



2009

Dance GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2009 Dance written examination paper reflected the *VCE Dance Study Design*. As in previous years, the examination questions were based on the key knowledge and skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4. Students were required to demonstrate their understanding of choreographic principles and the prescribed works studied in both units.

The examination paper consisted of five questions, which included a scenario question that required students to apply their knowledge and understanding of the generic processes dancers use when learning dance works. Questions 3, 4 and 5 related to dance works selected from the Prescribed List of dance works published annually in the *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET*. Responses indicated that students had studied appropriate works selected from the current Prescribed List. Teachers should note that the Prescribed List for 2010 has been amended for both Units 3 and 4. All questions were compulsory and students could not attain high marks if they did not answer all questions.

The marks allocated for each question will vary from year to year and are indicated on the examination paper at the end of each question. Students should use this information to plan the length and/or amount of detail required for each response. Students undertaking VCE Dance in 2010 may use past written examinations from 2007 to 2009 and other material, such as Assessment Reports and sample examination material, available on the VCAA website <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au> to assist in their examination preparation. Students should be advised that this material serves only as a sample and that the number and type of questions will vary from year to year.

Students should read each question carefully to ensure they understand what is being tested. They should identify the key words and phrases, consider how the weighting of each question will impact upon the depth of knowledge required and ensure they cover all aspects of the question in their response.

Students who gained high marks in all questions demonstrated consistent use of correct terminology as well as detailed knowledge and understanding of the key knowledge and skills relevant to each question.

Students who did not gain high marks did not provide sufficient detail, displayed a limited understanding of the concept(s) involved, and/or showed limited knowledge of appropriate dance terminology. The glossary attached to the study design contains explanations of the terms used in the study. It is essential that students become familiar with these terms early in the year and use them consistently in all written tasks, including the examination, especially when asked for a definition of a concept. Diagrams were awarded marks only if they provided information that was additional to written responses.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

Question 1

This question tested students' understanding of Unit 3 of Outcome 2 and Unit 4 of Outcome 2.

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	6	0	4	2	11	8	68	5.1

The following answers were accepted:

- coordination
- strength
- balance
- stamina
- control
- flexibility
- transference of weight
- alignment.

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High-scoring responses correctly listed three physical skills and outlined one correct and/or appropriate way each skill could be safely developed by a dancer.

Low-scoring responses did not refer to the correct physical skills and lapsed into a description of body actions or an aspect of dance technique such as core stability. Not referring to the correct physical skill impacted on the student's ability to correctly outline the safe development of the physical skill.

Following is an example of a high level response to this question.

Flexibility: can be developed through stretching everyday to lengthen the muscles. Various stretching techniques can be used such as Pilates.

Transference of weight: can be developed by having an awareness of weight placement when performing movement vocabulary, and by repeating/ rehearsing turns and other steps that involve transferring weight from the right to left side of the body.

Stamina: this can be developed by continuously repeating particular movement vocabulary such as turns and elevations in order to increase aerobic fitness.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	17	1	7	6	22	12	35	3.9

High-scoring responses correctly defined one of the four elements of spatial organisation and briefly described two contrasting examples from their Unit 4 Composition Solo to show the manipulation of the selected element.

Low-scoring responses either did not define any of the elements of spatial organisation or the definition offered was limited/incorrect and/or the examples given were limited.

Following is an example of a high level response.

Level: is the height that a movement or phrase is performed on in relationship to its distance from the floor. It can range from low, medium to high.

Low use of level can be seen in the resolution section of my composition solo where I do a phrase on the ground including movements such as slides and the splitz. The low level represents my character feeling sad, depressed and alone.

High use of level is seen in the beginning of my composition solo. In this section I am predominantly on a high level to show my character's happiness and love. It is seen in various movements such as rises, turns and arabesques.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	10	7	10	12	19	18	24	3.8

This question tested students' understanding of the generic processes dancers use when learning group dance works. The question was based on a scenario; therefore students were not required to relate their answers directly to the learnt group dance work studied in 2009.

Appropriate processes may have included any adaptation from the list which appears on page 30 of the *VCE Dance Study Design*. Students were only required to **list** these processes. Single words which referred to, or were part of, a legitimate learning process were accepted.

High-scoring responses provided a list of six correct and/or appropriate processes used to learn group dance works.

Low-scoring responses confused learning processes with movement creation processes or related their answer to rehearsing and/or performing processes.

Following is an example of a high level response to this question.

- *discussion with the choreographer as to how to interpret the expressive intention*
- *observing the choreographer execute the choreography a number of times*

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- *imitating the choreography*
- *breaking dance into phrases to develop technical accuracy*
- *repeating the movement sequences to develop movement memory*
- *following safe dance procedures when learning new elevations and other complex movement vocabulary*

Question 3

Work chosen	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
%	0	42	12	27	15	0	4	1	0

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	9	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	2	8	2	6	3	5	5	10	2	9	6	21	13.2

This question tested students' understanding of Outcome 1 of Unit 3, choreographic devices used in solo prescribed works. The question required students to select one prescribed solo work studied in Unit 3 and name and define two choreographic devices used by the choreographer throughout the dance work. For each identified choreographic device students needed to describe two different examples of movement vocabulary which illustrated the use of the device, identify where in the solo each of the four examples occurred and describe the expressive intention communicated in each of the four examples.

Examples of choreographic devices are listed in the study design (page 26) and in the Glossary (page 39). Other legitimate choreographic devices which students named and defined, and which were relevant to the selected solo dance work, were also considered acceptable.

Responses that gained high marks accurately named and defined two choreographic devices. The examples of movement vocabulary were linked back to the selected choreographic device, to the place it occurred in the solo and to the expressive intention.

Low-scoring responses either did not define the choreographic device and/or did not describe two different examples for each choreographic device identified. Very low-scoring responses tended to confuse choreographic devices with other choreographic principles.

Following is an excerpt from a high level response. The work being analysed is *Cry*.

Repetition is when a certain movement or phrase of movement is repeated or performed in exactly the same way. In the beginning section of Cry the choreographic device of repetition is used to build up the phrases into a section and to create emphasis. An example of this is when the soloist is on a low level on her knees, shuffling forward from the back corner while her arms make a scrubbing motion with the use of the fabric. The gesture of scrubbing is repeated three times in varying directions and is used to communicate her role as a slave and the monotonous duties she needed to perform.

Question 4

Unit 3

Work chosen	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
%	0	15	3	5	4	0	1	0

28 per cent of students chose Unit 3.

Unit 4

Work chosen	None	1	2	3	4	5
%	0	6	34	8	14	10

72 per cent of students chose Unit 4.

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

This question tested students' understanding of either Outcome 1 of Unit 3 or Outcome 1 of Unit 4, cultural influences on solo or group prescribed works.

Responses that gained high marks accurately described two different cultural influences which affected the technical and/or production aspect(s) of the solo or group works selected, and comprehensively discussed the impact of each of

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these relevant cultural influences on choices made by the choreographer in relation to the technical and/or production aspect(s).

Lower-scoring responses showed a limited understanding of the impact of the identified cultural influence upon the choreographer's choice of technical and/or production aspect(s). Some students accurately identified a plausible cultural influence; however, did not score high marks because they did not make clear the impact of this cultural influence on the choreographer's choice of technical and/or production aspect(s).

Very low-scoring responses tended to describe the technical and/or production aspect(s) in too much detail and/or the identified cultural influence(s) was either discussed in an inaccurate/limited way or not discussed at all. Some failed to provide a link to the choreographer's choices in relation to the technical and/or production aspects or discussed the movement vocabulary instead.

Following is an excerpt from a response which achieved high marks. The work being analysed is *Stamping Ground*.

Kylian viewed Aboriginal tribal dance while visiting Australia and he was impressed with their respect of the land and love of nature. Traditionally the Aboriginals regard their land as a part of themselves and Kylian wanted to explore the idea of the endless desert plains and wide open space in his dance piece. The resulting dance work reflected these values by presenting a plain minimal set without props which allowed the dancers to use the full area of the stage without restrictions, and capture the open space performances of the Aboriginal dancers. Kylian's dancers perform as though there are no restrictions or obstacles in their way. To reinforce this, a fringe curtain at the back of the space enabled dancers to exit and enter whenever necessary to give the illusion of an ongoing space. The dancer's costumes also represent the aboriginal's love of the land and natural earthy colours. Like the ochre used as body paint to express the ancient stories of the Dreamtime, Kylian's costumes used brown earthy colours that merged in with the dancer's skin and mirrored the Aboriginal culture.

Question 5

Work chosen	None	1	2	3	4	5
%	0	15	31	6	19	28

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Average
%	5	1	4	3	4	3	4	5	4	4	11	7	7	5	5	5	4	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	0	5	11.1

This question tested students' understanding of key knowledge from Outcome 1 of Unit 4, the choreographic principle of 'group structures' associated with group prescribed works. The question required students to select one group prescribed work studied in Unit 4 and analyse the ways in which the group structures were manipulated to communicate the choreographer's expressive intention.

The question invited an extended response to which marks were assigned using the bands of descriptors described below.

Band 1: 21–25 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated a **highly skilled** knowledge of the prescribed group work through a sophisticated and very detailed analysis of ways in which all group structures (symmetrical/asymmetrical groupings and movements performed in unison, contrast and canon) were manipulated to communicate the expressive intention throughout the selected work.
- Answers were analytical and insightful, explaining the placement and arrangement of dancers in group formations and the movement performed in these positions, plus how the movement vocabulary was manipulated through the use of unison, contrast and canon, to communicate the expressive intention throughout the selected dance work.
- Highly skilled use of correct dance terminology.

Band 2: 16– 20 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated a **competent**, but at times inconsistent, knowledge of the prescribed work through an analysis of ways in which most group structures (symmetrical/asymmetrical groupings and movements performed in unison, contrast and canon) were manipulated to communicate the expressive intention throughout the selected work.
- Answers were analytical, explaining the placement and arrangement of dancers in group formations and the movement performed in these positions, plus how the movement vocabulary was manipulated through the use



of unison, contrast and canon, to communicate the expressive intention throughout the majority of the selected work.

- Competent use of correct dance terminology.

Band 3: 11–15 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated a **sound** knowledge of the prescribed work through a fairly detailed understanding of the use of group structures throughout the majority of the work; however, the analysis may have contained some inconsistencies, that is, some group structures may have been analysed in less depth.
- Answers were, on the whole, analytical, examining the work in some detail through explanation of the placement and arrangement of dancers in group formations and the movement performed in these positions, plus how the movement vocabulary was manipulated through the use of unison, contrast and canon to communicate the expressive intention throughout some of the selected dance work.
- Sound use of dance terminology.

Band 4: 6–10 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated a **limited** knowledge of the prescribed work and there was a limited understanding of the use of group structures throughout the work, that is, not all group structures were addressed and discussion of the expressive intention was limited or not linked to the discussion of any aspect of group structure.
- Answers were, on the whole, descriptive rather than analytical, examining the work in little detail with limited use of specific examples of the placement/arrangement of dancers in group formations and the movement performed in these positions, plus how the movement vocabulary was manipulated through the use of unison, contrast and canon to illustrate the answer.
- Answers lacked the use, where appropriate, of dance terminology, or terminology may have been misused.

Band 5: 0–5 marks

- Answers may have shown a **minimal** knowledge and understanding of group structures and/or specific examples to illustrate the answer.
- The information may have included some relevant points, but these were random rather than organised as part of a coherent structure. Briefly referenced or a lack of examples of the placement/arrangement of dancers in group formations and the movement performed in these positions, plus how the movement vocabulary was manipulated through the use of unison, contrast and canon to illustrate the answer.
- Dance terminology was rarely used and/or where it was used it may have been misapplied, making the answer difficult to follow.

Responses ranked in Band 1 contextualised the linkages between the expressive intention, detailed examples of the use of movement vocabulary and group structures of the dance.

Lower-scoring responses often lapsed into a detailed discussion of the expressive intention and offered insufficient detailed references to the manipulation of group structures, which impacted significantly upon the marks awarded for this question.

Very low-scoring responses used incorrect terminology when discussing group structures and/or presented a synopsis of the expressive intention without any links to the way group structures were manipulated. Some students referred to the expressive use of spatial organisation.

Following is an excerpt of a response typical to Band 1. The work being analysed is *Steps in the Street*.

As the dance develops, several strong images are introduced. The main dancer is placed in the centre of the stage, with her arm and left leg extended in an angular shape. There is a group on each side of her performing a series of elevations and the other group remains motionless. The static effect of these elevations moving up and down convey the tension that would have been felt by those who were isolated by the social and military conflict. The placement of these two groups are unbalanced in the space, showing an asymmetrical grouping, and the groups are working in contrast which further reinforces the expressive intention of disharmony in society.