



**2013**

**Dance GA 3: Examination**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The 2013 VCE Dance examination was the final exam for the current study design (*VCE Dance Study Design 2007–2013*). Teachers and students should be aware of changes to the study and the examinations specifications that take effect from 2014. The new VCE Dance written examination specifications and sample questions are available on the VCAA website.

The 2013 Dance written examination was 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 consisted of five questions that were all compulsory. 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*. Teachers are reminded that this list changes from year to year; therefore, it is important to check the current list before deciding on the final selection of works. Responses indicated that some students had not studied works selected from the 2013 prescribed list.

In general, high-scoring students presented comprehensive responses that demonstrated consistent use of appropriate terminology, as well as detailed knowledge and understanding of the key knowledge and skills relevant to each question.

Students who didn't score highly displayed a limited understanding of the key concept(s) involved and/or showed limited knowledge of appropriate dance terminology. Key terms for the study are defined in the study design. It is essential that students become familiar with these terms early in the year and use them appropriately.

Students are advised to read each question carefully to ensure they understand what is being asked. They should use the reading time to identify the key terms (for example, 'list', 'describe', 'discuss', 'analyse', etc.) and key concepts being tested. They should address all aspects of the question in their response.

Some students presented overly long responses for Questions 1 and 2, and appeared to run out of time for the remaining questions. Practice at writing to a set time should assist students in preparing for examination conditions.

**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 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 errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

**Question 1a.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	12	4	8	12	15	13	35	3.9

The question tested students' knowledge and understanding of the three elements of movement. It also tested their capacity to describe the particular choreographic manipulation of each element in one example of movement vocabulary by using terminology relevant to time, space and energy.

To gain full marks for this question, students were required to describe the use of all three elements of movement in one example of movement vocabulary from their Unit 3 solo dance work.

Students with high-scoring responses presented comprehensive and detailed descriptions of all three elements of movement, or time, space and energy (as identified in the study design), in one example of movement vocabulary from their Unit 3 solo dance work.

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## Low-scoring responses

- did not refer to all three elements of movement
- did not describe a movement example or referred to multiple movement examples from throughout the work
- used terminology inaccurately and, therefore, did not demonstrate an understanding of each element of movement.

This is an example of a good response to this question.

*In the opening phrase of my solo I explore the use of time, space and energy. I am crouched in a sitting position on a low level, with my body tightly contracted in a small dimension and flexed in different angles showing an angular shape and using an indirect body focus. At this point I am axial. I elevate my legs to the side while I fall in the opposite direction. I perform this at a fast tempo, and use this impetus to roll along the floor in a forward direction clockwise on the accent of the music to show an even rhythm. I then recovered into an open balanced shape using a sustained energy quality to face the audience. After pausing in stillness, I raised my hands to cover my face before engaging in a fast percussive quality which led into a pushing action of a short duration to the sides showing a bound flow and strong force.*

## Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	1	1	4	12	16	21	46	4.9

This question tested students' understanding and application of three of the movement creation processes – improvisation, selection and arrangement – in relation to the creation or choreography of a solo dance work.

This question required students to explain how each of the three movement creation processes of improvisation, selection and arrangement were used when choreographing a solo dance work.

Students with high-scoring responses presented comprehensive and plausible explanations of how each stated movement creation process could be used when choreographing a solo dance work.

## Low-scoring responses

- did not refer to and/or explain all three different movement creation processes
- listed rather than clearly explained each process in detail
- stated a definition rather than explained how each process was used
- did not demonstrate an understanding of the different processes.

This is an example of a high-scoring response to the question.

*Improvisation is the initial movement creation process. It is the spontaneous creation of movement to a stimulus, or in my case the unit 3 criteria. This process allowed me to experiment and to explore movement possibilities which I then recorded on my phone to create a visual diary. Selection involved me revisiting my initial movement exploration and choosing movements and phrases based on their appropriateness in communicating the various components of the criteria. For example, I needed to communicate variations of time so I selected movements which would show both fast and slow use of tempo. Arrangement refers to the manipulation of the selected movement vocabulary, therefore I arranged my selected movement vocabulary into phrases using various manipulations of time, shape and energy to create sections and form a unified composition.*

## Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	7	3	8	10	19	13	41	4.3

This question tested students' understanding of why forming related phrases and sections is important when choreographing, and their understanding of rehearsal processes in a group context.

The question was based on a scenario; therefore, students were **not** required to relate their answers directly to the learnt group dance work that was choreographed in 2013.

In their response to this question, students needed to describe two or more rehearsal processes that dancers use when rehearsing a group dance work to improve the safe and accurate execution of the choreography.

Students with high-scoring responses presented a detailed and articulate description of two or more relevant rehearsal processes that are used by dancers in a group dance work to improve the safe and accurate execution of the choreography.

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## Low-scoring responses

- presented a basic description of a rehearsal process (it lacked detail, was only an outline and/or it included inaccuracies)
- lacked any reference to a group context
- discussed processes used in pre-performance or performance rather than rehearsal.

This is an example of a high-scoring response to this question.

*Slow mark through of the group dance work could be undertaken to ensure all group formations are positioned correctly and to ensure all choreographed movement vocabulary is executed accurately by all members of the group when in the various formations. Correct group formations and accurate reproduction of the choreography are essential to avoid any collision of the dancers.*

*The group could also employ repetition of the more complex phrases of movement in order to obtain clarity and muscle memory. This process could be done with and without the music in order to commit these phrases to memory and allow them to be performed flawlessly and safely.*

*While rehearsing each dancer could ask the choreographer questions to clarify the minor details of the movement vocabulary. These could include questions about the technical accuracy of the movement (eg positions of the feet or the shape of the body) or about the group placement in space. The group could achieve this accuracy by practicing as a group in front of the studio mirrors.*

## Question 3

Work chosen	none	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
%	0	52	18	18	1	2	0	5	3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Average
%	2	1	4	4	8	3	6	6	13	5	11	6	9	5	7	3	8	9.1

This question assessed students' understanding of cultural influences on a prescribed work studied in either Unit 3 or 4.

The question required students to discuss different cultural influences on the choreographer's choice of expressive intention, movement vocabulary, form and technical/production aspects in a prescribed work studied in either Unit 3 or 4.

High-scoring responses described a different cultural influence for each choice of expressive intention, movement vocabulary, form and technical/production aspects. Each cultural influence was discussed in a detailed and plausible fashion. The effect of each of these relevant cultural influences on choices made by the choreographer was discussed comprehensively with clear links to the selected work.

Low-scoring responses showed a limited understanding of the effect the identified cultural influence had upon the choreographer's choice in one or more of the specified categories of expressive intention, movement vocabulary, form and technical/production aspects. Some students accurately identified a plausible cultural influence; however, they were not able to score full marks because they did not make clear the effect that this cultural influence had on the choreographer's choice for all or some of the categories.

## Very-low-scoring responses

- did not clearly discuss how a plausible cultural influence could affect the choices made by the choreographer and/or chose to repeat the same cultural influence for each category
- gave a limited description of the influence or had a tendency to describe the influence in too much detail without addressing the effect
- identified the cultural influences for one or two different categories and presented an inaccurate/limited discussion or had no discussion at all
- summarised rather than analysed (the response was based on a description of each category and did not provide any insight into the cultural influence or its effect).

The following is a response that achieved high marks. The work being analysed is *Cry* by Alvin Ailey.



## *Expressive intention:*

*The solo dance work Cry was created as a dedication to 'black women everywhere'. Ailey's choice of expressive intention was influenced by Ailey's mother Lulu Cooper. Alvin Ailey was born in Texas (1931), a time before the civil rights movement. His father left when he was 6 months old and so his mother began to earn an income doing domestic work for wealthy property owners. Ailey's memories of this lifestyle included images of the degradation his mother felt as a victim of prejudice.*

*The effect can be seen in the intention of the work Cry, as Ailey's experiences of living as an African American in a predominantly racist environment can be seen in the woman's journey through adversity and emotions such as despair, anguish and rage, especially in the first and second sections of the dance. The third section is also a response to this experience as he shows the audience that the human spirit cannot be defeated in times of struggle and adversity – that it is possible to be optimistic and rise above your personal circumstances.*

## *Movement vocabulary*

*Ailey was influenced by his training with Katherine Dunham. Dunham's technique focused on the isolation of individual body parts, which gives the body an impressive range of movement. The technique draws on traditional African movement and the movement vocabulary consists of flat footed gliding actions, dragging/shuffling of the feet, flexibility of the spine, isolation of the body parts and centrifugal (exploding outwards from the hip) movements.*

*The effect can be seen in the movement vocabulary of Cry especially in the final section. Here the selection of movement includes the use of polyrhythm performed in a crouched position. There is a swinging quality which also comes from the Dunham technique as the dancer rotates one leg in a circular motion, while her arms and head are rotating in a free motion. The leg is moving at one pace while the arms are rotating and stretching upwards and accenting different counts. In this section Ailey has fused the Dunham style with his own movement vocabulary to create his own dance style.*

## *Form*

*Black African artists such as Ailey had only just gained acceptance during the 1960's due to the civil rights movement. Ailey rejected the experimental methods of the post modern choreographers of the 1960's who were appealing to young university audiences, in favour of traditional forms. He felt he had plenty of stories to tell and wanted to give audiences insight into the Black African experience. Being a form of storytelling, the traditional choreographic form of narrative was easy for audiences to follow.*

*The effect of the narrative formal structure can be seen in Cry through the choice of music and arrangement of movement. He used three different pieces of gospel and blues music to create three clearly defined sections. The use of three clear sections helped establish and develop the storyline into a narrative formal structure – A B C. Ailey's arrangement of movements and phrasing was very much linked to the music choice in each section to convey his expressive intention. We see this in the development of the dance work where the phrases of jiving movements are pieced together to reflect the dynamic shift of tempo in the music.*

## *Technical/production aspects*

*Music: Ailey's experience of growing up as an African American are reflected in his selection of music pieces in each section of Cry. Ailey grew up listening to gospel and blues music both at church and at roadside cafes. He wanted the music of Cry to reflect his heritage and tell the story of the hardships his people endured ie. the use of drugs which many of his community turned to in times of deep desperation, as well as emotions such as joy and exhilaration.*

*The song 'Something About John Coltrane' by Alice Coltrane is used in section A of the piece and reflects the shifting images of the black woman's identity from her role as a labourer, mother and priestess. This song is a blues piece and was chosen as a means of representing Ailey's heritage and background. In section B the blues song 'Been On A Train' by Laura Nyro was chosen to represent the hardships of his people. The song is slow and disturbing making references to drugs and death on a train which are reflective of the deep feelings of despair and anguish of the black Africans. In section C the gospel inspired song 'Right On, Be Free' was chosen as a result of Ailey's need to celebrate the strength of the human spirit and the pride in his culture.*

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## Question 4

Work chosen	none	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
%	1	4	19	5	9	5	3	30	23

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average
%	3	0	2	3	5	2	5	6	6	7	9	8	13	8	23	9.8

This question tested students' understanding of the prescribed group dance work studied in Unit 4. If the student wrote about a Unit 4 prescribed group dance work in their answer to Question 3, they needed to base their answer to Question 4 on the same work.

The question required students to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and application of the following terminology: spatial organisation (direction, dimension, level and focus), group structures (symmetrical and/or asymmetrical formations while dancing in canon, unison or contrast with each other), movement vocabulary and expressive intention.

Students with high-scoring responses comprehensively analysed the choreographic use of all **four** elements of spatial organisation simultaneously in **one** movement vocabulary example. They also comprehensively analysed the simultaneous and/or changing combinations of different types of group structures used in **another** movement vocabulary example. The description of the expressive intention, or aspect of the expressive intention, communicated in each movement vocabulary example was described in detail.

Students with low-scoring responses showed a limited understanding of how to approach the required analysis. Selecting appropriate movement examples proved difficult for some students; others referred only to simultaneous use of two or three elements of spatial organisation. The second example of movement vocabulary needed to be different from the first. The expressive intention, or aspects of the expressive intention, communicated in each movement example was either not described in detail or was not linked to the movement vocabulary and the use of spatial organisation and/or group structures.

### Very-low-scoring responses

- did not address all elements of spatial organisation
- demonstrated confusion when addressing spatial organisation in relation to the concepts of 'direction' and 'focus'
- identified or listed the elements of spatial organisation without any analysis or links to the movement vocabulary
- included limited discussion and/or analysis of differing combinations of group structures (for example, symmetrical formation while dancing in unison with each other changed to an asymmetrical formation while dancing in contrast)
- discussed more than one movement example for each part of the question
- listed or mentioned movement vocabulary but did not link it back to the concept to form a coherent analysis
- discussed the expressive intention, or aspect of the expressive intention, in detail without making any direct links to the use of spatial organisation and/or the differing combinations of group structures
- briefly mentioned the expressive intention or did not state it at all.

The following is a response that achieved a high score. The work being analysed is an excerpt from *Swan Lake*.

*Spatial organisation is used in one movement example from Murphy's Swan Lake to communicate the expressive intention of swans in flight. All twelve swans locomote en pointe travelling in a forwards direction, elevated on a high level, creating a zig zag floor pattern. As they do, their arms repeatedly move in an up and down direction to mimic 'flapping' and communicate they are in full flight in the sky. This idea is supported by their direct use of eye focus looking up and out to signify they are soaring high. Their dimension of body shape was large and expanded as the arms of the dancers extend to full length through the space. The simultaneous use of all four elements has enabled the audience to imagine swan like maidens flying high above the sky perfectly together, depicting a tranquil healing place to calm Odette's fevered mind.*

*Unison and symmetrical group formations are evident in another movement example. This is shown as the twelve dancers form two lines of 6 which are vertically placed on either sides of the stage. In this formation the dancers are evenly placed and the grouping shows a harmonious, balanced placement. The dancers at this point perform floating waving arm actions in unison or the same movement at the same time. As the movement progresses, four dancers move into the centre of the space before intertwining their arms and moving in a circular direction while performing a couru. The two groups dance in contrast to each other or different movements at the same time; however the grouping remains balanced and symmetrical as dancers in the*

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*central space mirror the balanced placement of the dancers placed on the peripheral space. This movement example communicates a peaceful image with the baby swans being protected and embraced by the group.*

## Question 5

Work chosen	none	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
%	1	31	35	26	0	4	0	3	0

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
%	4	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	4	4	5	3	5	4	8	4	5	2	4	9	3	2	2	2	1	16	14.3

This question tested students' understanding of one solo prescribed work studied in Unit 3. A student who wrote on a solo dance work for Question 3 needed to base their response to Question 5 on a **different** solo dance work.

The question required an analysis of how the choreographer(s) communicated the expressive intention through the manipulation of movement vocabulary that resulted from use of a range of choreographic devices.

A range of choreographic devices should have been analysed in relation to detailed examples of movement vocabulary and how they communicated the expressive intention, or aspects of it, throughout the dance work.

The analysis of the expressive intention should have been a plausible interpretation and/or based on the student's opinion of the expressive intention in the selected solo dance work.

The range of choreographic devices analysed included, but were not limited to, those referred to in the study design – abstraction, repetition, motif, addition, accumulation, inversion, distortion and retrograde. Other legitimate choreographic devices (that is, choreographic processes or tasks that result in the creation and manipulation of movement that expresses the expressive intention) were accepted.

To obtain high marks, students needed to demonstrate a link between the movement vocabulary being performed, and present in-depth discussion of a range of choreographic devices and the aspect of the expressive intention being communicated. Examples from throughout the whole work needed to be addressed.

The question invited an extended response, and students may have included diagrams and drawings if appropriate. Marks were assigned according to the quality, depth, detail and comprehensiveness of the response, based on the bands of descriptors described below.

## Band 1: 20–25 marks

- Sophisticated and very detailed analysis of a range of choreographic devices used by the choreographer(s) of the solo dance work selected. Sophisticated and very detailed analysis of the movement vocabulary resulting from the use of these choreographic devices and the expressive intention that is communicated via this movement vocabulary throughout the solo dance. Demonstration of a very high level of understanding of all the choreographic devices analysed. In-depth discussion of each selected choreographic device.
- Perceptive and very clearly articulated explanation of what the expressive intention is. In-depth understanding of the development of the expressive intention throughout the work. If the expressive intention is more than a singular idea, there is detailed and very clear articulation of the range of ideas communicated or aspects the expressive intention progresses through.
- In-depth analysis of movement vocabulary that is the result of the choreographer's(s') use of the choreographic devices selected by the student for analysis. Sophisticated description of examples of movement vocabulary that demonstrates very effectively the communication of the expressive intention the student articulates. Movement vocabulary examples are selected from throughout all of the solo dance work. Use of detailed and relevant examples that substantiate and support the student's argument and opinion regarding both the expressive intention and the use of particular choreographic devices.
- Sophisticated reasoning or explanations connecting analysis of expressive intention, the range of choreographic devices analysed and examples of movement vocabulary that are the result of, and hence evidence of, the use of these choreographic devices. Sophisticated and accurate use of terminology.



**Band 2: 15–19 marks**

- Detailed analysis of a range of choreographic devices used by the choreographer(s) of the solo dance work selected. Detailed analysis of the movement vocabulary resulting from the use of these choreographic devices and the expressive intention that is communicated via this movement vocabulary throughout all, or the majority of, the solo dance. Demonstration of a good level of understanding of all of the choreographic devices analysed. A variety of choreographic devices referred to and analysed. The thoroughness of the analysis of each choreographic device may vary.
- Logical and well-articulated explanation of what the expressive intention is. Demonstrates good understanding of the development of the expressive intention throughout all, or the majority of, the work. If the expressive intention is more than a singular idea, there is clear articulation of the range of ideas communicated or aspects the expressive intention progresses through.
- Clearly articulated analysis of movement vocabulary that is the result of the choreographer's(s') use of choreographic devices selected by the student for analysis. Detailed description of examples of movement vocabulary that adequately demonstrates understanding of the communication of expressive intention the student articulates. Movement vocabulary examples are selected from throughout all, or the majority of, the solo dance work. Use of relevant examples to substantiate and support the student's argument and opinion regarding both the expressive intention and the use of particular choreographic devices. All elements of the student's argument may not be equally supported.
- Logical reasoning or explanations connecting analysis of expressive intention, the range of choreographic devices analysed, and examples of movement vocabulary that are the result of, and hence evidence of, the use of these choreographic devices. Accurate and appropriate use of terminology.

**Band 3: 10–14 marks**

- Some logical but brief discussion or explanation (minimal analysis) of a range of choreographic devices used by the choreographer(s) of the solo dance work selected. Reasonably detailed analysis of the movement vocabulary resulting from the use of these choreographic devices and the expressive intention that is communicated via this movement vocabulary throughout the solo dance.
- Brief but accurate discussion or explanation (minimal analysis) of movement vocabulary resulting from the use of a range of choreographic devices and the expressive intention communicated via this movement vocabulary throughout the majority, or only a part of, the solo dance work selected. Lack of detail used to demonstrate understanding of some or all of the choreographic devices discussed.
- Brief to reasonably articulated explanation of what the expressive intention is. Understanding of the development of the expressive intention throughout the majority, or only some of, the solo dance work. If the expressive intention is more than a singular idea, there is an outline or inconsistent description of the range of ideas communicated or aspects the expressive intention progresses through.
- Brief analysis of examples of movement vocabulary that are the result of the choreographer's(s') use of the choreographic devices selected by the student for description/analysis. Brief description of examples of movement vocabulary that demonstrate a limited understanding of how the expressive intention the student articulates is communicated. Movement vocabulary examples are selected from throughout the majority, or only part of, the solo dance work. The use of some or all examples has limited connection with the student's outlined argument and/or opinion regarding one or both of the expressive intentions and the use of all or some of the particular choreographic devices identified.
- Reasoning or explanations connecting explanation of expressive intention, the choreographic devices discussed, and a small to adequate number of examples of movement vocabulary that are the result of, and hence limited to adequate evidence of, the use of these choreographic devices. Relevant terminology used consistently.

**Band 4: 5–9 marks**

- Incomplete explanations and some discussion lacking detail about a small range of choreographic devices used by the choreographer(s) of the solo dance work selected. Incomplete explanations of the movement vocabulary resulting from the use of these choreographic devices and very brief demonstration of understanding of the expressive intention that is communicated via this movement vocabulary throughout only a part of the solo dance. Only a small number of choreographic devices described rather than discussed.
- Outline only or inadequate description of personal opinion of what the expressive intention is. Little or no evidence that demonstrates understanding of the development of the expressive intention throughout half or less of the solo dance work. If the expressive intention is more than a singular idea, there is an incomplete outline or list of some of the ideas communicated or aspects the expressive intention progresses through.
- Some relevant but limited description of a few examples of movement vocabulary that are the result of the choreographer's(s') use of the choreographic devices the student writes about. A small number of briefly



described movement vocabulary examples demonstrate minimally the communication of the parts of the expressive intention the student articulates. Movement vocabulary examples are selected from less than the majority, or only part of, the solo dance work. Examples are poorly aligned or connected with the student's outlining of argument and/or opinion regarding one or both of the expressive intentions and the use of all or some of the particular choreographic devices identified.

- Some reasoning or explanations barely or tenuously link the student's incomplete ideas about the expressive intention with the choreographic devices described, and with a small and mainly inadequate number of examples of movement vocabulary that are the result of, and hence limited or insubstantial evidence of, these choreographic devices. Some inaccurate use of terminology.

**Band 5: 1–4 marks**

- Brief information without detail, or sketch only, of one or a small number of choreographic devices used by the choreographers(s) of the solo dance work selected. Similarly brief or sketchy information about the movement vocabulary resulting from the use of the choreographic devices and the expressive intention that is communicated via this movement vocabulary in only a small part of the solo dance work selected. Little evidence provided to demonstrate understanding of only one or a small number of choreographic devices. Use of choreography devices briefly discussed but not analysed.
- Either no mention of expressive intention or only an outline of what the expressive intention is. No or limited and tenuous understanding of the development of the expressive intention throughout all or any of the solo dance work. A sketchy grasp of a few aspects but no or very limited understanding of the expressive intention overall.
- If included, inadequate and possibly inaccurate description of movement vocabulary examples that are the result of the choreographer's(s') use of one or a small number of choreographic devices the student writes about. If included, minimal examples are selected from a very small section of the solo dance work and do not or very minimally demonstrate understanding of the communication of the expressive intention or the aspect of the expressive intention the student mentions. Majority of movement vocabulary examples ineffectively connect/align with the mention or outline of the student's opinion regarding one or both of the expressive intentions and the use of one or a small number of the choreographic devices identified.
- If included, reasoning or explanations inaccurately or very tenuously link the student's very limited ideas about the expressive intention with no or an extremely limited grasp of one or a small number of choreographic devices, and with no or a minimal and inadequate number of movement vocabulary examples that are the result of this or these choreographic devices. Limited and often inaccurate use of terminology.