

OCR GCSE Drama

Section B-Written Exam

Live Theatre Review

LIGHTING*SOUND*COSTUME*STAGING*ACTING



Retrieval

1. How many question are in Section B?
2. How many marks?
3. How much time should be spent on section B in total?
4. How much time should you spend if you have extra time?
5. Which aspects of live theatre might the question be on?
6. What written skills are you assessed on? Think command words!



Retrieval

1. How many question are in Section B? ONE (Question 9 of the paper)
2. How many marks? 30 Marks
3. How much time should be spent on section B in total? 35 minutes
4. How much time should you spend if you have extra time? 11 extra minutes (46 minutes in total)
5. Which aspects of live theatre might the question be on? Acting, Design and Directing.
6. Describe, Evaluate and Analyse



Marking the question

- ↓ 10 marks are given for your use of **description** and understanding of **Drama Terminology** and knowledge of how **meaning** is **communicated** within the play.
- ↓ 20 marks are given for your ability to **Evaluate** and/or **Analyse** the **impact** a **range of elements** of the play had on **you** as an audience member. You must be able to provide **evidence** using **specific moments** from the production.
- ↓ TIP: In the exam start with this question first as you will be more prepared to answer this plus you want to bank the most marks first.



<u>DESCRIBE (AO3)</u>	<u>EVALUATE (A04)</u>	<u>ANALYSE (A04)</u>
<p>WHAT- Moment or design</p> <p>HOW- Examples using the 'Rule of 3' (3 Adjectives to describe the acting/design skills).</p> <p>WHY- Explain effect or how meaning is being communicated.</p>	<p>Your personal opinion</p> <p>This made me feel...</p> <p>I think this successfully showed...</p> <p>I loved how this...</p> <p>This was a brilliant way to...</p>	<p>Think deeper and make links to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic intention • Historical context • Themes • Genre • Style
10 MARKS	10 MARKS	10 MARKS
TOTAL= 30 MARKS		



Types of questions

- ▶ **Visual elements** – everything you can see (lighting, costume, set/props, characterisation but not voice)
- ▶ **Use of space** – staging, levels, proxemics, parts of the stage (could include use of set)
- ▶ **Characterisation** – voice, facial expression, gesture, body language, gait
- ▶ **Design elements/semiotics** – costume, lighting, sound, set/props
- ▶ **Style/conventions** – specific to performance
- ▶ **Specific scenes** – opening, ending, climax, key scene
 - ▶ BE ADAPTABLE!!!!



Recommended Structure

- ▶ **Introduction** – what you went to see, the overall style of the piece, the intentions of the performance.
- ▶ **Paragraph 1** – most important of your points, specific and detailed examples from the performance, evaluation and analysis.
- ▶ **Paragraph 2** – your next most important point, examples, evaluation and analysis
- ▶ **Paragraph 3** – next most important point, examples, evaluation and analysis
- ▶ **Conclusion** – go back to the question and sum up your overall audience response linking back to the question.



Reading the question- what is it asking?

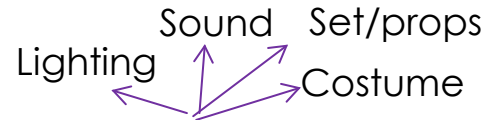


CUE- The first thing you should do when reading the question

C- Circle the command word

U- Underline the key words

E- Expand on the question- key words



9* Evaluate how the design aspects within the live performance impacted you as an audience member

Use **CUE** on the following question/You may already know this exam technique as **BUG**



Step by Step essay

STEP 1- Read the question

9. Evaluate the use of semiotics in the live production you watched and their impact it had on you as an audience member (30 marks).

Step 2- Let's CUE it together (Circle, Underline, Expand)



Step by Step essay

STEP 1- Read the question

How meaning is communicated
through design or acting

9. Evaluate the use of semiotics in the live production you watched and their impact it had on you as an audience member (30 marks).

How the semiotics made me feel, think,
question



Write your Introduction

Step 3- Write your Introduction (Keep it short- 3-4 sentences maximum)

- **Title and playwright?**
- **Director:**
- **Where** it was performed?
- **When** you watched it?
- A very **brief summary** of the play:
- Link to the question

I went to see a digitally streamed version of 'Things I know to be True' by Andrew Bovell in March 2025 in Leicestershire. It was directed by.....and is about.....



How to create a DEA paragraph.

DESCRIBE:

- ▶ **What**...is the scene you want to evaluate and analyse (Describe in a sentence).
- ▶ **How**...The Actor/lighting/set/sound/costume/sound designer demonstrated their skills. **Rule of 3**
- ▶ **Why**...This

EVALUATE...As an audience member this made me feel...

ANALYSE...This could symbolise...



Let's make a paragraph together

	DESCRIBE			EVALUATE	ANALYSE
SET	What	How	Why/effect	Opinion/Evaluation	Deeper analysis
Designer:	(moment from the play/design area)	(use technical drama terminology – rule of 3)	(how is meaning being communicated to the audience)	(this made me feel/in my opinion/I felt...)	Explain artistic intentions. Links to historical context/style/genre/themes
	1				





Let's look at an example together

EXAMPLE ESSAY (DESIGN)

Use three highlighters for:

- ◀ **Description – to write about what they saw, heard or experienced (what, how why).**

(10 marks)

- ◀ **Evaluate – to judge or form your own opinion of the skills/key moment, such as explaining how successful it was.**

- ◀ **Analyse- looking deeper into the skills or moment created. What else it communicated for the audience. Historical context, deeper themes, genre, style might be referenced here.**

(20 marks)



Live Theatre- example paragraph

Read through and highlight in the appropriate colours and label in the margin:

WHAT, HOW, WHY **EVALUATE** **ANALYSE**

I really enjoyed the way that Grace Smart, the Set designer, communicated the semiotics of the play. One way she did this was through her simple yet effective design of the backdrop.

On the backdrop she had created the look of a large, wooden gymnasium floor which looked grey and worn in condition. It had red and orange court lines painted on too to add further detail and clarity to the image.

I think it effectively showed the play was set within a school. The backdrop was the same design throughout the play as the location was always at school.

This design successfully showed the set designers artistic intentions to show the play was based in a school and is something we all recognised as audience members. I loved how it was a constant reminder that the play is set within the school and how its worn, grey dismal look conveyed the time period of the 1980s as it wasn't pristine and modern. On a deeper level I believe the grey, tired look could also communicate that both main characters/the teachers were worn out and tired with the education system. It's design was minimalistic which also helped to communicated the style of the design throughout the piece. With a minimalistic set I think it helped me as the audience focus on the main action and deeper messages regarding education such as learning being results driven which was highlighted by the Headmaster and why Irwin's character was brought into the play.

Overall her design of the backdrop helped to communicate the semiotics of the time period, location and style really clearly and on an even deeper level the messages regarding teaching and education which was washed out and tired as the head teacher tried to sack Hector for his old methods, yet the new teacher, Irwin, also showed a tick box approach to teaching which was disinteresting to the students.



WHAT, HOW, WHY EVALUATE ANALYSE

WHAT

I really enjoyed the way that Grace Smart, the Set designer, communicated the semiotics of the play. One way she did this was through her simple yet effective design of the backdrop.

HOW

On the backdrop she had created the look of a large, wooden gymnasium floor which looked grey and worn in condition. It had red and orange court lines painted on too to add further detail and clarity to the image.

WHY

I think it effectively showed the play was set within a school. The backdrop was the same design throughout the play as the location was always at school.

EVALUATE and ANALYSE

This design successfully showed it was based in a school and is something we all recognised as audience members. I loved how it was a constant reminder that the play is set within the school and how its worn, grey dismal look conveyed the time period of the 1980s as it wasn't pristine and modern. In relation to the use of semiotics I believe the grey, tired look could also communicate that both main characters/the teachers were worn out and tired with the education system. Its design was minimalistic which also helped to communicated the style of the design throughout the piece. With a minimalistic set I think it helped me as the audience focus on the main action and deeper messages regarding education such as learning being results driven which was highlighted by the Headmaster and why Irwin's character was brought into the play.

Overall her design of the backdrop helped to communicate the semiotics of time period, location and style really clearly and on an even deeper level the messages regarding teaching and education which was washed out and tired as the head teacher tried to sack Hector for his old methods, yet the new teacher, Irwin, also showed a tick box approach to teaching which was disinteresting to the students.

EXAMPLE ESSAY (ACTING)

Use three highlighters for:

- ◀ **Description – to write about what they saw, heard or experienced (what, how why).**

(10 marks)

- ◀ **Evaluate – to judge or form your own opinion of the skills/key moment, such as explaining how successful it was.**

- ◀ **Analyse- looking deeper into the skills or moment created. What else it communicated for the audience. Historical context, deeper themes, genre, style might be referenced here.**

(20 marks)



Example paragraph

Read through and highlight in the appropriate colours and label in the margin:

WHAT, HOW, WHY EVALUATE ANALYSE

The scene where the character Mark (Matthew Barker), came out as transgender to his parents, Fran and Bob, was very successful in using his vocal and physical skills to interpret this role. For example in the line “I wanted to be normal mum, whatever that is”, Barker created a desperate tone by using a high volume, staccato timbre and fast pace. He also emphasised “I” when using his hand gesture to point to himself. The raw desperation here helped portray the character of Mark effectively because it highlighted how personal the issue was to mark. Therefore I as the audience felt sympathy towards Barker’s character because the situation depicted was in a naturalistic style and was heartfelt. Similarly he switched to a bitter tone towards the end of the line, “Whatever that is” to illustrate his frustration of both his parents and society’s perception of what normal is but also his own inner anger for not being able to fit into this socially accepted bracket of people. I personally think this was successful as Barker portrayed the negative side of society in a sentence which made us as the audience feel shocked and guilty because he was speaking the truth.



Now write your own DEA paragraph

Now spend some time going over the moments you have chosen for live theatre, you might even have some written up in a paragraph.

Either:

- ▶ Create your DEA paragraph
- ▶ Or go over and check your existing work for DEA.



Conclusion

- What is the purpose of your conclusion?

To sum up the points you have made in relation to the question and ultimately...answer the question.

Again make this short, concise, a summary of your points.



ANALYTICAL SENTENCE STRUCTURE



The **'THING' THAT YOU ARE ANALYSING** **ANALYTICAL TERM** ...

- CONVENTION
- SKILL
- TECHNIQUE
- ELEMENT
- DESIGN
- STYLE

The...
actor's
director's
designer's
writer's

} creative choice

SENTENCE STARTERS

- The...
- The use of...
- The actor's use of...
- The director's use of...
- The designer's use of...
- The ensemble's use of...

WHAT CAN REPLACE 'USE OF...'?

- ... utilization of...
- ... usage of...
- ... portrayal of...
- ... exploration of...
- ... application of...
- ... employment of...
- ... manipulation...
- ... control of...

establishes

sets up/creates

signifies

shows/acts as a sign

denotes

provides a straightforward meaning

connotes

suggests or offers an interpreted meaning

suggests / implies

provides a possible interpretation

illustrates

provides a clear example of

foreshadows

hints at what's to come

contrasts with

offers a different idea to another example

is juxtaposed with

creates opposite feelings compared with another

demonstrates

is an example

identifies

pinpoints/makes clear

LIVE THEATRE REVIEW TOOLKIT

USING ACTIVE VERBS



SENTENCE STRUCTURE

I think that the actor's/director's/designer's () was to ()...

The actor's/director's/designer's () was to ()...

I know that the actor's/director's/designer's () was to ()...

OBJECTIVE

GOAL

TARGET

DESIRE

INTENTION

INTENT

PLAN

PURPOSE

IDEA

POINT

AMBITION

ASPIRATION

DREAM

HOPE

ACTIVE VERBS

show - display - demonstrate -
highlight - emphasise - define
deduce - devise - illustrate -
indicate - interpret - construct
represent - introduce - detail -
characterise - reveal - prove
narrate - acknowledge -
attribute - state - compare -
evaluate - distinguish -
determine - propose - simplify -
inform - suggest imply -
support - extend - isolate -
combine - convert - amend
anticipate - arouse - assist -
arrange - correct - consider -
clarify exploit - execute -
entertain - dramatize - elicit
direct - imitate

LIVE THEATRE REVIEW TOOLKIT

SENTENCE LEAD-INS



'COMPARED TO...'
'SIMILARLY...'
'BY CONTRAST...'
'THE BEST PART...'
'AN INTERESTING PART IS...'
'ON THE POSITIVE SIDE...'
'ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE...'
'DOES THIS MEAN...'
'A QUESTION I HAVE IS...'
'I WAS UNSURE ABOUT...'
'IMAGINE...'
'WHAT IF...'
'I THOUGHT...'
'I THINK...'
'I BELIEVE...'
'I LEARNED...'
'I DISCOVERED...'
'IT SEEMS IRRELEVANT THAT...'
'ONE POINT OF VIEW IS...'
'I AGREE...'
'I DISAGREE...'

One way to remember what your options are for commentary on the live theatre work is to use the acronym SPIES:

SIGNIFICANCE

PURPOSE

IMPORTANCE

EFFECT

SUGGESTION

Using these trigger words should help you create meaningful analysis of the live theatre work.

EFFECT ON THE AUDIENCE



SENTENCE STRUCTURES

... allows the audience to...

... deduce / infer /
understand / realise /
question / aspire / conclude

... creates an
expectation that...

... X and Y will happen...

... heightens the
sensation of...

... fear / dread /
excitement / passion /
suspicion / anticipation /
ect.

... invites the audience to...

... sympathise /
emphathise /
identify with (a character)



POSITIVE MOOD WORDS

amused	flirty	refreshed
awed	giddy	rejuvenated
bouncy	grateful	relaxed
calm	harmonious	relieved
cheerful	hopeful	satiated
chipper	hyper	satisfied
confident	idyllic	sentimental
contemplative	joyous	silly
content	jubilant	surprised
determined	liberating	sympathetic
dignified	light-hearted	thankful
dreamy	loving	thoughtful
ecstatic	mellow	touched
empowered	nostalgic	trustful
energetic	optimistic	vivacious
enlightened	passionate	warm
enthralled	peaceful	welcoming
excited	playful	
exhilarated	pleased	

mood = emotional effect that the devised drama creates for the audience

NEGATIVE MOOD WORDS

aggravated	fatalistic	nervous
annoyed	foreboding	nightmarish
anxious	frustrated	numb
apathetic	futile	overwhelmed
apprehensive	gloomy	painful
barren	grumpy	pensive
brooding	haunting	pessimistic
cold	heartbroken	predatory
confining	hopeless	rejected
confused	hostile	restless
cranky	indifferent	scared
crushed	infuriated	serious
cynical	insidious	sick
depressed	intimidated	somber
desolate	irate	stressed
disappointed	irritated	suspenseful
discontented	jealous	tense
distressed	lethargic	terrifying
drained	lonely	threatening
dreary	melancholic	uncomfortable
embarrassed	merciless	vengeful
enraged	moody	violent
envious	morose	worried
exhausted	nauseated	

mood = emotional effect that the devised drama creates for the audience

You have 35 minutes to answer each question. Time yourself and try to stick to it.

Practice Questions

READY
STEADY
go!

You should now be ready to answer some section B questions

Remember to use **CUE** when reading the question

Plan your answer briefly before starting

Use **WHAT HOW WHY** for each paragraph then **EA**

You are advised to spend about 35 minutes on this section.

You must answer this question referring to a different performance text than you have studied for Section A.

Evaluate how the design aspects within the live performance impacted you as an audience member.

Evaluate how style used in the live theatre production you watched impacted you as an audience member.

Evaluate a key scene of the live production you watched and its impact on you as an audience member.

Evaluate the use of semiotics in the live production you watched and their impact it had on you as an audience member.

Evaluate how an actor's vocal and physical skills in the live theatre production you watched impacted you as an audience member.



When using the grid:

- **To determine the level** - start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer.
- **To determine the mark within the level** - consider whether the response consistently meets the criteria for the level, and/or could be described as closer to the level above or below.

AO3 Assessment Grid	
Level 5: 9 - 10 marks AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of specialist drama and theatre terminology will be accomplished and highly developed and will be integrated throughout the response. • There will be an accomplished and highly developed understanding of how meaning is communicated to an audience in a live performance. <p><i>There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant and logically structured</i></p>
Level 4: 7 - 8 marks AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of specialist drama and theatre terminology will be very clear and used confidently throughout much of the response. • There will be a very clear and developed understanding of how meaning is communicated to an audience in a live performance. <p><i>There is a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and relevant.</i></p>
Level 3: 5 - 6 marks AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of specialist drama and theatre terminology will be competent and often used clearly in the response. • There will be competent understanding of how meaning is communicated to an audience in a live performance. <p><i>There is a line of reasoning presented which is mostly relevant and which has some structure.</i></p>
Level 2: 3 - 4 marks AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of specialist drama and theatre terminology will be basic and used in some of the response. • There will be a basic understanding of how meaning is communicated to an audience in a live performance. <p><i>There is a line of reasoning which has some relevance and which is presented with limited structure.</i></p>
Level 1: 1 - 2 marks AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of specialist drama and theatre terminology will be limited and used intermittently or incorrectly in the response. • Limited understanding of how meaning is communicated to an audience in a live performance. <p><i>The information is communicated in a basic/unstructured way.</i></p>
0 marks	No response worth of credit.



When using the grid:

- **To determine the level** - start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer.
- **To determine the mark within the level** - consider whether the response consistently meets the criteria for the level, and/or could be described as closer to the level above or below.

A04 Assessment Grid

Level 5: 17 - 20 marks AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accomplished evaluation of how successfully the artistic intention was communicated in performance. • Accomplished understanding of the impact of the artistic intention on them as an audience member is evident. • Effective examples used will be clearly supported, explored and relevant to the performance seen, not dependent on the script. • Very detailed reference will be made to the impact of theatrical element(s) used to communicate the artistic intention in the production. • Accomplished in depth discussion of the impact of the artistic intention and interpretation of themes and meanings for the audience.
Level 4: 13 - 16 marks AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very clear evaluation of how successfully the artistic intention was communicated in performance. • Very clear understanding of the impact of the artistic intention on them as an audience member is evident. • Most examples used will be supported, explored and relevant to the performance seen, not dependent on the script. • Very clear reference will be made to the impact of theatrical element(s) used to communicate the artistic intention in the production. • Very clear in depth discussion of the impact of the artistic intention and interpretation of themes and meanings for the audience
Level 3: 9 - 12 marks AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses are likely to be variable in presenting aspects of the artistic intention. • Some clear evaluation of how successfully the artistic intention was communicated in performance. • Some clear understanding of the impact of the artistic intention on them as an audience member is evident. • Some examples used will be supported, explored and relevant to the performance seen, not dependent on the script. • Some clear reference will be made to the impact of theatrical element(s) used to communicate the artistic intention in the production. • Some clear discussion of the impact of the artistic intention and interpretation of themes and meanings for the audience.
Level 2: 5 - 8 marks AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses will present basic opinions on the impacts of the artistic intention in the production. • Responses are likely to be mainly descriptive. • A basic understanding of the impact of the artistic intention on them as an audience member is evident. • Basic examples in support of comments are likely to be given, or may focus on only one or two aspects in some detail. • Examples may lack detail specific to the performance seen; the beginning of a sound but incomplete answer may fit this mark level • There may be some basic links made between the artistic vision and the audience's response.
Level 1: 1 - 4 marks AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses are likely to be limited and undeveloped • Responses are likely to be descriptive or may be incomplete, including those not relevant to the question. • Limited or ineffective examples which may not be specific to the performance seen. • There may be limited or no reference to the impact on the audience.
0 marks	No response worth of credit.

