



GENERAL COMMENTS

In general, students who understood the conceptual framework of the course handled the examination well. The majority of students answered all questions on the paper. Some students used illustrations to support their written answers.

Areas of strength and weakness

Common areas of strength were:

- a clear understanding of the concepts that underpin the course as outlined in the Theatre Studies Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design
- 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 used by the student themselves and by others
- a sound knowledge of one or more of the following areas of stagecraft: acting, directing, dramaturgy, stage management, set design, costume, lighting, properties, make-up and sound
- an understanding of requirements of different question types, for example 'describe', 'explain', 'discuss' and 'analyse'
- use of the marks allocated for a particular question as a guide to the depth of response required.

Common areas of weakness were:

- a limited understanding of the concepts of the course as outlined in the Study Design
- limited use of appropriate terminology pertaining to the area(s) of stagecraft being discussed or analysed
- a limited understanding of the concept of 'production values' as pertaining to Outcome 3 in Unit 3
- limited use of the marks allocated for a particular question as a guide for the depth of response required.

Advice for students

When answering questions, students should be guided by the numbers of marks allocated per 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 to which they are referring. Students should note that their response to any question may be supported by an illustration(s), but that this is an option only.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

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

The 2004 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 an 'analysis'. 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).

Question 1

Area 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	1	0	1	5	9	18	26	22	19	6.0

Area 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	3	0	2	8	15	22	27	15	9	5.3

This question assessed students' understanding of the effect their use of two areas of stagecraft in Unit 3 had on the production of a play(s) or excerpt(s) from play(s). The student was instructed to **evaluate** how the two areas of stagecraft that he/she applied contributed imaginatively to the production. The student was also asked to begin his/her



answer by stating the name of the production. If a student only discussed one area of stagecraft then the maximum number of marks he/she could receive was eight (half of the total number of marks for the question).

A high level response was characterised by:

- a high level of understanding of the application of the two areas of stagecraft that were evaluated, including their nature and purpose
- use of highly appropriate and well-informed theatrical terminology to analyse the application of each area of stagecraft
- detailed and well explained examples of thinking and working processes associated with the application of the areas of stagecraft
- a high level of evaluation of how the application of the two areas of stagecraft contributed **imaginatively** to the production.

An example of a high level response is as follows:

'Away' by Michael Gow

'Away' is a play about three families and their journeys from blindness to insight as they are enlightened to the world around them through reconciliation, discovery, loss and love.

The two stagecraft areas which I worked in were direction and acting.

There was a small group of three directors for our production and we decided that we should each specifically direct two scenes each. In my scenes I wanted to focus on adding more contrasts into the action of the scene, as the scene was static physically with most of the action happening on a verbal level. I decided that in order to add contrast, the focus of the scenes themselves had to be on the hypocrisy of one character. This character (Gwen) promotes activity at every chance she gets, preaching on how important it is for people to be busy and how busy she is - yet in reality she is passive throughout the whole play.

In direction, I portrayed this passivity through the blocking with Gwen staying mainly still during the scenes while other characters moved around her. I also directed the actors in the scene to react more to the hypocrisy of Gwen's actions with frustrated hand gestures or groans, and when speaking lines to Gwen or in retort to something she has said, to emote those lines with the sense of someone who has done this so many times before and is contemptuous of Gwen's two-sided actions.

Vocally, in order to add contrast, I told the actors to make the angrier parts or the more confronting parts heightened, verging on melodrama, in order to make the quieter sections seem even the more quiet.

I think the actions of vocally and physically (others moving while Gwen did not) adding contrast did aid the play because to make the performance feel less static and stilted.

For another scene which I directed, there was a chorus of campers. When I first started rehearsing with the actors, I had them moving around while they spoke, but [I thought this would be] too confusing and hectic for the audience, so I attempted a new approach. I directed the chorus to stand on one side of the stage, in a line and say their lines one after the other, with simultaneous movements, so that they looked like one united body of people, almost like a Greek chorus. This added a new level to the play, with a chorus, which almost seemed out of place, with the fluidity of simultaneous movement, adding much needed contrast to the play. (The student then discussed her/his second stagecraft area – acting.)

An acceptable level of response was characterised by:

- an understanding of the application of the two areas of stagecraft that were evaluated, including their nature and purpose
- use of appropriate theatrical terminology to analyse the application of each area of stagecraft
- examples of thinking and working processes associated with the application of the areas of stagecraft
- an evaluation of how the application of the two areas of stagecraft contributed **imaginatively** to the production.

A low level response was characterised by:

- little evidence of an understanding of the two areas of stagecraft the student chose to write on
- little or no appropriate theatrical terminology used to analyse the application of each area of stagecraft
- few, if any, examples of thinking and working processes associated with the application of the areas of stagecraft
- little or no **evaluation** of how the two areas of stagecraft contributed imaginatively to the production.



Question 2

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

Theme 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	2	1	4	10	19	18	22	15	10	5.2

Theme 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	6	1	6	11	18	18	21	12	7	4.7

This question focused on the key knowledge and key skills for Outcome 2 of Unit 4 in the Theatre Studies Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design.

The question assessed the students' understanding of a play containing a prescribed scene from the 2004 Monologue performance examination paper. This paper can be downloaded from the 'Bulletins & Memos' section of the VCAA website. Students were expected to discuss how at least two of the play's themes were realised by the character(s) in the prescribed scene. Students could discuss one or more of the characters in the scene. In their response students were required to refer to **one** of the scenes listed on the examination paper (which correlated with the Theatre Studies Monologue performance examination paper).

A high level response was characterised by:

- a high level of understanding of the two or more themes that the student selected to discuss
- a discussion which used highly appropriate theatrical terminology and described how the themes selected by the student were conveyed by the character(s) in the scene
- highly pertinent examples that illustrated how the themes in the play were realised by the characters in the scene.

An example of a high level response is as follows:

'Phaedra' by Racine – Hippolytus

The themes of 'Phaedra' are universally dictated by tragedy, irony, hubris and guilt. These themes were central to neoclassical tragedy, from which playwright Jean Racine adhered to impeccably in his 1677 French play. In my prescribed scene (Act II, Scene II), the main protagonists are headstrong, vain Hippolytus and Aricia, the daughter of a family in opposition to Hippolytus. In the scene, Hippolytus confronts Aricia and, upon hearing rumours that his father is dead, gives up parts of his kingdom to her. Her surprise prompts Hippolytus to confess a long-held love for her from which he is ashamed, yet bound to.

Effectively, this scene and the actions of the characters within it realise all four aforementioned universal themes embodied in the play as a whole. The element of tragedy is foreshadowed and constructed pivotally herein, for it is this very confession that costs Hippolytus his life later in the play. He could have been saved by his stepmother Phaedra from doom, yet her jealousy based on Hippolytus' admittance of love prevents her. Within the scene itself, I emphasised the tragedy of Hippolytus through depicting the pain that love has given him.

Irony is heavily implied in this scene, for in the very previous scene, Aricia was talking with her friend Ismene, lamenting the fact that her affection towards Hippolytus is unreturned.

'The god of strength was easier to disarm, than this Hippolytus!' Yet in this scene, without any effort or coaxing on her part, Hippolytus ironically reveals that 'for nearly six months past', he has yearned to escape his love for her, yet he cannot. I wanted to show Hippolytus' hubris [which is] reflected in the wider text. His pride 'has been vanquished in a moment' by Aricia's 'handywork' upon him. His ego despises the commonness of love and he is appalled that he has succumbed to it.

Finally, I depicted Hippolytus' guilt to the spell that he has fallen under with Aricia. This too is reflective of the wider text, because Phaedra has fallen under the same spell for Hippolytus himself.

The scene, through illustrating these themes, can be seen as a microcosm of the themes in the rest of the play.

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An acceptable level of response was characterised by:

- a satisfactory level of understanding of the two or more themes that the student discussed
- a discussion which used appropriate theatrical terminology and described how the themes selected by the student were conveyed by the character(s) in the scene
- examples that illustrated how the themes in the play were realised by the characters in the scene.

A low level response was characterised by:

- little or no understanding of, or reference to, two themes from the play
- little or no use of appropriate theatrical terminology
- little or no understanding of the process of character realisation and/or how the themes were conveyed via the character(s) in the scene.

Question 3

This question related to the context of an excerpt from a play and to the use of stagecraft to enhance the intended meaning of the excerpt. In accordance with the description of the end of year examination in the Theatre Studies Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design (p.27), 'stimulus material' was provided on the examination paper (in this instance the stimulus material consisted of an excerpt of script and some illustrations to accompany it). The students were informed on the examination paper that no prior knowledge of the script or stimulus materials was necessary.

3ai – where and when this scene might take place

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	1	1	6	19	29	25	19	4.3

3aii – what interrelationships might exist between the characters

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	2	1	7	21	27	26	17	4.2

3aiii – how the script and one or both of the stimulus materials informed your choice of context

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	3	10	20	25	21	18	4.0

In part a, students were instructed to read the excerpt of script and refer to the stimulus materials. The student was expected to create a context of his/her own choosing for the excerpt of script and in doing so to discuss:

- where and when this scene might take place
- what interrelationships might exist between the characters
- how the script **and** one or both of the stimulus materials informed his/her choice of **context**.

Some students addressed each dot point separately while others wrote their response by combining them. Either form of response was considered acceptable.

A high level response:

- created a context for the scene by demonstrating a very high level of understanding of the content of the excerpt of script that was provided on the examination paper
- constructed an imaginative context for the scene by drawing on the dramatic potential of one or both of the stimulus materials
- drew on highly pertinent information in the dialogue, examined the interrelationships of the characters and made strong links between the script and the stimulus materials.

An example of a high level response is as follows:

The script indicates a very strong level of non-naturalism and some absurdism. It appears to have occurred near the beginning or the end of the play and assuming this, very particular elements must be conveyed. Audience focus must be established or cemented here, and because of this, I won't distinguish between start and end here.

The text suggests a 'sandstorm' in the 'dark'. In the background on the stage a cyclorama from which images of a dark wind-swept sandstorm and a castle are projected onto. The 'snowflake' indicates wilderness and this informed my choice of the projection of the power of nature (a sandstorm) covering the glory of man (a castle). I envisage an abstract set with minimalistic design. There is nothing else on the stage except for the 'crone' and some bones beside her. The stage is a thrust stage with Mary [positioned] centrally out near the audience and the crone in the background behind her.



The character of Mary ‘wakes up’ at the beginning of the scene, and, because she plays the role of the audience – she speaks what the audience thinks – she would be centre stage. In my context of this scene An is only a voice spoken over a loudspeaker – like a figment of Mary’s imagination and An assumes a metatheatrical-style conscience role. An orientates Mary and the audience – Mary and the audience are at the mercy of An. The crone, on the other hand, is outside this conflict and embodies a wise, knowing image of an old woman who has seen many sandstorms and many ignorant individuals lost in their own consciousness, such as Mary.

I sourced the aforementioned image of wisdom and knowingness from the first stimulus material of a picture of a crone’s face. This image communicates a sense of resigned despair that hangs over the text through the description of ‘crying’ and ‘tears’. The image highlights hardship, yet endurance and this informed my choice of making Mary, who appears to have just experienced, or is on cusp of an ordeal. Also, the knowing wisdom in the image and the absolute bareness of the woman’s features informed my choice of having a surreal knowing voice as An, and a bare set as the acting space. The image jumps out at the viewer with its starkness, and that is why I chose a thrust stage to infringe upon the audience’s sense of comfort just like the photo does.

An acceptable response:

- created a context for the scene by demonstrating an understanding of the content of the excerpt of script that was provided on the examination paper
- constructed a context which drew on the dramatic potential of one or both of the stimulus materials
- drew on the information in the dialogue, examined the interrelationships of the characters and made links between the script and the stimulus materials.

A low level response:

- created a context for the scene with some tenuous links to the content of the script
- drew on one or both of the stimulus materials, but the connection was obscure and/or was limited in its dramatic potential
- demonstrated little understanding of the dramatic potential of the dialogue in the script. The student indicated little understanding of the possible interrelationships of the characters.

Question 3b

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	0	1	3	8	16	22	18	14	6	7	6.1

The student was expected to draw on her/his knowledge and skills pertaining to one area of stagecraft to describe how he/she would interpret the scene referred to in part a. In doing so the student was instructed to refer to:

- the scripted scene,
- one of the stimulus materials supplied
- her/his own context from part a.

A high level response was characterised by:

- a well-informed description of how one area of stagecraft could be used to interpret the scene, with clear and highly appropriate references to the chosen stimulus material and the context the student had constructed
- a clear and comprehensive level of understanding of the nature and purpose of the selected area of stagecraft, which was evident in the highly applicable examples selected
- well-developed theatrical terminology which was used when making reference to the area of stagecraft chosen for the answer.

An example of a high level response is as follows:

An’s final line ‘here it only rains sand’, and the image of the snowflake formulated an idea to create a particular set design. Set designers form ideas and concepts based on the physical setting of the play and, through collaboration with other designers form an acting space which is consistent with the director’s intentions of the play...I saw a strong symbol possible in the text. Everything inherent here, the context of a sandstorm, the descriptions in the text and the image of a snowflake indicate small things infringing upon larger things and infecting/attracting them. So, by forming a thrust set design on the stage, the message of the play comes out to the audience and instantly captures focus, as shown in the illustration on the left [the student provided a hand drawn illustration of a groundplan depicting the cyclorama across the back with the thrust stage area between it and the audience]. The minimalist barren stage is structured to allow audience focus upon the characters to be achieved easily, without props. All that is on the set is suggested here. The snowflake image is similar to what would be projected upon the white cyclorama if the environment was in snow. It is something very small by itself, but like many tiny grains of sand, becomes large and powerful, and that is what I would indicate on this stage. The bareness of the stage heightens the bare vulnerability of the character with whom the audience relates to in my context – Mary. Her disorientation on a stage [which is] so simple, creates irony.

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An acceptable level of response was characterised by:

- a description of how one area of stagecraft could be used to interpret the scene, with appropriate references to the chosen stimulus material and the context the student had constructed
- an understanding of the nature and purpose of the selected area of stagecraft, which was evident in the examples provided
- theatrical terminology which was used when making reference to the area of stagecraft chosen for the answer.

A low level response was characterised by:

- a limited description of how one area of stagecraft could be used to interpret the scene, with some reference to the chosen stimulus material and/or the context the student had constructed
- little evidence of an understanding of the nature and purpose of the selected area of stagecraft
- little use of theatrical terminology when making reference to the area of stagecraft chosen for the answer.

Question 4

Play Chosen	0	1	2	3	4
%	3	21	26	47	3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	4	1	3	6	11	18	18	18	13	8	5.7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	7	2	4	7	12	18	18	17	10	6	5.3

This question required students to discuss the production values of a play from the Theatre Studies prescribed play list for Unit 3. The concept of the 'production values' of a play is central to Outcome 3 of Unit 3 in the Theatre Studies Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design.

A high level of response was characterised by:

- a strong understanding of the concept of production values
- well-chosen, evocative examples which demonstrated an accomplished level of understanding of the nature of production values as seen in the performance.

An acceptable level of response was characterised by:

- a satisfactory understanding of the concept of production values
- examples which demonstrated a satisfactory level of understanding of the nature of productions values as seen in the performance.

An example of an acceptable level response is as follows:

'Urinetown- the Musical'

The production values of lighting, costumes and acting were of a very high standard which profoundly enhanced an already vibrant play script.

The lighting was very non-naturalistic keeping with the musical theatre genre. [Lights of] almost every colour were used to enhance the performance. Such as pink – for the 'Urine Good company' and blue to highlight the poverty of the poor at 'Amenity #9'. The lighting helped to make seemingly impossible things believable. Such as when Bobby Strong falls off a building to his death. It is only made believable by the moving light paired with a strobing effect – making it seem like he actually fell off a building (the building was made believable by a yellow light through the grate on the apron. This also provides a distraction from the stage-business of setting up the pipe in which Bobby was to be impaled upon. The standard love at first sight scene was enhanced by the lights placed at the back of the set [which] shone through pipes representing stars.

The costumes helped to easily distinguish between two worlds – one of privilege and one of poverty. The privileged wore blinding white lab coats and pin-striped suits paired with strident shades of citrus. These costumes helped to create comedy as Mr Cladwell's black and white coiffure provided comical flicking and Hope Cladwell's full circle skirt caused continuous twirling and subsequent dizziness. The poor had deliberately dyed murky green and red tones and were reminiscent of the punk generation of the 1970s. Despite having mostly 1930s and punk style costumes, some were up-to-date fashions indicating that elements of Urinetown do exist in today's world.

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A low level of response was characterised by:

- little understanding of the concept of production values
- examples that demonstrated scant understanding of, and little relevance to, the nature of productions values as seen in the performance.

Question 5

Play Chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5
%	7	28	22	30	6	7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	8	1	2	5	7	9	13	13	14	10	11	4	3	6.6

This question required students to describe how one actor worked with **theatrical conventions** to portray a character in a play from the Theatre Studies prescribed play list for Unit 4. If the student chose an actor who played more than one character, the student had the choice to discuss one or more of these characters.

Some students discussed the theatrical conventions in relation to performance styles of the play (because they are interrelated). Others did not. Either response was considered acceptable. If the student discussed the theatrical conventions in relation to the performance styles this was deemed acceptable where it assisted the student to develop his/her discussion of the theatrical conventions; however the question did not require reference to performance styles in the response.

A high level of response was characterised by:

- a strong understanding of the process of character portrayal in relation to the chosen actor and the nature of theatrical conventions
- the selection of one actor whose performance enabled a detailed level of description
- a high level of understanding of the connections between the theatrical conventions of the production and how these affected and were affected by the portrayal of the character(s) by an actor.

An acceptable level of response was characterised by:

- an understanding of the process of character portrayal in relation to the chosen actor and the nature of theatrical conventions
- an understanding of the connections between the theatrical conventions of the production and how these affected and were affected by the portrayal of the character(s) by the actor.

An example of an acceptable level response is as follows:

'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

The character of Puck, played by Richard Gyoerffy was true to the theatrical conventions of Elizabethan theatre. Gyoffrey a male conformed to the theatrical conventions [of Elizabethan theatre] as women at this time didn't have acting as a profession. He maintained a relationship with the audience with his constant asides, and also with his speeches in rhyming couplets both to open and close the show.

The plays in Elizabethan times had to appeal to a common audience, therefore the comedies had to be rather humorous. Puck used his acting skills to create this comedy. He staged backflips and acrobatics throughout the performance. These were prominent in Elizabethan theatre as the actors were required to sing, dance, act and play an instrument. [The actor playing Puck] used magic tricks with the blue flower (making it disappear etc) in order to please the audience – this is also in keeping with the [Elizabethan theatre] theatrical conventions.

He also used his physicalisation skills to set his status with Oberon – whom he knelt to, and to reveal his motivation of pleasing Oberon.

A low level of response was characterised by:

- little evidence of an understanding of the process of character portrayal in relation to the chosen actor and the nature of theatrical conventions
- a low level of understanding of the connections between the theatrical conventions of the production and how this was connected to the portrayal of the character(s) by an actor.