

GCE AS and A Level Subject Criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies

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The criteria

Introduction

AS and A level subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.

They provide the framework within which the awarding body creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and objectives

1. AS and A level specifications in Drama and Theatre Studies should encourage students to:
 - develop their interest and enjoyment in drama and theatre both as participants and as informed members of an audience, fostering an enthusiasm for and critical appreciation of the subject;
 - develop understanding and appreciation of the significance of social, cultural and historical influences on the development of drama and theatre;
 - experience a range of opportunities to develop a variety of dramatic and theatrical skills, enabling them to grow creatively and imaginatively in both devised and scripted work;
 - integrate theory and practice through their understanding of critical concepts and the discriminating use of specialist terminology.

Subject content

2. AS and A level specifications in Drama and Theatre Studies should build on students' prior knowledge of drama in Key Stages 1–3 and the skills, knowledge and understanding established at key stage 4/GCSE.

Knowledge and understanding

3. AS and A level specifications should require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- how performers, designers and directors communicate meaning to an audience;
 - theatre practice through their own engagement with the medium as both participant and informed audience member;
 - the appropriate vocabulary and specialist terminology for the subject.
4. AS level specifications should require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
- a minimum of two published plays demonstrating understanding of how style, form, dramatic structure and characterisation can be interpreted and realised in performance, and how plays relate to their historical, social and cultural context – they must be varied in terms of period and genre;
 - the work of at least one influential director, designer, theatre company or other practitioner who has made a significant contribution to theatre practice.
5. A2 level specifications should require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
- at least two more published plays, of which one must be pre-20th century;
 - the connections between theory and practice demonstrated through a range of forms, genres and performance styles;
 - the directorial overview required in the interpretation and realisation of a theatrical performance;
 - how relevant research supports practical work.

Skills

6. AS and A level specifications should develop learners’:

- ability to form judgements about live theatre based on their understanding of drama and theatre;
- use of subject-specific terminology in a range of contexts;
- performance and/or production skills appropriate to the creation and realisation of drama and theatre;
- ability to work creatively and collaboratively to achieve shared dramatic intentions;
- ability to respond to plays imaginatively, conveying ideas clearly and coherently.

7. In addition A2 learners should develop:

- a more advanced level of performance and/or production skills;
- the ability to think independently, make judgements and refine their work in the light of research;
- the ability to analyse the ways in which different performance and production elements are brought together to create theatre.

Assessment objectives

8. Knowledge, understanding and skills are closely linked. Specifications should require that all learners demonstrate the following assessment objectives in the context of the content and skills prescribed.

9. The assessment objectives are to be weighted in all specifications as indicated in the following table. The assessment objectives apply to the whole specification.

Assessment objectives		Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
AO1	Demonstrate the application of performance and/or production skills through the realisation of drama and theatre	30–40%	30–40%	30–40%
AO2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of practical and theoretical aspects of drama and theatre using appropriate terminology	20–40%	20–40%	20–40%

AO3	Interpret plays from different periods and genres	20–40%	20–40%	20–40%
AO4	Make critical and evaluative judgements of live theatre	10–25%	10–25%	10–25%

Scheme of assessment

Internal assessment

10. All A level specifications in Drama and Theatre Studies must have internal assessment up to a maximum weighting of 40 per cent. Internal assessment must not exceed 40 per cent at either AS or A2.

11. Where internal assessment is included, specifications must make clear how reliability and fairness are secured, by setting out requirements that ensure the robustness of each stage of the internal assessment, for example:
 - the specific skills to be assessed;
 - the setting of tasks;
 - the extent of supervision in carrying out of tasks;
 - the conditions under which assessment takes place;
 - the marking of the assessment and internal standardising procedures;
 - any moderation process.

Synoptic assessment

12. Synoptic assessment in Drama and Theatre Studies should be included at A2 and will take account of the requirement that A level qualifications should enable learners to develop a broader and deeper understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specifications as a whole.

13. Synoptic assessment in Drama and Theatre Studies involves the selection and application of skills knowledge and understanding to a range of new and varied contexts.
14. In those units indicated as synoptic, learners should be required to address artistic challenges through the creation of their own work and their interpretation of plays, and show understanding of the ways in which other drama and theatre practitioners have made artistic decisions.
15. There should be both practical and theoretical elements to synoptic assessment, which should draw on all the assessment objectives although not necessarily with equal weighting.
16. Examples of synoptic assessment are demonstrated in specification content through knowledge and understanding and skills.

AS performance descriptions for Drama and Theatre Studies

	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2	Assessment objective 3	Assessment objective 4
Assessment objectives	Demonstrate the application of performance and/or production skills through the realisation of drama and theatre.	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of practical and theoretical aspects of drama and theatre using appropriate terminology.	Interpret plays from different periods and genres.	Make critical and evaluative judgements of live theatre.
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) produce work that is creative and results from a well-developed understanding of the content, form, style and/or genre;</p> <p>b) present work that is technically accomplished, disciplined and communicates effectively with an audience.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant aspects of drama and theatre using appropriate terminology;</p> <p>b) present work that is well organised, clear and fluent.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) analyse and comment on the key characteristics of the play in terms of its performance potential and provide practical ideas for a dramatically effective interpretation in performance;</p> <p>b) interpret comprehensively the meaning of a play through application of ideas and concepts appropriate to the</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate the ability to make sound critical and evaluative judgements of live theatre.</p>

			context.	
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) produce work that is based on a partial understanding of the context of the work;</p> <p>b) produce work that sometimes communicates with an audience but has a restricted level of technical accomplishment.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate some degree of knowledge and understanding of some aspects of drama and theatre, using some appropriate terminology;</p> <p>b) present work that communicates in a straightforward way although it is not always entirely accurate.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) identify some of the play's theatrical characteristics in terms of its performance potential;</p> <p>b) provide an obvious and straightforward interpretation of a play.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate some ability to make evaluative judgements of live theatre.</p>

A2 performance descriptions for Drama and Theatre Studies

	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2	Assessment objective 3	Assessment objective 4
Assessment objectives	Demonstrate the application of performance and/or production skills through the realisation of drama and theatre.	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of practical and theoretical aspects of drama and theatre using appropriate terminology.	Interpret plays from different periods and genres.	Make critical and evaluative judgements of live theatre.
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) produce work that is imaginative and highly creative; b) demonstrate a high level of understanding of the content, form, style and/or genre; c) present work that demonstrates sustained technical accomplishment, communicates effectively to an audience and has a 	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of relevant aspects of drama and theatre, articulating their awareness of the relationship between theory and practice; b) write accurately, use terminology appropriately and organise, sustain and develop an argument based on well-chosen 	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) reflect analytically and perceptively on the key characteristics of the play in terms of its performance potential and provide inventive practical ideas for a dramatically effective interpretation. 	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate the ability to consistently make accurate critical and evaluative judgements of live theatre.

	real sense of purpose.	examples.		
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) produce work that shows a straightforward understanding of the content, form, style and/or genre;</p> <p>b) present work where technical achievement is often insufficient to enable an effective performance.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate generalised knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre, making some connections between theory and practice;</p> <p>b) write in a way that communicates ideas and understanding but where the meaning is sometimes obscured by incorrect information.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) respond to a play with some ideas that provide a workable interpretation of the performance of the play.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate some ability to make critical and evaluative judgements of live theatre.</p>

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