



2013

Theatre Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2013 Theatre Studies written examination was based on the *VCE Theatre Studies Study Design 2007–2014*. The examination was presented in a question and answer book and covered five Areas of Study from the study design – all Unit 3 and 4 outcomes, except for Unit 4, Area of Study 1 (which is assessed in the monologue performance examination).

- In general, students who understood the underlying concepts of the *VCE Theatre Studies Study Design* handled the examination well.
- Most students answered all questions in the examination.
- Students were given the option to support their written answers with hand-drawn illustrations or diagrams and many took advantage of this.
- Question 1 related to the 2013 Unit 3 prescribed playlist. There were four plays to choose from.
- Question 2 related to the 2013 Unit 4 prescribed playlist. There were six plays to choose from. Students were required to refer to the same play in all three parts of Question 2.
- The examination included a detachable insert that contained stimulus material pertaining to Questions 3 and 4. When responding to these questions, students were required to draw on the stimulus material and the contextual background information that was also provided. For Question 4, an excerpt from a playscript was reproduced with accompanying questions. It was clearly noted in the examination that no prior knowledge of the play, its contextual background or the stimulus images was required when answering Questions 3 and 4.
- In Question 4b., students were provided with lines down the right side of the playscript excerpt, where they could annotate their answers.
- A total of 50 marks was available for the paper.
- In answering questions, students could choose to write in essay form, point form, annotations (of scripts, diagrams, illustrations, etc.) or any combination thereof. All of these were considered acceptable as long as the student addressed the focus of the question and the response was appropriate to the demands of the question.

Areas of strength and weakness

High-scoring students demonstrated the following.

- high-level use of appropriate theatrical language, terminology and expressions
- use of specific examples to illustrate how acting and other areas of stagecraft **might be** applied to previously unseen material and how they **were** applied in the two prescribed plays studied
- sound knowledge of the nature and function of two areas of stagecraft
- excellent knowledge of how two areas of stagecraft are applied differently through each of the four stages of production, as specified in the *VCE Theatre Studies Study Design*
- good understanding of how the intended meaning of a playscript might be realised through the application of stagecraft
- a high level of skill in developing theatrical images and ideas from a playscript, contextual information and stimulus images
- Question 1 – thorough knowledge of one of the prescribed Unit 3 plays in production and an ability to cite specific examples from **both** the written playscript and the play in production
- Question 2 – thorough knowledge of one of the prescribed Unit 4 plays in production and an ability to cite specific examples of an actor(s) performance(s) in the production
- Question 3 – thorough knowledge of one area of stagecraft (other than acting) and how it might be applied in production planning, production development and the production season
- Question 4 – thorough knowledge of how an actor might develop an interpretation of a character and how expressive skills might be applied in a specific scene to realise the characterisation and an intended mood
- understanding question requirements

Low-scoring students demonstrated the following.

- incorrect, little or no use of theatrical terminology and expressions
- little or no use of specific examples
- limited knowledge of the nature and function of two areas of stagecraft
- little or no understanding of how two areas of stagecraft are applied differently through each of the four stages of production, as specified in the *VCE Theatre Studies Study Design*
- little understanding of how the intended meaning of a playscript might be realised through the application of stagecraft



- lack of sophistication in developing theatrical images and ideas from playscripts and stimulus images
- Question 1 – limited or overly generalised knowledge of one of the prescribed Unit 3 plays in production and little or no specific examples cited from both the written playscript and the play in production
- Question 1 – no evidence that the student had read the prescribed playscript from which the Unit 3 playlist play was interpreted
- Question 2 – limited knowledge of one of the prescribed Unit 4 plays in production and little, if any, specific examples of an actor(s) performance(s) in the production cited
- Question 2 – confusion over ‘character’ and ‘actor’
- Question 3 – limited knowledge of one area of stagecraft (other than acting) and how it might be applied in production planning, production development and the production season
- Question 4 – limited knowledge of how an actor might develop an interpretation of a character and how expressive skills might be applied in a specific scene to realise the characterisation
- reiteration of the information provided in the question, script excerpt or insert
- little or no understanding of how to annotate scripts, diagrams or illustrations
- lack of understanding of question requirements; for example, referring to one character in Question 4a. and referring to a different character in Question 4b. (the same character needed to be referred to in Questions 4a. and 4b.)
- responses that were repetitive or off task

Advice for students

- Attempt to answer all questions.
- Take note of the particular type of response required in each question, as indicated by words such as ‘describe’, ‘evaluate’, ‘explain’, ‘discuss’, ‘compare’, ‘analyse’ and ‘identify’, and respond accordingly.
- Understand what is required when annotating scripts, diagrams or illustrations. When illustrations are used, annotations should add explanatory comments.
- Develop a working vocabulary based on theatrical language, terminology and expressions, as pertains to the study.
- Be prepared to provide specific examples from the playscript from which the play selected from the Unit 3 playlist was interpreted and from the plays in performance.
- Ensure that you identify how many ideas or elements need to be referred to in the question. If ‘two or more’ of something is required in the response, then referring to fewer than two of these items would result in a prevent students from scoring full marks for the question (for example, in Question 2a., where students were required to describe ‘two or more key characteristics’). At the same time, if a specified number of things is required (e.g. ‘two’), the assessor will assess the first of these items that appears in the response and will not assess any additional items beyond the number required. For example, in Question 3b., students were required to describe ‘one production aim or concept’. Assessors graded the description of the first production aim or concept that appeared in the response and ignored additional aims or concepts.
- While teachers and students might supplement their understanding of the plays in the prescribed playlists for Units 3 and 4 by referring to study notes or attending show forums or educational programs provided by theatre companies, these study support programs are not the prescribed texts.
- Students must have thoroughly studied the written playscript for the Unit 3 play and have taken thorough notes of the Units 3 and 4 plays in production.



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 the 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 1

Play chosen	none	<i>The Good Person of Sichuan</i>	<i>Other Desert Cities</i>	<i>Robots Vs Art</i>	<i>The Club</i>
%	1	37	42	10	11

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	3	1	4	9	15	15	15	13	13	9	5.5

Students were asked to select and answer one of four questions, each of which pertained specifically to one of the plays on the 2013 Unit 3 prescribed playlist. In accordance with Unit 3, Area of Study 3, all students were expected to have attended one of the plays from the 2013 Unit 3 prescribed playlist and to have read the corresponding written playscript. Students were expected to refer to both the play in performance and to the written playscript in their response.

Teachers and students are reminded that a key consideration when preparing for this section of the examination is being able to refer to specific and relevant examples from the written playscript. A number of responses made little or no reference to the playscript and this was a key characteristic of low-scoring responses. An appropriate reference might be a direct quote from the playscript, for example, a line of dialogue, stage directions or relevant act/scene titles or numbers. Other specific references might be a description of the structural aspects of the playscript, for example, in *The Good Person of Sichuan*, the episodic structure of the play or the poetic structure of the songs in the written playscript (with reference to a specific moment in the play). In order for students to draw a comparison between the written playscript and an aspect of the performance, they needed to include this type of direct reference to the written playscript.

Some students struggled to provide specific examples from the play in performance. While some students were able to discuss general ideas about the play in performance, students with higher-scoring responses described the specifics of stagecraft (for example, a particular moment when lighting changed or a detailed description of a set piece, costume, etc.) and/or a particular moment of action on stage (for example, a vivid description that evoked how acting and other areas of stagecraft were presented during a specific moment). The most effective examples were relevant to the focus of the question, were directly linked to the reference from the playscript and reminded us – through strong descriptive language – of what happened on stage. The best of these descriptions used stagecraft-specific terminology and expressions.

High-scoring responses were characterised by the following.

- insightful and demonstrated a high level of understanding of the play in production and the written playscript from which the play was derived
- a high level of understanding of the focus of the question: ‘theatrical styles’ (option 1), ‘stagecraft implied in the playscript’ (option 2), ‘key images and ideas implied in the playscript’ (option 3) and ‘acting and one or more other areas of stagecraft’ (option 4)
- inclusion of pertinent references to the written playscript and to the play in performance
- skilful use of appropriate theatrical language, terminology, expressions and/or concepts

Low-scoring responses were characterised by the following.

- limited or scant understanding of the play in production, with little or no reference to the written playscript from which it was derived
- little or no understanding of the focus of the question: ‘theatrical styles’ (option 1), ‘stagecraft implied in the playscript’ (option 2), ‘key images and ideas implied in the playscript’ (option 3) and ‘acting and one or more other areas of stagecraft’ (option 4)
- limited use of examples from the written playscript and/or the student referred only to the play in performance

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- little or no use of theatrical language, terminology or expressions

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. Note how the student has made specific references to the playscript, provided detailed descriptions of stagecraft and used stagecraft-specific terminology. Note also how the student used subheadings, which are an acceptable way to structure a response.

2. Other Desert Cities

The stagecraft of acting in the playscript was realistic in style, and this was similarly illustrated through Meadows' timed delivery of the line 'No! No! No discussion of war' which overlapped Brooke's line, thus evoking a casual, familial, conversational atmosphere similar to the text. The character of Polly is described as 'forthright' in the playscript which was highlighted through the stagecraft of acting, as Robyn Nevin used a blunt tone when making racist remarks such as 'crazed Indians' and 'chink food'. Also, the mothering role of Polly illustrated in the play text was similar in production as Robyn Nevin used a strong, firm gesture when holding her glass of alcohol to highlight her control over her children. Moreover, the stagecraft of costume highlighted the playscript's description of Polly as 'elegant', by designing silver, satin pants and a firmly tailored turquoise jacket, thus evoking a sense of sophistication. The character of Lyman in production was similar to the playscript's description as 'oak-like', as the actor used a strong, balanced physicality and deep tone of voice.

Set: The set design in the script was described as 'Desert-French regency' in style, however, in MTC's production, the design was dissimilar and was that of a Kauffman House style of architecture, common of desert homes. Moreover, there is no mention of a monolithic, monochrome exterior in the text, however this was added in MTC's production to interpret the lifelessness of the desert, thus similar to Silda's description of Palm Springs being like 'King Tut's tomb'.

Lighting: The playscript implies realistic lighting to reflect the time passing, 'some hours have passed'. This was similar in the production through the use of the cyclorama, that had hues of yellow and orange, which slowly developed to a deep red to reflect the sunset and time passing. This was further illustrated through side lighting that caused shadow to be cast on the set, and this slowly moved to realistically represent time passing.

Props: Props such as the joint and manuscript illustrated in the text were similarly presented in the production. They were also similarly used, as Meadows rolled the joint with ease, as described in the text, Trip rolled the joint 'expertly'.

Direction: The American accent implied in the text through the context of Palm Springs, was maintained in MTC's production. However, alterations were made, such as in the script it states Trip leaves before the secret is revealed, however in the production the directorial choice was made to keep him present to highlight that the whole family was affected by the secret.

Question 2

Play chosen	none	1. <i>A Sunburnt History: The true story behind Burke and Wills' ill-fated expedition</i>	2. <i>Barassi: The Stage Show</i>	3. <i>Molly Sweeney</i>	4. <i>Sunday in the Park with George</i>	5. <i>The Cherry Orchard</i>	6. <i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
%	0	3	1	6	17	60	13

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	2	10	29	59	2.5

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	4	20	42	34	2.1

Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	2	10	33	55	2.4

This question related to the 2013 Unit 4 prescribed playlist. Students were asked to select one of the six plays on the prescribed playlist. They were expected to refer to the same play in their responses to parts a., b. and c. The three parts of the question encompassed a description of two or more key characteristics of one character, a brief explanation of



how the application of one or more areas of stagecraft enhanced the acting, and an analysis of how one actor used one or more expressive skills to interpret a character.

Part a. required students to describe key characteristics. As defined in the study design, ‘characteristics’ are ‘aspects of a character portrayed by the actor’. Some students referred to the objective, motivation and/or status of the character as key characteristics. Characteristics could also refer to aspects of the character’s background, psychology or physicality. In describing a characteristic, more sophisticated responses took into account how the actor portrayed this aspect of the character. It is important to note that the analysis of how the actor portrayed the characteristic is not a subsequent characteristic.

Part b. asked students to briefly explain how the application of one or more areas of stagecraft enhanced the acting in the production. The best responses showed an understanding of the interrelationship between acting and other areas of stagecraft. Weaker responses explained how the application of other areas of stagecraft conveyed meaning or enhanced the meaning that was intended by acting choices, but did not show how stagecraft and acting worked together. For example, explaining how the colour or style of a costume item symbolised or represented a characteristic of one of the characters does not explain how the acting was enhanced by the stagecraft choice. A good example of how stagecraft enhanced acting might be an explanation of how an actor’s tight-fitting costume and high heels restricted the movement of a character, thus portraying an idea about the character’s restricted social context.

Part c. asked students to analyse how one actor used expressive skills to interpret a character. Students with the best responses demonstrated a strong capacity to describe the qualities of the expressive skills used to convey meaning. They also analysed how expressive skills were used to communicate and portray specific ideas about the character were portrayed on stage. For example, in describing movement, sophisticated responses referred to qualities of movement, such as time, weight and use of space, in order to analyse how specific characteristics were represented.

High-scoring responses were characterised by

- a high level of understanding of the play and its contexts
- a high level of understanding of the actor’s use of expressive skills
- a high level of understanding of how an actor can portray characteristics
- a high level of understanding of the characteristics of characters in the play
- a high level of understanding of how acting is enhanced through other areas of stagecraft
- the inclusion of highly pertinent examples from the play pertaining to acting
- an appropriate use of theatrical language, terminology, expressions and/or concepts.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by

- a low level of understanding of the play and its contexts
- some understanding of an actor’s use of expressive skills
- no differentiation between a character and an actor
- a low level of understanding of the actor’s use of expressive skills
- a low level of understanding of how an actor can portray characteristics
- a low level of understanding of the characteristics of characters in the play
- a low level of understanding of how acting is enhanced through other areas of stagecraft
- little or no use of theatrical language, terminology, expressions and/or concepts.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. Note how in part a. the student describes more than two key characteristics and provides a detailed description of how these were portrayed. In part b., the student provides detailed examples showing the interrelationship between acting and more than one area of stagecraft. In part c., the student’s analysis uses stagecraft-specific terminology to describe the qualities of voice and movement.

5. The Cherry Orchard

2a.

Lopakhin is a hard working and ambitious character working from ‘dawn to dusk’ to devise a plan for the estate as he feels immense affection for them and wants to help their financial situation. He is always constantly talking about progress and walks with a fast paced gait to highlight his determination for progress and thus highlight his ambitious and opportunistic qualities. In addition his inability to gaze directly into Varya’s eyes and his inability to propose to her highlights his self-sufficiency and independence.

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2b.

Prop – the way Pamela Rabe drank from the champagne bottle in an almost unladylike way enhanced her portrayal of the reckless and indulgent characteristics of Ranevskaya. In addition the way Rabe utilised a float Laban energy to lightly ‘drop her purse’ enhanced the realisation of Ranevskaya’s reckless spending explaining the reason behind her debts.

Costume – In addition the way Rabe utilised the flexibility of her free floral wrap dress by crawling on the floor with her legs open highlighted Ranevskaya’s sensual and indulgent nature.

2c.

Voice – Davis utilised a fluid classical high pitch tone and utilised his vowels in a beautiful and transcendent way as he sung the love song. This highlighted Yepikhodov’s sensitivity and enhanced the audience’s realisation of his raw and pure love for Dunyasha.

Movement – Gareth Davis’s movement utilised a float Laban energy and consisted of the occasional slapstick moment where he would trip over objects and down the stairs. For example when greeting Dunyasha. This enhanced the audience’s realisation of Yepikhodov’s flaws and clumsiness as he is referred to as ‘disaster zone’. It is also generated an intimate actor audience relationship as they realised his humanity.

Question 3

Area of stagecraft chosen	none	1. direction	2. stage management	3. dramaturgy	4. set design	5. properties	6. costume	7. make-up	8. sound	9. lighting	10. multimedia	11. promotion
%	0	9	1	1	25	3	33	6	8	10	2	4

Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	1	34	65	1.7

Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	1	4	28	37	30	2.9

Question 3c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	2	4	18	31	26	19	3.3

Question 3d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	11	34	30	22	2.6

Question 3e.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	6	10	25	30	20	10	2.8

For Question 3, students chose one of the following areas of stagecraft to describe how stagecraft could be used to enhance the intended meaning of a scene: direction, stage management, dramaturgy, set design, properties, costume, make-up, sound, lighting, multimedia and promotion (including publicity). Each part of Question 3 asked students to consider one of the stages of production using an extract from *The Woman in Black*. The stages of production assessed were: production planning, production development and production season.

Students were required to explain what preliminary research they would undertake into the context(s) of *The Woman in Black* to develop their selected area of stagecraft; describe one production aim or concept for the selected area of stagecraft in the development stage with reference to one or more of the stimulus images; describe how they would experiment with or trial this approach during production development; describe how they would apply their selected area of stagecraft to achieve the intended meaning of the playwright during the production season; and analyse how the work in their selected area of stagecraft would be enhanced through work in one other area of stagecraft during the production season.



High-scoring responses were characterised by

- a very detailed description of how stagecraft could be used to enhance the intended meaning of the scene in the various stages of production
- description, discussion and analysis of how the chosen area of stagecraft could enhance the intended meaning of the scene in the various stages of production
- ideas that were linked to the stagecraft in an imaginative and sophisticated manner
- inclusion of a pertinent example(s) to support the discussion
- ideas that were enhanced by the appropriate use of theatrical language, terminology and expressions.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by

- limited understanding of the intended meaning of the play
- limited understanding of how stagecraft worked within the various stages of production
- confusion over 'concept' and 'process'
- ideas that were not linked to the stagecraft
- a discussion of other areas of stagecraft with limited focus on the selected area of stagecraft (that is, confusion over the nature and function of the selected area of stagecraft)
- limited or no annotations, descriptions, discussion or analysis
- few or no examples to support the discussion
- limited or no understanding of the stages of production
- not answering all parts of the question
- limited understanding of how stagecraft worked in collaboration during the production process
- reiteration of the question or material from the insert with a general or limited discussion of the selected area of stagecraft
- limited or no use of appropriate theatrical language, terminology and expressions.

In part a., the best responses described a form of research that would be undertaken (for example, reading a book about Victorian architecture, visiting a haunted house, etc.), identified a relevant area of context (for example, old houses of the Victorian era) and made reference to how this might be relevant to their selected area of stagecraft (for example, how design elements from Victorian architecture might influence set design). Weaker responses may have made reference to one of these aspects of preliminary research without referring to all three aspects: the form of research, the area of context and/or relevance to the selected area of stagecraft.

In part b., students were required to describe one production aim or concept. If students referred to more than one aim or concept, only the first aim or concept referred to in the response was assessed. The aim or concept could have been an overarching design concept (for example, arches and vaulted ceilings consistent with architectural designs of the Victorian era or to create a frightening mood), themes (for example, the loss of a child) or practical aims (for example, to create a rehearsal schedule that would facilitate the blocking of the play). Students with the best responses showed a high level of understanding of the nature and function of their selected area of stagecraft during the production development stage. They also developed production possibilities from the previously unseen materials provided. Students with weaker responses might have made broad generalisations about the play without specifically anchoring their ideas to the selected area of stagecraft or the development period.

In part c., students were required to develop the description of the aim or concept described in part b. by explaining how they would experiment with or trial approaches for their selected area of stagecraft. In this question, students were given an opportunity to show the process that they might go through during the development period in order to build on an idea. The best responses showed a strong understanding of experimentation or trialling processes (for example, sketching, creating diagrams, creating models, workshoping, rehearsing, etc.) relevant to the selected area of stagecraft. The best responses also made specific reference to the idea presented in part b. These responses used stagecraft-specific terminology and expressions to explain ideas. Weaker responses were unable to distinguish between the aim or concept and processes of experimentation or trialling.

In part d., students were provided with a quote from the playwright, describing his intention. Students with the best answers used this quote as a starting point to explain how their selected area of stagecraft would work during the production season (which might include bump-in, technical rehearsal, dress rehearsal and/or performance). The quote implied a particular audience response and the best answers showed a good understanding of how stagecraft can be used to convey meaning to an audience – a key characteristic of this stage of production. Students with weaker responses tended to reiterate the ideas in the quote and gave few specific details about how their selected area of stagecraft might work during the production season.



In part e., students were required to analyse how their work in the selected area of stagecraft would be enhanced through work completed in one other area of stagecraft during the production season. Students with sophisticated responses showed the interrelationship between areas of stagecraft during the production season. Those with weaker responses spoke in general or vague terms about how the two areas of stagecraft would work together or did not refer to their selected area of stagecraft in the response.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. The student has shown a very high level of understanding of how their area of stagecraft worked during each stage of production and has developed a clever interpretation for the play. Further improvements could have been made by using more theatrical language or terminology to explain their ideas.

4. Set design

3a.

Preliminary research into furniture of the Victorian period, how it looked and where I could find furniture from this period (online, furniture shop)

Preliminary research into how productions of the play has made set appear haunted e.g. whether it has moved or what it looked like.

3b.

Number(s) of the stimulus image(s) referred to 3, 4

Production aim – for the set to reinforced the ‘gothic horror’ of story and add to its ‘moody atmosphere’ and ‘eeriness’ by creating illusions

In response to stimulus image 3, I will design a mirror that shows the reflection of something that is not there, like a baby done through multimedia projection. It would be an illusion to elicit fear in audience.

In response to stimulus image 3, I will design and build a baby carriage that moves by itself, by means of an electronic motor. The illusion would shock the audience.

In response to stimulus image 4, I would design and build a door that the Woman in Black would be able to pass through, by creating a hole in it that the audience can’t see – This would make the woman appear even eerier.

In response to stimulus image four, I would design pieces of set that would deliberately cast areas of stage into shadow. [the student provided a sketch of the set design accompanied by the following annotations]: light source, set piece (wardrobe); cast shadow on stage = eeriness, darkness, gothic horror; woman could hide in this shadow and then appear from it.

3c.

To realise the set aim to frighten the audience and create a moody, eerie atmosphere, I would place the large Victorian style set pieces, like wardrobes and other large items, in various positions around stage, to experiment where they cast the longest shadows. This would happen during rehearsals to see how they interact with characters.

As the set designer, I would sit in the audience during rehearsals with the set, in all different seats around the theatre, to see if the illusions work from all angles, especially the doors with the holes in them which must not be seen.

I would experiment with different images of babies to project onto the mirrors to trial which looks the most eerie and realistic

I would experiment with the various motorised set pieces to see if they are reliable and quiet, because the motors must not be heard, otherwise the illusion they are haunted would be shattered – like the baby carriage and motorised rocking chairs.

I would experiment with different textures over the pieces of furniture, to see whether cobwebs would look eerie or fake and whether silk layered over them would appropriate for ‘gothic horror’.

3d.

During production season, I would watch the dress rehearsals and each show to see if the ‘haunted’ set pieces were subtle enough, so as to only hint to them being haunted eg. Subtly prompt audience’s imagination. I would see if you could hear motors from audience and see how illusions were created.

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During production season I would give audience members a questionnaire to see how 'frightening' they found the set and the performance as a whole so as to determine if set must be adapted for next show.

During production season, I would listen to audience's screams and complete anticipatory silences to see how my special effects were being perceived and perhaps change timing and strength of effect for the next show.

During production season, I would see if other set was working effectively with all other areas of stagecraft, like lighting, to see if they cohesively created a frightening effect. Eg. Lighting created enough shadows on set.

3e.

Sound could enhance set by playing a noise of a baby crying to reinforce the multimedia projection of a baby on the mirror during the production.

Loud creaking noises could be played when the mechanic aspects of the set are moving – reinforce the fact they are haunted

When the Woman in Black slips into and out of shadows and in and out of the doors, ominous music could be played to create a tension and frightening anticipation

A 'whooshing sound' could be made long after the woman 'disappears' in the shadows, door, to show her presence is still felt – add to fear

Eerie children's music could be played when the image of the baby is in the mirror or the baby carriage is in motion, like a children's nursery rhyme from a music box – this would make the death of babies a more frightening concept

Question 4

Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	6	3	15	26	24	15	12	3.5

Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	19	2	10	19	22	15	12	3.2

Question 4 required students to select one character (YOUNG KIPPS – as played by the ACTOR or THE WOMAN IN BLACK) and to refer to the same character in both parts of the question. It was unfortunate that some students referred to a different character in part b., despite the instructions. Students were required to discuss how two or more of the stimulus images could inform the performer's realisation of the selected character. In part b., students were required to annotate an excerpt from *The Woman in Black*, explaining how the performer would portray the selected character using three expressive skills (facial expression, movement, gesture and/or stillness and silence) to emphasise the mood intended by the playwright.

In part a., the best responses made a specific link to the stagecraft of acting; for example, referring to rehearsal processes, application of stagecraft or how the actor would present characteristics of the selected character. Weaker responses discussed the character in more general terms without specific reference to how a performer would use this information to realise the character. Some students were able to provide quite sophisticated readings of the stimulus images. However, unless these were linked to the stagecraft of acting and the portrayal of a character, they were tenuous or irrelevant.

In part b., the most sophisticated responses strongly described the qualities of the listed expressive skills in order to represent ideas about the character and to emphasise the mood intended in the scene. For example, when discussing facial expressions, these responses referred to the shape of the mouth, jaw, cheeks, eyes, eyebrows and forehead to create a particular expression. In contrast, weaker responses discussed in more general terms the emotion that may have been conveyed through the facial expression without specific reference to how this might be achieved (for example, 'surprised facial expression'). Responses that referred to a different character from the character used in part a. were not awarded any marks for this part of the question. Weaker responses also tended to retell the story, as indicated in the stage directions, without specific reference to how and why an actor might use these stage directions to inform the application of expressive skills. Weaker responses sometimes referred to more than three expressive skills. In these



instances, the first three expressive skills mentioned in the response were assessed and subsequent descriptions of other expressive skills were not taken into account (this is consistent with VCAA assessment procedures).

High-scoring responses were characterised by

- an excellent understanding of how expressive skills could be used to interpret character
- a high level of understanding of how an actor might realise a character
- a practical explanation of how expressive skills used in the interpretation of character could be used to convey the intended meaning of the playscript
- an understanding of the use of subtext and mood in an excerpt of a playscript
- appropriate use of theatrical language, terminology and expressions.

Low-scoring responses were characterised by

- limited or no understanding of how expressive skills could be used to interpret character
- little or no understanding of how an actor might realise a character
- little or no explanation of how expressive skills used in the interpretation of character could be used to convey the intended meaning of the playscript
- little or no understanding of the use of subtext and mood in an excerpt of a script
- basic use of theatrical language, terminology and expressions.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. The student has clearly linked the stimulus images and the playscript excerpt to the craft of acting. Improvements could be made in part a. by discussing in greater depth how expressive skills could be applied and how the acting space could be used.

4a.

Name of the selected character *The Woman in Black*
Numbers of the stimulus images referred to *Image 1 and 3 and 4*

For the performer portraying The Woman in Black to realise the character successfully, the actor would refer to stimulus images provided by the director. Image 1 shows the New Burgtheater, Vienna built in 1888, and would inform the actor of the type of acting space they will be performing their character in. The eerie nature of the image, and the shadows in the image would aid the actor in realising the gothic and horrific nature of the Woman in Black. Image 3 is an eerie interpretation of 'How Babies Become Conscious', and would influence the character's motherly tendencies, and hyper-sensitive attitude toward children, particularly her own. The woman holding the baby in the image would give the actor an indication of the physicality of The Woman in Black before she became a ghost. This would aid the actor to realise the dual nature or polarity of the Woman in Black and would influence the actor's interpretation of expressive skills used. Image 4 would heighten the actor's 'ghostly' portrayal and realisation of the Woman in Black. The image highlights the unknown, and would help the actor realise the scary demeanour of the character.

Throughout the response to part b., the student had underlined and circled words and phrases in the stage directions provided. The student had attached each of these annotations to one or more of these specific words or phrases in the stage directions.

4b.

Stillness and silence: The actor is creating noises by tapping the walls and the floor with her feet and hands. After each sequence of this noise the actor remains still and silent in order to build tension and build to a climax.

Movement: The chair is not moving 'of its own volition', rather it is an illusion. The actor is frantically moving around the stage echoing on the floorboards as she does so. Each time the actor passes the rocking chair she knocks it with more power, until stopping it suddenly and remaining silent.

Facial expressions: As the wind rises, the actors hair goes over her face and gets caught in the actors mouth. The actor has a wide open grin, showing old, broken teeth and has wide eyes glaring directly at the audience when they 'momentarily glimpse' her.

Movement: Again the actor is moving frantically about the stage knocking over the 'found objects' and creating a mess while creating a crow-like physicality. She begins to flap their arms until they are moving extremely fast – appearing to almost be dislocated.

Stillness and silence: As she stands over [Young] Kipps the actor is still and silent and is breathing heavily.