

IGCSE DRAMA (0411) Frequently Asked Questions

We would like to introduce IGCSE Drama 0411, what needs to be in place in the school?

There are no special technical requirements but the Centre must have an adequate performing space. As the coursework is assessed purely by video/DVD there must be arrangements for a professional standard recording of selected work to take place. These arrangements must be available during the course, not just at the end. The recording will have to be of sufficient standard to show the performances clearly and in detail. If the video/DVD is of poor quality it may affect the moderation of the Centre's marks.

What training is necessary for teachers running this programme, especially in terms of coursework and moderation of coursework?

The Centre marks the compulsory coursework component. It **must** therefore have a teacher experienced in teaching Drama at this level, preferably with experience of delivering and assessing IGCSE. All teachers must first be accredited by CIE to mark the coursework component. Accreditation will only be given to teachers who satisfy CIE's requirements: to meet these requirements, CIE offers schools in-service training in assessment at courses held at intervals in Cambridge and elsewhere and also via Coursework Training Handbooks.

Is there a Coursework Training Handbook for Drama?

Yes, there is a pack which contains a Coursework Training Handbook DVD and a Standards CD-ROM. The DVD and CD-ROM have been produced to allow both experienced and new teachers to familiarise themselves with the assessment requirements of the IGCSE Drama (0411) syllabus. Please refer to the CIE Publications catalogue for details.

Must I provide written evidence to CIE that I am competent to set and mark the coursework?

Yes. Teachers must hold a certificate or letter of accreditation from CIE. The accreditation can be obtained by successful completion of the IGCSE Drama Coursework Training Handbook. Teachers who already have experience in Centre-based assessment may apply to CIE to be accredited without such training by submitting their CV, but such exemption is not given automatically.

What is the required length of each piece of coursework?

Each candidate must take part in **two** group pieces and **one** individual piece. Each group piece should last no longer than 15 minutes and must allow each candidate broadly equal exposure. Each group should be between 2 and 6 candidates. Each individual piece should last no longer than 5 minutes.

Should I supply recorded evidence of planning and evaluation discussions and rehearsals as well as a performance and post performance evaluation?

No, the above evidence is all that is required.

Are written evaluations of each element of coursework required?

No, these are not required.

Are there any rules as to what texts I can choose for my candidates to perform in their coursework?

Yes, the texts must be published plays intended for performance on the stage. The dialogue must be in English (although translations are acceptable if the original is in a different language). If a published play that you have chosen is unlikely to be available in the UK, a copy must be enclosed with the video or DVD sent for moderation.

Candidates must **not** perform screen plays, adaptations of novels or dramatised poems.

Is there a list of repertoire available?

We do not provide a list of repertoire as our Centres are likely to have a wide range of views of what suits their candidates, but Centres are welcome to ask if specific choices are suitable.

Can students use the pre-release material for any of their coursework pieces?

No.

Please can you give an explanation of the following dramatic techniques; Forum theatre, physical theatre, satire, musical satire, entertainment and comedy?

These terms apply to both group and individual devised pieces. They are options – so steer clear of those that you are not familiar with! Physical Theatre and Forum Theatre are associated with particular practitioners and their body of work; image is a sort of puppet theatre; these are quite specialised niche genres, and you are either familiar with them or not! Any of the text books in the syllabus bibliography give an introduction and starting points for these.

The other options are somewhat broader and more general – the examiners are happy to allow interpretations of these to be quite flexible and there should be opportunities here for all candidates to show what they can do.

Forum Theatre – a type of theatre associated with the work of Boal in South America. The audience assesses methods of improving their situation through dramatic means.

Physical Theatre – a type of theatre associated with Stephen Berkoff. Emphasises the physicality of the work and crosses the boundaries between drama and dance.

Piece of satire – satire is a form of comedy that often takes an incisive approach to commenting on situations in order to ridicule.

Musical Theatre – plays with music, often associated with Broadway, Hollywood or the West End.

Entertainment – drama that seeks to engage in a light-hearted manner, probably not dealing with issues in an in-depth way

Comedy – Work that seeks to illicit laughter from the audience through timing, exaggeration and bawdy comment.

If students use Forum Theatre as a form and involve the audience are they still restricted to 15 minutes only for their Group piece?

Yes, they are restricted to the 15 minutes regardless of what form they choose to undertake.

The nature of Forum Theatre, whilst an acceptable dramatic style of working, will need to be adapted to fit the requirements of the examination.

Who is the best practitioner to use for Physical Theatre?

The genre of Physical Theatre incorporates elements of Drama and Dance. Within Drama, Steven Berkoff's work encompasses an approach to physicality that represents the genre. However, since Berkoff's use of language can be extremely gritty – as befits this genre – care should be taken in selecting extracts to ensure that the language is appropriate to the age and outlook of the candidates.

What is meant by style? Does it refer to genre e.g. comedy, melodrama, tragedy or is it about techniques they use such as drama, dance etc?

Dramatic style would certainly include the genre such as comedy and melodrama. In addition candidates could give examples of tone, for example a *black* comedy.

What does the syllabus mean by 'physicality'?

The term 'physicality' refers to an approach to Drama that is distinct from English Literature.

We are not looking at text on paper; it needs to be brought to life. It also refers to the way in which actors make a role their own: a character needs to be physicalised (à la Stanislavski).

One of the problems that IGCSE candidates often have is how to bring to life a character in a way that goes beyond reciting the lines. For a part to live, it needs to be physicalised.

How do you portray time?

This depends on the style of the piece. If the extract is in a Naturalistic style, the movement of time at a faster pace than the action is extremely difficult to achieve. However, in the episodic style associated with Bertolt Brecht, time can be moved forward or backwards through back projection, narration, songs, the changing of costume or simple third-person address of the audience.

How can an actor create the mood or atmosphere of a speech or passage?

In preparing a piece of repertoire, it is essential that each actor takes care to go beyond simply learning lines and saying them. Many IGCSE candidates have the idea that so long as they are fluent in saying their lines they will get a good mark. The meaning of what is being said must be central to the learning of the lines and the mood should be created through careful pacing, voice control, contrast and dynamics.

How should an actor approach performing individual characters?

There needs to be a very clear understanding of the role of the character within the drama. This should involve a consideration of age, motivation, relationships, vocal tone and accent. The context of the drama and the relationship with the other characters is obviously a vital aspect of this.

For the individual practical work, should the candidate look at the camera or past it, if the piece is a monologue?

When videoing a monologue, it is important that the candidate looks wherever he/she would normally look. This is not TV drama and there is no need to deliver the piece to camera.

Is it possible to send coursework which has other actors present who are not being assessed for IGCSE?

This would be allowed in some cases but the non-assessed actors should not outnumber those being assessed. Instances where additional performers might be allowed include a group piece where a minor part needs to be filled, or an individual piece where the candidate requires a sleeping partner. However, a school production of a play, for example, where the candidates being assessed form part of a larger cast would **not** be acceptable. The piece must be performed specifically for the purposes of IGCSE Drama coursework.

Are students able to perform an extract from a musical for their group piece of repertoire?

Yes. However, music and songs should not dominate the piece to the extent that it is impossible to assess each candidate on their acting skills as opposed to their musical skills.

For the marking of coursework, how much of the grade is given for the rehearsal period?

There is no specific importance given to the rehearsal period. However, Objective A refers to the interpretation of a text and Objective B to the devising of material. It is likely that the assessment of these will be through process and product, although there is no specific split envisaged between the two. The evidence should be obvious through the performance in the video.

Paper 1 (Written paper)

Is there a sample paper for the written component?

Past question papers and pre-release material are available on the Teacher Support website although in some cases copyright restrictions may prevent publication of the pre-release material.

Some of the questions on the written paper ask about the structure of the pieces that candidates have devised. What do you mean by 'structure'?

The way in which the parts of the piece are put together. For example, a piece may have a tripartite structure ABA where the opening and conclusion are similar but the middle is a contrast.

What sort of length is required for the 25 mark question on the written paper?

It is impossible to say how long the answer should be. Different candidates write at different speeds in examination conditions. While some candidates will struggle to write one side of A4 in 30 minutes, others will produce two sides in that time. The crucial thing is that they get to the point and do not deviate from the important points about the performance.

When will I receive the pre-release material?

The pre-release material is despatched to Centres in the December preceding the written examination. Only Centres who have submitted their provisional entry information to CIE will be eligible to receive the pre-release material.

Regarding the individually devised work on the stimuli, may the students write a monologue, or should the piece involve more than one character?

It does not matter whether there is one group, several groups, one individual or several individuals. Of course, it is better if the work is undertaken as a group as this will enable the candidates to discuss their ideas when they are making up the piece. Since they will be working in groups for the text-based work, it is best if they continue working in groups for the drama devised from the stimuli. Individual work is not encouraged here. Writing a monologue is **not** in the spirit of the activity.

Must this piece of drama be complete in itself, or could it be a 5-minute part of a longer piece?

The piece of drama must be complete in itself. There is no point in creating a section of a longer piece since the rest of it would have no impact on the assessment. Furthermore, the piece **must** be specifically created for the purpose of the assessment and based on the stimuli. It would not be acceptable to take an extract from a piece devised for any other purpose.