



GENERAL COMMENTS

In general, students who understood the underlying concepts of the *Theatre Studies VCE Study Design* handled the examination well. Most students answered all of the questions on the paper. Students were able to support their written answers with illustrations, and some took advantage of this option. There was a total of 45 marks available for the paper.

Areas of strength and weakness

High-scoring papers demonstrated:

- an understanding of all of the key knowledge and key skills within the Study Design
- an understanding and appropriate use of subject specific terminology
- skill in reflecting on theatre processes that the student took part in during the year and those applied by others
- a sound working knowledge of one or more of the following areas of stagecraft: acting, direction, dramaturgy, stage management, set design, costume, lighting, properties, make-up or sound.

Lower-scoring papers demonstrated:

- a limited understanding of the concepts of the course as outlined in the Study Design
- a limited understanding and application of areas of stagecraft
- not understanding the requirements of a particular question; for example, writing a description in response to a question that required an evaluation
- limited use of the marks allocated for each question as a guide for the depth of response required.

Advice for students

- In the examination, students should be guided by the numbers of marks allocated to each question when determining the length and/or detail of their response.
- Where a question is either divided up into parts or has more than one focus, students can either divide up their response into sections, or answer the question in its entirety in one extended response.
- When required, students must name the play (or state the number of the play/monologue as printed on the examination paper) they are writing about.
- Students should note that their response to any question may be supported by an illustration(s) or diagram(s), but that this is an option only.
- Students should take note of the particular type of response required in each question, as indicated by words such as 'describe', 'evaluate', 'explain', 'discuss', 'compare', 'analyse', 'identify', and respond accordingly.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

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

The 2005 examination paper did not stipulate that a particular form of written response was required. Students chose to write in essay form, point form, short-answer form or any combination thereof. All were considered acceptable, as long as the student addressed the focus of the question and the response was appropriate to the type required; for example, an 'evaluation', or a 'discussion'. Where a 'discussion' was required, most students chose to write their answer in either short-answer or essay mode (that is, not in dot points). The examination contained a detachable insert that contained 'stimulus materials' pertaining to one of the questions. The students were required to draw on the stimulus materials in their response to Question 3.

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	1	5	28	67	2.6

Here the students were required to briefly describe how one area of stagecraft (as listed in the Study Design) was developed during the rehearsal process of a production they were involved in during Unit 3. The question very specifically required the students to discuss the application of stagecraft **only** within the rehearsal process; that is, any period of the production process **prior to** the performance in front of an audience.

A high level response was characterised by:

- a high level of understanding of the selected area of stagecraft, including its nature and purpose as developed during the rehearsal process

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- highly effective use of theatrical terminology to describe the development of the area of stagecraft
- highly pertinent example(s) of the thinking/working processes associated with the development of the area of stagecraft.

An example of a high level response is as follows:

In our production of Steven Berkoff's 'The Trial' my stagecraft area of sound was developed during the rehearsal process as follows:

- *Initially, collaborated with director; he told me his ideas for the play and we worked through the script, deciding the best ways to utilise sound.*
- *It was decided that the narrator would be represented through sound as a recorded voice, so as to allow effects to be added to the recording which would enhance the subject matter.*
- *I tried a number of sound effects, including a vocoder (makes recording sound like it's spoken by a robot), delay, reverb, chorus (sounds like many people are speaking) and pitch shifting. By process of presenting the samples to the director & then collaborating with him in choosing the most suitable, I was able to select the best effect to use on the recordings.*
- *I also presented a number of music samples in a range of styles to be played before the performance, to set the mood of the piece. In collaboration with the director, a very dark and repetitive piece was chosen to heighten feelings of corruption and conformity.*

An acceptable level response was characterised by:

- a satisfactory understanding of the selected area of stagecraft, and appropriate reference to how it was developed during the rehearsal process
- appropriate choice of theatrical terminology used to describe the development of the area of stagecraft
- use of good example(s) of the thinking/working processes associated with the development of the area of stagecraft.

A low level response was characterised by:

- little, or a superficial, understanding of the development of the selected area of stagecraft
- little or no appropriate theatrical terminology used to describe the development of the area of stagecraft
- example(s) that did not address the rehearsal period and/or the specific stagecraft area
- no specification of the time period of the production as required in the question.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	1	1	6	16	25	25	25	4.4

This part of the question was directly related to part a., thus students were required to address the **same** area of stagecraft as they had discussed previously. The specified period of the production process was when the production was 'presented in front of an audience'. Students were required to 'evaluate' in their responses.

A high level response was characterised by:

- a high level of understanding of the effectiveness of the selected area of stagecraft when the production was presented in front of an audience
- use of highly effective theatrical terminology to evaluate the application of the area of stagecraft
- use of highly pertinent example(s) to evaluate the application of an area of stagecraft that was applied to a production when it was performed to an audience.

An acceptable level response was characterised by:

- a satisfactory level of understanding of the effectiveness of the selected area of stagecraft when the production was presented in front of an audience
- use of appropriate theatrical terminology to evaluate the application of the area of stagecraft
- use of appropriate example(s) to evaluate the application of an area of stagecraft that was applied to a production when it was performed to an audience.

An example of an acceptable level response is as follows:

When our play (Speaking in Tongues) was presented in front of an audience the set worked extremely effectively with the acting styles and moods and emotions portrayed throughout the play. The blocks were used in contrast with the actors' status levels creating a dynamic amongst the characters on stage. It was viewed well by the audience because not only did it create a visually good look, but it helped with the realisation of some of the characters and where they stood in contrast with the other characters of the play.

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We had broken glass stuck on the blocks to represent the shattered lives the couples were living and if they could find the pieces, how difficult it would be to place them back together. Visually it looked great but throughout the performance several pieces fell off because they were not reinforced correctly. This made some distraction in the scenes but was not a major worry.

The neutral colour of the block fabric that was used to cover the blocks was a bland and bright wooden colour. This appealed very well with the audience because it was a constant colour, it was understandable and meant that there no confusion about why the set was the colour it was.

We had to place a part of the set down the opposite end of the wall forcing the audience to either side (the student drew an illustration of this). This was a problem because they found it hard to see in some scenes and created a gap in (the) performance when switching to the other set.

A low level response was characterised by:

- a low level of understanding of the effectiveness of the selected area of stagecraft when the production was presented in front of an audience
- use of little or no theatrical terminology to evaluate the application of the area of stagecraft
- use of example(s) that were not relevant to the stagecraft area and/or the performance in front of an audience
- a response type other than an evaluation; for example, an analysis or a description.

Question 2

Play Chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
%	0	11	9	7	8	9	9	14	6	13	4	7	2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	1	0	1	4	8	14	19	23	15	15	6.5

Students needed to base their response to this question on one of the scenes from one of the monologues on the 2005 Monologue list. This list can be downloaded from the 'Bulletins & Memos' section of the VCAA website. Students were required to discuss three ways their interpretation of the monologue was informed by the context of the prescribed scene. Page 25 of the Study Design lists 'context' as including the:

- historical period in which the play was set
- historical period in which the play was conceived
- playwright
- play's themes
- play's structure, including plot and character
- performance styles and theatrical conventions described and/or implied by the play and the period in which it was conceived
- interpretations of the play and use of theatrical conventions.

A high level response was characterised by:

- a high level of understanding of the monologue and its associated scene
- a discussion of three highly pertinent examples of how the context of the prescribed scene informed the interpretation of the monologue
- use of highly effective theatrical terminology to discuss the interpretation of the monologue.

An acceptable level of response was characterised by:

- a satisfactory level of understanding of the monologue and its associated scene
- a discussion of three appropriate examples of how the context of the prescribed scene informed the interpretation of the monologue
- use of appropriate theatrical terminology to discuss the interpretation of the monologue

An example of an acceptable level response is as follows:

Monologue 11, 'The Winters Tale' by William Shakespeare, contextually an Elizabethan play, my interpretation was firstly an enhancement and celebration of its Elizabethan origins – as I believe Shakespearean language is more dignified and comprehensive when performed true to its original intention.

So I researched Elizabethan day wear and the architecture of an Elizabethan courtroom – as the scene where the monologue takes place is Hermione (Queen) on trial for allegedly having a child with King Leontes' best friend Polixenes. Targeting symbolism as my main convention of Elizabethan theatre I created the courtroom by standing side on to the audience allowing them to feel as if they are a part of the jury, my focus when I speak to King Leontes is opposite me, but on a higher level (as that was where the judge was located). And I wear a 'prison stained' Elizabethan day dress (mud on the bottom hem of my dress). A



second way the context informed my interpretation was the fact that Hermione is innocent and royal at heart so although her dress is covered in mud, the dress is purely regale purple defining/symbolising Hermione as a character.

Also through symbolism I chose to display the intensity of the possible punishment (death) by using sharp silver witch's hats as the 'plea stand' creating a dangerous barrier around the courageous Hermione (the student drew an illustration of the scene as described, to support the written answer).

A low level response was characterised by:

- little understanding of the monologue and its associated scene
- a discussion of only one example or a discussion of two or three examples at a very superficial level
- little or no theatrical terminology used to discuss the interpretation of the monologue.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	1	0	1	2	4	7	12	15	16	14	15	6	7	7.9

Students were asked to explain how they would 'imaginatively' apply one area of stagecraft to a production of *Trafford Tanzi*. Information about this play was contained in the stimulus materials given and in the contextual background on the examination paper. It was clearly stated on the exam that the student 'must' refer to the contextual background and one or more of the stimulus materials. Students were informed that no prior knowledge of the contextual background or stimulus materials was necessary.

Students were instructed to:

- look at the stimulus materials and make reference to at least one of them
- read the contextual background and make reference to it where required.

Each of the stimulus materials contained an excerpt(s) of script from the play *Trafford Tanzi* along with a visual(s) pertaining to themes and/or plot and story of the play.

The contextual background provided the date of the original play, its themes, its setting and the storyline, informed the students that the play would be performed as a touring production set on a traverse stage, and gave a picture of a traverse stage.

A high level response was characterised by:

- highly pertinent example(s) drawn from the contextual background and one or more of the stimulus materials
- an indication of how one area of stagecraft would be used in a highly imaginative way in the production
- highly effective theatrical terminology in the explanation
- a high level of understanding and skill pertaining to the selected area of stagecraft.

An example of a high level response is as follows:

The contextual background suggests Tanzi always struggles against society to 'break the mould' and be independent; to be what she wants. This is also shown in Stimulus A, where the text states she doesn't want to be a housewife, but to 'be somebody' successful and different, as well as pictures showing a 'working woman', dressed in loose fitting clothes with her sleeves rolled up, and the contrast it takes with the other picture, of a housewife, cooking for her family, who only seems interested in 'new recipes for cooking', and her children, the cleanliness and clothing contrast with the working woman completely. In fact that the housewife is 'inside' the house symbolises buttoned down restrictions on her life and the fact that the working woman is outdoors represents the freedom she entails.

Sound:

In accordance with this, I would use sound to symbolise the 'fight' Tanzi has with the world around her. At the start of the production I would use a loud bell sound, symbolic of a 'round' of the fight beginning. The context states that we see excerpts from Tanzi's life as she fights oppression; at the start, when she is young, she is unable to put up a good fight; when she grows older her wisdom and will to be free of oppression grows and her 'fight' is more even handed. This would be symbolised through sound as follows:

- *At the start of the play, there would be loud music which sounds very peaceful and 'happy'; which is symbolic of the 'easy' life Tanzi is offered by those around her. This is very loud at the outset so as to represent the strong enticing nature of this kind of life for someone of a young age. It is also to be played for five seconds, then repeated over and over, symbolising the repetitiveness and monotony Tanzi feels for such a life.*
- *As the play goes on, and Tanzi gets older and more rebellious, the music is played again, but softer so as to symbolise the desire and attraction for such a life fading away. Also, sounds of a truck and people working begin to play, symbolic of the contrast exemplified in Stimulus, A, of the working woman and house wife, afore mentioned.*
- *Also, after each 'round' a narrator would be recorded to give a quick overview of the previous events; this narrator would alienate the audience – reminding them they are watching a play with a set social message, a convention of*



Brecht's epic theatre – and would also allow for a strengthening of the play's themes through the 'recap' of events. This would...create an effect symbolising the conformity that Tanzi is facing – and the echoic nature of the effect enhances the setting in the wrestling ring, as it sounds like a commentator.

- *To allow for the traverse stage, the speakers playing music would be placed, 2 at each end of the stage, facing the audience as follows: (the student drew an illustration of a traverse stage with the speakers placed on it as described)*

An acceptable response was characterised by:

- appropriate example(s) drawn from the contextual background and one or more of the stimulus materials
- an indication of how one area of stagecraft would be used in an imaginative way in the production
- appropriate theatrical terminology in the explanation
- an acceptable level of understanding and skill pertaining to the selected area of stagecraft.

A low level response was characterised by:

- a tenuous link to the given contextual background and/or stimulus materials
- little indication of how one area of stagecraft would be used.
- little or no use of theatrical terminology in the explanation
- little understanding and skill pertaining to the selected area of stagecraft.

Question 4

Play Chosen	0	1	2	3	4
%	1	16	27	51	5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	0	2	3	7	12	16	18	16	11	13	6.8

This question pertained to the 2005 VCE Theatre Studies play list for Unit 3. The students were required to selected one of the plays from the play list and describe and evaluate how one area of stagecraft contributed to the production values of the production.

A high level of response was characterised by:

- a description and evaluation, with a high degree of appreciation, insight and understanding of how one area of stagecraft contributed to the production values
- a detailed understanding of production values and the contributions stagecraft makes to them
- use of highly effective theatrical terminology and example(s) to describe and evaluate.

An acceptable level of response was characterised by:

- a description and evaluation, with an acceptable level of appreciation, insight and understanding how one area of stagecraft contributed to the production values
- a satisfactory understanding of production values and the contributions stagecraft makes to them
- use of appropriate theatrical terminology and example(s) to describe and evaluate.

An example of an acceptable level response is as follows:

Two Brothers – Hannie Rayson

Set was an area of stagecraft which highly contributed towards production values. As well as being physically appealing and thereby adding value to the production, it also added value due to its practicality and symbolic design. It was designed on a proscenium arch stage, which had a revolving floor – this was an effective tool in that it allowed for smooth scene transitions leaving time for music and other thriller aspects to be incorporated between scenes. However, because it was a travelling production, the production team had to take into account the practicality of the set. Despite this, it was extremely lavish and well organised, adding much value to the production. The outside of the set (the outer stage) was also coloured black, white and grey, adding to the film noir aspects of the play, and therefore creating audience tension. The fact that the set matched these thriller aspects of the play meant that the appropriate messages of the play (i.e. the corruption evident in politics and family) could be conveyed in a creative and appropriate manner. The set was immaculately designed, consisting of separate subsections for an office, lounge room and kitchen. These meant that appropriate scenes could be played out in well-defined circumstances as well as in a naturalistic way. Production values were therefore achieved because the set was practical, lavish and physically appealing – all aspects which added value.

A low level of response was characterised by:

- a low degree of appreciation, insight and understanding of the requirements of the question
- little understanding of production values and the contributions stagecraft makes to them
- little or no theatrical terminology used to describe and evaluate.

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Question 5

Play Chosen	0	1	2	3	4
%	3	14	22	27	33

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	4	4	10	26	27	29	3.6

This question pertained to the 2005 VCE Theatre Studies play list for Unit 4. The students were required to select one of the plays from the play list and compare how two actors in the same production created an actor-audience relationship.

A high level of response was characterised by:

- an insightful and knowledgeable comparison between two actors in the same production in relation to the creation of an actor-audience relationship
- a comparison, using excellent examples, of how the actors created an actor-audience relationship
- a highly appreciative understanding of the actor/audience relationship
- use of highly effective theatrical terminology in the comparison.

An example of a high level response is as follows:

In Bell Shakespeare's production of 'Measure for Measure', two actors in particular had great impact on the establishment of actor-audience relationship:

a. Darren Gilshenan

In his portrayal of Pompey, Gilshenan utilised caricature in order to convey Pompey as a stereotypical...stock type character. This had great effect on creating an actor-audience relationship; it was very comical and encouraged the audience to enjoy the otherwise tedious performance of the play.

Also he used the non-naturalistic convention of direct address in the final act. [The] houselights came up and he pointed out members of the audience as people he knew. His comical dialogue encouraged the audience to become immersed in the performance and thus enhanced the actor-audience relationship he previously created.

b. In contrast to Gilshenan, Shaun O'Shea created a lamentable actor-audience relationship. In his portrayal of the Duke, he acted using very naturalistic conventions, often using very little blocking movements, standing stagnant [sic] on stage to deliver [an] entire 7 minute monologue. This created a bad actor-audience relationship as in consequence they were distracted from the production and it created boredom and disregard for both dialogue O'Shea would project and also the themes inherent in both the play and O'Shea's soliloquies/monologues. Thus, while Gilshenan created an interesting actor-audience relationship, O'Shea created one of distinct stagnation [sic].

An acceptable level of response was characterised by:

- an acceptable level of comparison between two actors in the same production in relation to the creation of an actor-audience relationship
- a comparison, using well-chosen examples, of how the actors created an actor-audience relationship
- an acceptable understanding of the actor/audience relationship
- use of appropriate theatrical terminology in the comparison.

A low level of response was characterised by:

- little understanding or appreciation of the actor/audience relationship
- examples that had a tenuous link to the production and/or the question
- little or no theatrical terminology used in the comparison
- a very general comparison of two actors in the same production
- a description of one or two actors in the same production, but no direct comparison.