within the body of the essay.

Getting the question right is also key to the success of the task. The question should be a work in progress and should be constantly adapted and refined as the candidate researches further into the field. The narrower the focus of the question, the better, as this gives the candidate a clear area to research and a particular aspect to address. There is still some misunderstanding regarding the aspect and this is often too broad - general design or direction of a piece is huge and too great an undertaking within the word limit. Depth is more important than breadth. Choosing a particular aspect of performance that is particular to the theatre practice selected (for example use of gesture in Melodrama) and the CORRESPONDING application of this particular aspect of the play selected (for example the way a particular character communicates their emotions using gesture) helps the candidate to stay on task. The candidate may even choose to focus on a particular key moment of action rather than the whole play.

Many Higher Level candidates struggle with the Critique of sources by simple describing the source and briefly explaining how they used it. The critique needs to be more developed than this and should address the source, its reliability, its usefulness in general and how effective it is as a source within the field they are researching. They then need to address how they used the source and its usefulness for this particular task.

The strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual areas

Criterion A - Research skills

Many students still do not attribute sources consistently and having provided a bibliography feel that this is sufficient attribution. Observations need to be consistently supported by research evidence and the source of this evidence clearly stated. This is considered correct attribution of sources. The more successful candidates were able to not only discern what significant research is but also research these areas further in order to provide more depth. Facts and observations taken directly from one text can sometimes be superficial and derivative. In most cases students consulted a range of sources. The strongest candidates were able to cross reference and relate one source to another as this made for more perceptive observations.

Candidates must also consider all visuals as sources and these too need to be clearly attributed.

Criterion B - Task relevance

The requirements of the task are:

- research a theatre practice
- choose a play/piece of theatre from this practice
- choose an aspect appropriate to the practice and of significance to the production of the play/piece of theatre

The candidate then needs to research this aspect of the theatre practice and demonstrate how it is applied and how it impacts on the production of the play/theatre piece selected from the practice.

Most students understood this and met these requirements, though some students are still not selecting a play/piece of theatre directly from the theatre practice they have chosen. This does not meet the requirements.

The development of the question is key to the success of this task. Most strong candidates wrote a clear and focussed question and provided a clear and focussed answer to the question. Where the question was poorly formulated or too general and vague, students did less well. Some students also created such complex and multifaceted questions that, though interesting, were impossible to address within the word limit. In this respect they overcomplicated the task for themselves as they were unable to fully address the question. The questions with a narrower focus seemed to be the most successful.

Criterion C – Presentation

Most candidates wrote fluid and well structured essays which were written in the appropriate formal register. Some candidates are still writing the essay as if they are addressing a

practitioner. This is a misunderstanding of the requirements. The essay needs to be seen as an academic and formal research paper that would be of service to anyone involved in staging that play/piece of theatre using the theatre practice that this play/piece of theatre originates from.

The most successful Research Investigations were written in the third person, with a clear introduction and conclusion. They had a clear line of argument and some analysis and discussion rather than a simple presentation of the facts. In some instances students impeded the flow and coherence of the essay by breaking it into titled sections.

Less successful Research Investigations are often padded with visual and textual material in the appendix (sometimes including an entire script) without clearly indicating the relevance of this material. The reason why any piece of material in the appendix is included must be clearly stated.

All material must be presented neatly and clearly, with visuals being clearly visible. Some reproductions are poor - either too small and unclear or blurry and difficult to see. Where colour is mentioned, visuals need to be in colour.

Criterion D (HL only) - Critique of sources

This is an area that many students need help with as this is a significant number of marks for higher level students. The sources need to be critiqued in terms of their reliability, effectiveness, style etc and not simply described. Their suitability and relevance also needs to be discussed. This element of the task requires the student to take both an objective and a subjective perspective-critique of the source in the context of other sources of this nature and in this field as well as a critique of how useful the source was for the students purposes and how the source was used.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Bringing together the different elements of the task (practice, play/piece of theatre, aspect) is key to the success of this task. Teachers should work on mini assignments/exercises that allow students to bring together these aspects and help them to see what is relevant to a practitioner and what is not useful information.
- Students should be made aware of the importance of research in theatre making and experience, through practice, how research informs performance and production.
- Access to and availability of sources should be checked before a student embarks on the Research Investigation.
- Students need practice in planning and writing formal essays and research papers with correct attribution and register. Students may also be referred to the extended essay as an example of formal writing and research.
- The candidates should be familiar with all the assessment criteria. It may be useful to break the criteria up and discuss each aspect of it. Pay particular attention to the question at the top of each criterion.

- Quotations are not regarded as part of the word count and students need to be clear of this, that the word count is a requirement and is strictly adhered to by the examiners.
- Students needs to be given guidance on how to develop an effective question and practice at developing and refining questions during the duration of the course.

Theatre Performance & Production Presentation

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 16	17 – 21	22 – 25	26 – 30	31 – 40

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 10	11 – 14	15 – 18	19 – 22	23 – 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range was wide and the quality of the presentations was predictably varied.

The more successful candidates were able to select and edit from a range of work so that their presentations not only reflected their development as practitioners of theatre but also their growing maturity as students. In achieving this, the candidate has always got to be mindful that the content of what is being presented is shaped around the demands of the three (SL) or four (HL) criteria. The better candidates were careful to do this and found a way of combining a response to the criteria when focusing on key theatrical experiences. The specific demands of Criterion A provide the candidate with the particular material that should be presented, that a relationship will naturally exist between different theatrical processes or practices is the premise of the second criterion and that reflection, the third criterion, is fundamental to the act of understanding, concludes the process for standard level candidates. The importance at higher level of developing a theoretical basis in their understanding of theatre is the purpose of the fourth criterion, always ensuring that theory is not studied as pure theory but tested through exploration in application to practice. An example of how three criteria can relate one to another is the following: the act of reflection can be focused on the synthesis of different aspects of the course and this can take an analytical form. This

economy of approach and concentration on the specific rather than the general distinguishes the candidates who are able to fulfil the requirements of the task.

The importance of the images is fundamental to the task and, while they do not figure in the criteria, they cannot be neglected. That they frequently are is either a product of carelessness or faulty preparation.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A – Analysis

There was some excellent analysis at both standard and higher level. The use of overlapping experiences is so crucial here; nothing is “stand alone” and if it is, it will threaten to become counter-productive to the exercise. The range of the course facilitated by the teacher and carefully charted by the candidate in the journal is a guarantee of quality, provided that the range is not built up as a series of discrete units which bear no relationship to each other. On the contrary, what the student needs to see and be made consistently aware of is the process of overlapping, the connectedness of things or the comparison between things. The more challenged they are by their material the more likely they are to respond adventurously to it. Academic rigor is not negotiable. If a candidate is to analyze then there must be a thorough understanding of the subject matter. The general commentary, the superficial observation, the cliché response and the narrative approach are all likely to create problems for the candidate in this task.

Criterion B - Synthesis

The way the teacher designs the introductory year of the course should encourage the candidates to accept a basic fact about theatre, namely that it is an amalgam of different skills and tasks, a composite art as the “nature of the subject” in the Guide describes it. The process of making theatre, the act of performing or producing it and the exposure to radically different approaches to these tasks through the world traditions and practices selected for study all combine to produce an enriching experience the candidate can present on. There was a tendency to explain away theatrical experience rather than explore it and there was too often a reluctance to commit to the hard work of seriously establishing links from one experience to another. To review a play in the fashion of a theatre critic as an autonomous event is to neglect a wonderful opportunity to make that visit to the theatre a centrepiece of the work rather than a unique event that is isolated from it. The tendency to multiply experiences in the presentation, thereby impressing through the enumeration of quantity as opposed to a more thoughtful exploration of fewer experiences with a view to achieving a more comprehensive understanding of them, is a tendency that should be discouraged.

Criterion C - Reflection

This criterion was often well done. The candidates were adept at using reflection as a bridge between different aspects of the course and seemed to appreciate how important this is. The act of reflections registers the level of understanding the candidate manages in relation to the work and is therefore a crucial indicator for the overall success of the task. Those who reflected through specific examples and carefully thought out instances were able to catch the

essence of their understanding in concise passages of speech. You do not have to make lofty generalizations about the nature of theatre; indeed such generalizations are almost always pretentious and limited. It is far better to take a small but resonant action and build up to a larger pattern of experience. In this way reflection becomes a means of accepting the challenge of constructing a viable sense of the course, not a verbose way of explaining it away in a series of grandiose but rather obtuse observations. The candidate cannot simply reflect. Content is required and thought needs to be exercised on this content so that its nature is examined and analyzed usually with reference to other content. Reflection is what comes after or it can be part of what can move a process along, for example in the devising of a piece of theatre, or the candidate might, through an act of reflection, apprehend a link or comparison of one practice or theory to another.

Criterion D - Applied research

Too many candidates tried to do too much here. It is better to really examine a restricted body of theory and explore it in practice than try to cover Craig, Boal, Stanislavski, and Brecht in 30 minutes. The tendency to erect a response to theory on the basis of one aspect of that theory was also a prevalent and mistaken mode of understanding. A level of academic humility should be exercised when approaching a complicated and often contradictory body of theory. To listen to blithe assumptions about theory being made by candidates on the basis of one idea from that theory is not edifying. The crucial need to explore through doing is also often neglected but when it is enacted such enactments are exciting and challenging. The better candidates approach theory and the practice accruing to it in a spirit of intellectual curiosity and in doing so meet the challenge of the criterion.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Use the images
- Keep it simple
- Analyze; do not narrate
- Go for depth as a way of constructing breadth
- Connect the criteria in your presentation
- Look for connectedness and comparison – let these be your ways of understanding
- Apply theory in practice, not to prove but to explore
- Be part of an ensemble, not the star
- Be open to world theatre practices, especially if they challenge your assumptions
- Speak for 30 minutes
- Do not read – present and enjoy