

## THEATRE

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 – 11	12 – 22	23 – 36	37 – 50	51 – 62	63 – 75	76 – 100

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 – 9	10 – 18	19 – 29	30 – 42	43 – 56	57 – 69	70 – 100

### Independent Project Portfolio

#### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 – 6	7 – 13	14 – 19	20 – 26	27 – 32	33 – 39	40 – 50

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 14	15 – 19	20 – 24	25 – 29	30 – 40

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of SL projects increased again this session, with many based on solid theatrical research; though not a requirement at SL, this practice improved the quality and authenticity of the portfolios almost without exception. Unfortunately, some candidates are still treating the

SL option as a 'watered down' version of the HL options rather than the demonstration of skill in an area of theatre that it represents.

This session there was a surprising increase in the number of Option B projects at HL; candidates are mostly opting to lead workshops for this option. What is particularly pleasing is the number of workshops that were approached with a sense of exploration or specifically with the intent to understand more about a theatre practice or practices. More candidates this session chose to experiment with more than one practice, particularly with the intent of learning or understanding something new – this is to be commended and should be encouraged for future candidates. Candidates should be reminded that a workshop is not the only possibility for Option B; candidates may also approach a practice or practices with the same explorative nature as with a workshop, but in the contribution towards a production or performance.

Unfortunately there were still a small number of projects based in disciplines other than theatre such as dance, television, film, physical education, and arts and crafts – these are not suitable areas for the independent project.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### **Criterion A – Preparation**

This criterion was for the most part the strongest in terms of meeting the assessment criteria descriptors; the majority of candidates showed evidence of independence and perseverance to some extent, even if lacking in skill development, reflection or a theoretical underpinning at HL. It was evident in some of the work sampled, however, that teachers are still facilitating the projects; specifically, the choice or role and guidance throughout the process as well as sources for the theoretical underpinning at HL.

### **Criterion B – Process**

The main area of concern was in relation to evidence of skill development. Candidates are still choosing areas without necessarily understanding the related skill (writing a play but not dealing specifically with the process or skills of writing for theatre or designing costumes with no understanding of the skills or areas necessary to design such as colour, texture, use of material etc). The problem appears to stem from the candidates being largely unaware of the skill-base associated with the particular role or area of theatre. Candidates should be reminded that it is part of their responsibility to demonstrate evidence of skill development under this criterion. The starting point therefore in meeting this requirement should be to identify and then understand the skill or skills associated with the particular role or area of theatre chosen.

### **Criterion C – Reflection**

This criterion seems to improve slightly with each session. Reflection is appearing more consistently throughout portfolios rather than in one section. The most successful candidates showed evidence of reflection, often connected to skill development and critical analysis of the level of learning and development during each stage of the creative process. The less successful candidates discussed mainly their feelings, how classmates missed rehearsals, or superficially attempted to interpret audience response.

**Criterion D – Presentation**

The requirements in terms of subject matter and format were solid for the most part. Most candidates kept under the word limit (2000 words at SL or 3000 words at HL). Portfolios that went over the word limit did not score higher than a 4 on this criterion due to the wording in the assessment descriptors. Sources were attributed more consistently and to a better standard and the range and quality of sources improved this session. Candidates should be aware that in the case that a source is not attributed properly (within the body of the work, footnotes or bibliography) a 4 is the highest mark possible for this criterion. Where there is no acknowledgement of sources this will be investigated by the IB as suspected malpractice. Under the requirements for format, the subject guide indicates that the portfolio should be sectioned; this does not mean that the sections must be based on the headings Preparation, Action and Reflection. Though candidates are entitled to do this and there is no direct penalty, there are problems with such a choice, namely that reflection and quite often research and its impact are limited to one section. These limitations will prevent candidates from reaching the upper bands of the assessment criteria.

**Criterion E – Application of research and practice (higher level only)**

Generally speaking there was a more consistent and better standard of theatrically-based research which underpinned the projects at HL; although strangely, more candidates chose to use research or work studied during the course as their theoretical underpinning. Candidates can use work from the course as a starting point or inspiration for the theoretical underpinning, but should quickly branch into a new and independent area on which to base the research for the project at HL. A relatively small number of centres are still neglecting the theoretical underpinning at HL; centres must treat this requirement very seriously as the theoretical underpinning is the basis for the project at HL. Failure to establish such an underpinning will limit a candidate's success in all criteria. Please note that the theoretical underpinning for the project must be theatrically based. Historical, sociological, cultural, psychological research etc may be applied, but may not represent the only research that influences the project at HL. In these instances the candidate failed to meet the requirements of the task.

**Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates**

In past subject reports, the advice of structuring mock independent projects and portfolios into the course has been made and remains a recommendation for the teaching of future candidates. Candidates should have experience with similar type projects and portfolios prior to the IPP being approached and assessed. In addition, it is recommended to set up planning templates for candidates leading into projects throughout the course. Such progression-based templates would allow candidates to plan and outline the necessary stages of the project. For HL, this could begin with an area of theatrically based research, and then for both HL and SL, a possible project and role, and finally an outline of the skills related to the role or area chosen. This last stage is particularly important to the template for the reasons already addressed under criterion B. If candidates gain experience with this type of a template for projects during the course such practice will be familiar when approaching the independent project.

## Further comments

Further to the earlier comment regarding independence, it is clear that some centres are encouraging new and unique methods to demonstrate independence and skill development based on the range and types of projects represented, while other centres seem to be satisfied with the school play or musical 'housing' all candidates' projects at the centre. Though there is nothing wrong with this choice and some very good portfolios have come as a result, too often these projects represent a lack of independence on the part of the candidates and are therefore not in the spirit of the independent project. Centres that encourage candidates to individually take risks and delve into uncharted areas should be commended, not only for honouring the nature of the task, but for providing candidates with what was often described as the most valuable learning experience of the Diploma Programme.

## Practical Performance Proposal

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 8	9 – 12	13 – 15	16 – 19	20 – 25

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 – 1	2 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 8	9 – 13	14 – 17	18 – 25

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The proposals submitted offered examples of a wide range of levels of SL and HL work. The better examples conveyed a genuine response to the stimulus, followed by a depiction of the exploratory journey from stimulus to vision and culminating in a developed outline of an onstage theatrical event. The stronger HL exemplars further showed an integrated understanding of theory/research throughout the proposal backed by examples of 'practical effects' brought about in their performance by application of the theory/research.

Although the majority of HL and SL candidates had a grasp of the requirements of the task, it was clear that a significant minority had not been informed of the process or practiced completing a practical performance proposal. This lack of exposure to the intricacies of the assessment task led to work of a level not suitable for presentation.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Section 1 – Pitch

In the more accomplished proposals, the section 1 pitch presented an opening gambit which set the scene for an envisioned piece of theatre in an impassioned and dynamic fashion. However, more often than not this pitch summarised the plot in a dry manner with little or no reference to space, style or animation.

### Section 2 – Supporting materials

An encouraging trend, particularly in the HL proposals, was the good use of theatre terminology suggesting an experience of practical work related to performance production. An important phrase that occurs in the assessment criteria is ‘the stimulus’ in relation to ‘imaginative response’ and ‘genuine response’. Certain proposals jumped straight from stimulus to product with no comment on how the imitation, influence or inspiration of ‘the stimulus’ influenced this process of creativity. These proposals did not do well against the criteria. Those proposals which spent time on showing how the stimulus was explored for ‘dramatic potential’ leading to clear onstage action descriptions and staging choice ideas scored well against the criteria.

When a proposal offered a concept and applied this to style choices rather than linking to narrative descriptions, the proposal scored highly. Some pieces of work spent too much time on the devising of literary aspects such as character or plot development without then developing these to onstage action. In this case, credit was given for the exploration of stimulus whereas the better examples followed the literary work through to practical onstage application. This was often conveyed through detailed, annotated storyboards. Another aspect of staging which distinguished the better examples of work was attention to how the staging process ensued ie how scene or set changes were brought about.

Many of the weaker proposals merely offered a list of production elements and superficially described how they worked in a general fashion. Stronger PPPs clearly showed an understanding of the importance of the production elements in **their** performance, not only describing the element but also linking this to the concept and justifying the choice in terms of intended effect. The top band proposals not only described effects but also showed through sketches and annotations how these could be brought about through combinations of a variety of production elements.

Section 2 of the proposal is described in the subject guide as “explanatory, visual materials to illustrate the candidate’s understanding of the intended process of realization” (p28). In some proposals there is still a tendency to rely on the written word and, although not in formal essay form, to try to explain visual effects by text alone. These proposals did not do well against the criteria which ask the candidate to convey “understanding of the production elements and how they function in performance” ie seeking a broad communication of effects rather than dry descriptions.

A growing trend in the PPP is the inclusion of images downloaded from the Internet and presenting these, unannotated, as completed design ideas. A significant number of candidates included a range of such images which were not framed or contextualised in any way and which therefore were not helpful in showing either the development of the candidate’s ideas or any sense of onstage visuals or action. Though such images can clearly

be used as an inspiration or starting point for design, they do not constitute a design for a piece.

An aspect of production that is often ill considered is the use of performance space. In many proposals, a proscenium arch is chosen with little link to the performance concept or exploration of other staging possibilities which may be more appropriate.

### Section 3 – Commentary

The strongest HL proposals offered a commentary that reinforced theoretical choices already introduced in section 2 but did not repeat ideas. Section 2 requires the candidate to make artistic choices based on their own creative ideas and justify these on either a practical, an aesthetic or a symbolic basis (or indeed all three). Section 3, on the other hand, requires a candidate to show an understanding of theory/research, integrate the concepts of the theory/research with their performance concept AND offer examples of ‘practical effects’ brought about through this assimilation. For example, if Epic’s theatre *verfremdungseffekt* is being cited as a philosophical aspect then it should be clear that the candidate understands *v-effekt* in relation to Epic theatre; explains why *v-effect* is necessary in their performance and describes how it will be brought about in their performance (‘practical effect’). For ‘impacts and resonances’ it is not enough to simply state what ‘impact or resonance’ one wishes to bring about but to describe the ‘practical effects’ deemed necessary to bring these about. In essence, for section 3, the key is not just the theory but how ‘practical effects’ bring this theory into application.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The practical performance proposal is an assessment task that reflects real theatre practice and has parameters defined within the criteria and task requirements. As such interpretation and clear communication of the task requirements and criteria by the teacher is imperative to allow the candidate to successfully complete the assessment. A teacher, therefore, **should, attend a category 1 IB theatre workshop** to gain an understanding of:

- i. the requirements of the task
- ii. the interpretations of the criteria
- iii. the specific skills necessary to complete the task

Once the teacher is fully conversant with the task, s/he should ensure that there is adequate opportunity for the candidates during the course to learn and practice the skills specific to the PPP such as pitch writing, storyboarding, planning and sketching (rough and detailed), practical integration of research/theory etc.

Furthermore, in many proposals it was clear that the phrase ‘performance concept’ needed further practical exploration and clarification, as candidates often did not see any link between the performance concept identified and the style of production brought about by artistic choices.

In stronger examples, the clear transmission of onstage action was always successfully communicated through annotated and detailed storyboarding. The inclusion of the learning of storyboarding skills would, therefore, be an asset for future candidates.

From the varying range of work presented in HL section 3 – the commentary, it was clear that many candidates did not fully understand the brief of the task as often no ‘practical effects’

were identified or described although the candidate did understand the concepts involved. Classwork activities on applying concepts from the three theoretical areas described in the subject guide and exercises on how impacts and resonances can be brought about using 'practical effects' would be a positive inclusion by a teacher.

An essential part of research is the sourcing and attribution of referred to material. Although in the HL PPP no marks are deducted for lack of attribution, this should be insisted upon by the teacher at all times as failure to acknowledge sources will be investigated by the IB as suspected malpractice.

## Further Comments

Many proposals are presented in a file with the individual sheets in plastic folders. It is standard practice for examiners to annotate the work with comments upon content with reference to the marking criteria. Although it is appreciated that the candidates have taken much consideration on the appearance of the proposals, the added time needed to remove and annotate each sheet is appreciable. Candidates are, therefore, requested to not put individual sheets in plastic folders.

## Research Investigation

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 – 4	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 19	20 – 24	25 – 29	30 – 40

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 9	10 – 12	13 – 16	17 – 19	20 – 30

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The most successful candidates showed discrimination in their choice of theatre practices and had clearly taken great pains to research carefully before selecting a suitable play and research question. A personal level of interest in the practice and the play/piece of theatre was evident by the initiative and perseverance shown by the candidate in terms of the research they discovered and the range of their sources.

Less suitable work reflected a poor choice of play and theatre practice with the resulting

difficulty in creating a suitable research question. Some candidates did not select a play from the practice, as clearly stated in the guide and on the cover sheet and therefore did not fulfill the requirements of the task.

It is **important** to note that the candidates who had a clear understanding of the task (criterion B) also seemed to do well in the other criteria. A focused question led to focused research into the chosen practice (criterion A) and led to an organized, structured essay (criterion C) that addressed and answered the question (criterion B).

Several examiners have also commented on the fact that some centres seem to provide the candidates with pre-formulated questions, simply asking them to fill in the blanks eg What would the costumes for \_\_\_\_\_ look like in a traditional \_\_\_\_\_ production of \_\_\_\_\_? How would an actor perform the part of \_\_\_\_\_ in a traditional \_\_\_\_\_ production of \_\_\_\_\_?

Though this may be helpful for some candidates and may be a good exercise as preparation during the course for the research investigation, it is not appropriate as part of the culminating assessment task. It leads, in general, to shallow research without close analysis of an aspect of the practice or the play/piece of theatre; the information provided ended up being unfocused, covering too wide an aspect of the practice. The most successful research investigations were ones that really focused on a particular aspect of the practice and play/piece of theatre and were therefore play/practice specific. The candidate should create their own question based on their preliminary research into the theatre practice they have selected and the play/piece of theatre from that practice. The question **should not** be provided by the teacher.

Although many candidates demonstrated a commitment to their research investigations, a number of candidates submitted work with general and superficial information that would not really inform a production.

Some candidates misunderstood the nature of the task and submitted essays that were inappropriate and demonstrated a misunderstanding of the task. These included research investigations that were:

a) a **literary analysis** of the play/piece of theatre focusing on style and interpretation of the text. This was particularly common for candidates who chose Theatre of the Absurd or Realism as the practice.

b) an **analysis of the themes** of the play. This was particularly common for candidates who chose Theatre of the Absurd as their practice.

c) an **artistic interpretation** with candidates offering their own creative ideas and imaginative solutions for the staging, performing and design of the play/piece of theatre. This was particularly common with Theatre of Cruelty and Epic Theatre.

d) research into a practice where it is difficult to find an **appropriate** play/piece of theatre. This was particularly common with Burlesque and vaudeville where many candidates focused on the performances of particular 'stars' rather than the application of the research to a play/piece of theatre.

e) focused on the **training programmes** of particular practices (usually performer focused) as they ended up explaining how an artist develops their skills rather than on how the skills are applied to the play/piece of theatre. This was particularly common with Kathakali.



f) **guides** explaining 'how to...'. This does not encourage analysis but simply provides a set of instructions. This also has an impact on criterion C as it affects the register which ends up being informative and not analytical. This was particularly evident with Beijing Opera and Kathakali make-up.

The most successful research investigations chose a theatre practice where there were strong conventions such as Wayang Kulit.

The presentation of the research investigations was generally good, with some excellent use of visual material and a generally good standard of writing. Most candidates presented their work in the appropriate register. Visual material was sometimes included, however, that was decorative and used to illustrate or prettify the research investigation. Visual material must serve a particular purpose in terms of the response to the research question.

In the less successful investigations, a number of candidates struggled to find a discursive, investigative linguistic register in the essay. These candidates often drifted into an instructional style of writing (usually with sub-headings and bullet points) and this often led to 'how-to' research investigations.

Many candidates and teachers (who verify the word count on the cover sheet) did not take careful note of the word count requirement. This meant that candidates unnecessarily limited their success in this criterion. There were candidates who could have received a mark in the 7-8 band who effectively penalized themselves by not meeting the word count requirement, often by including quotes as part of their word count.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A - Research skills

The depth of some of the research was highly impressive with candidates using a varied and inventive range of sources and many candidates contacting practitioners or experts who work with a particular theatrical practice.

A significant number of candidates, however, simply presented the information but did not draw observations/deductions from it.

The less successful candidates often chose practices with a substantial number of sources available in print, journals, films and reviews and yet chose only internet sites for their investigation. Some used Wikipedia as a principal source thus calling into question the reliability of the research. This does not demonstrate a varied range of sources. The 'raw data' was also sometimes simply a matter of 'cut and paste' into the essay with the result that the research was not directly applied to the play/piece of theatre. Many middle range essays were descriptive and lacking in depth or analysis.

The cross-referencing of sources and the consistent support of all observations with evidence from their research also proved difficult for some candidates.

Weaker candidates only used the bibliography to attribute sources. **A bibliography is required** but observations and points that candidates have drawn from their research should also be **attributed within the body of the work** either in parenthesis, or as footnotes or endnotes. This includes images and visual material.

Candidates should be careful about including contemporary productions they have seen or researched as their main sources of information as these are often the individual interpretations or adaptations of particular artists and not authentic to the practice.

### **Criterion B - Task relevance**

The most successful candidates formulated thought-provoking questions that focused their investigation on interesting, specific aspects stimulating research that explored some new material for the candidate. These candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of the nature and purpose of their chosen aspect, a sound knowledge of the play and an applied understanding of the practice. They exercised control over the raw research to synthesize the material into an in-depth discussion of the research and its application to the play/piece of theatre.

Some candidates failed to formulate a research question according to the specific requirements. Most often this was because there was no particular aspect selected to focus the essay or because the play did not belong to the practice. The best questions helped candidates give relevant evidence and provided scope for discussion.

The area being researched needs to be formulated into a question and NOT a statement. Questions need to focus on only **one** aspect of the practice or play. An aspect is not a broad element of production (directing, performing, designing etc) but something specific and particular to the practice and the play. For example, rather than: How would a traditional Classical Greek Theatre production of *Oedipus* be directed? a better question is: How would the Chorus enter and exit the performance space in a Classical Greek Theatre production of *Oedipus*?

With regard to task relevance, most candidates were successful at choosing a theatrical practice, a play/text from the practice, and an aspect from either the text or the practice. Some candidates, however, were less successful at addressing and connecting all three requirements in the body of their investigations. Some candidates would research the practice and the aspect but almost completely neglect the action of the chosen play/text. Other candidates would engage in artistic interpretations of the play and its chosen aspect, neglecting research of the chosen theatrical practice.

Some candidates chose to compare two practices or to compare the unfamiliar practice to a practice they were familiar with. This is not the nature of the task and by focusing on two theatre practices candidates ended up being superficial and splitting the focus as well as not meeting the requirements of the task.

Formulating a research question is part of the requirements of the task. Candidates should start with a preliminary question to guide their research but they should be open to continuously reformulating this question according to their discoveries. The question, like the essay, should be redrafted until the candidate feels that the question is appropriate to the response and that the response is appropriate to the question. Pre-formulated questions created by the teacher and used systematically by every candidate in the class are risky and often led to shallow research and a misunderstanding of the aspect selected.

Some candidates focused their research into the practice (eg Theatre of the Absurd) on plays/playwrights (eg *Waiting for Godot*, Ionesco). As a result they frequently ended up focusing on literary, socio-historical and biographical research. Theatre of the Absurd pieces also tended to be focused on an examination of the themes in the play rather than the action.

There were a number of essays that had a mixture of analysis and a mixture of artistic choices. One of the biggest problems regarding this had to do with the question itself. Here are a few examples of inappropriate questions.

- How would a director direct and produce a production of Georg Kaiser's *The Raft of the Medusa* with various expressionistic, religious, and political influences?
- How does a costume designer apply a Steampunk aesthetic to the costumes of Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?

Candidates should only include what is strictly relevant to the question rather than general information regarding a practice. This is often done by the candidate to show their knowledge of the practice but the candidate often ends up being penalised for not really addressing the question.

The selection of the practice and in particular the choice of the play/piece of theatre is key to the success of the research investigation. Candidates performed best when the chosen text was not simply tacked onto a practice, but provided the focal point for their exploration and the application of the information they have researched.

Some candidates defined practices by their broad cultural context without being specific for example Native American storytelling is very broad and is the equivalent of saying European comedy. A more appropriate choice would be Navajo storytelling (rather than Native American storytelling) or Italian Commedia dell'arte (rather than European comedy).

### **Criterion C – Presentation**

Sourcing visuals and providing visuals that are clearly relevant and of quality is important. Visuals should be clear, appropriately sized so that relevant detail can be seen, well placed, annotated and in colour if colour is important to the point being addressed eg make-up.

Too many candidates are ignoring this aspect and this is affecting an otherwise strong mark.

The introduction to some research investigations is a lengthy description of historical and social background to the practice which is not necessary. Candidates should also be careful not to include a lengthy summary of the plot. Two or three sentences are adequate.

Candidates should use sub-headings sparingly as too many titles and breaks in the body of the text impede the flow and coherence of the essay.

Some candidates are presenting the research in the first half of the essay and then applying it to the play/piece of theatre in the second half. Essays that synthesised the two were more successful and flowed better.

Candidates were penalised for the inclusion of entire scripts in their appendices, as these were unnecessary and irrelevant. There should be careful selection regarding what textual and visual material is included in the appendix as candidates sometimes included irrelevant information and illustrations without any explanation as to the purpose and without any reference to it in the body of the essay.

Some candidates had difficulty in keeping to a formal essay style. The essay should be in a formal register and works best when written in the third person. Some research questions were directed at a specific artist and this affected the register and the focus. The research investigation should **not** address or be addressed to a particular practitioner as the essay

should inform the production and not only the work of one artist, for example research into the acting conventions of a particular theatre practice applied to a play from that practice would be useful not only to the actor but also to director, designer etc. The third person register makes it applicable to all artists and is most appropriate.

Research investigations were strong when the essay adopted a formal and analytical tone rather than being a piece of descriptive writing which simply describes a blow by blow account of the action of the play/piece of theatre. Essays that had an organised and focused structure, which used visuals when relevant and met the word count, were most successful.

Candidates might be reminded that research contributing to the realization of visual aspects of a theatre piece would benefit from well-chosen images/visual support.

Every essay would benefit from a conclusion as many ended abruptly without bringing together all the varied strands of the essay.

### **Criterion D (HL only) - Critique of sources**

As a whole, the majority of candidates found it difficult to critique the sources. This involves making a judgment of and an evaluation regarding the source in general, its value, reliability and status within the field. Most candidates describe the content of the source and its use to their own research but do not critique it or evaluate it.

Strengths were demonstrated in this criterion when candidates demonstrated an understanding of the sources' reliability, how the source was used, its relevance to their research and how it *could be* used generally.

Several candidates failed to write any critique and others made vague and uninformative comments. The best critiques were very thorough and incisive.

The critique of sources should be a separate part of the research investigation and not built into it in the form of a concluding paragraph.

## **Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates**

- Candidates should take greater care when completing the cover sheet to ensure that each section is filled in correctly. Candidates need to ensure **their word count is accurately reported** and that quotations have not been included as part of this word count. Some centres did not copy the second side of the research investigation cover sheet. The cover sheet should be checked by the teacher before signing.
- Emphasis needs to be put on the fact that the task is essentially NOT a creative task.
- The research question like the essay should be also drafted and redrafted and adjustments should be made as the research grows and the essay develops to ensure that the question is appropriate to the answer and vice versa.
- Candidates need access to sufficient theatre resources in order to be able to make good choices for their research investigations.
- Teachers should give their candidates clear guidance on the requirements of this task and explain how the work is assessed by drawing their attention to a careful analysis

and understanding of the assessment criteria.

- Candidates should experience doing small research projects before embarking upon this externally assessed culminating task. There should be a range of activities throughout the course that prepare the candidates and develop the appropriate skills for the task. One possibility is to engage candidates with small research projects where they have to do practical research for productions that teachers may be working on as part of their extra-curricular programme.
- Candidates could benefit from playing the role of the examiner and assessing sample material as a way of getting a good grasp of the criteria and the requirements of the research investigation.
- The candidates need to be clear that they are not making artistic choices, but that they are instead selecting and discussing information that will **inform** a production.
- Future candidates need guidance on how to integrate quotes and properly attribute sources. Theatre teachers cannot assume that candidates know how to do this from writing in other Diploma Programme subjects. It is important to address this in relation to the research investigation. They should be shown how to attribute sources within the body of the work and how to reference, footnote, write a bibliography etc.
- Teachers should give HL candidates more guidance and practice regarding how to evaluate and critique a source and its usefulness: this should include an objective description of the source, with an analysis of reliability and general usefulness of the source, the way it's written, the way information is communicated etc., as well as a subjective comment where they describe how useful the source was for their personal research.
- Skills are required in writing a structured essay and how to present a coherent argument. Special attention should be paid to a register which is appropriate to a formal essay style.
- Teachers should guide candidates through preliminary research during the course that would help them to understand how to identify a play/theatre piece that belongs to the practice.
- Candidates need guidance in how to discover and access a range of sources. Accessing Wikipedia and the subsequent external links on the same web page will not lead to a successful body of research.

## Theatre Performance & Production Presentation

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 16	17 – 21	22 – 25	26 – 30	31 – 40

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 10	11 – 14	15 – 18	19 – 22	23 – 30

There is evidence in the work this year that the candidates are finally coming to terms with the demands of this assessment task. There are however some points that need to be covered since they relate to procedures.

### Recommendations for IB procedures

- The work should be recorded on CDs and the CDs should be tested before being sent on to the moderating examiner. The incidence of faulty recordings continues to frustrate all examiners. DVDs and cassettes are not appropriate.
- The images need to be reproduced on hard copies of A4, one image per sheet. No collages, no double images, one image per A4 sheet.
- The images need to be referenced and should also be numbered for ease of reference.
- The new 6/T form should be used by all centres; some are still using the old one.
- A number of centres did not submit a 6/IAT form.
- Reference to the images in the course of the TPPP (5-7 at SL, 7-10 at HL) is an obligatory part of the assessment task.
- It is absolutely mandated that candidates be found a quiet place to complete this task. The cacophony of sounds too many candidates have to find their way through as they struggle to present is scandalous.

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a definite improvement in the use of the recommended time with many more candidates speaking for the full 30 minutes. When candidates used images in their presentation (and the majority thankfully did so) they varied greatly in how they chose to do so. The use of images for illustrative purposes is absolutely justifiable but tends to limit the

potential of the medium. Some candidates were more adventurous looking to more comprehensively “release” the image as symbol or metaphor or even present it as something more enigmatic, a talking point, and an ambiguous motif that could be referred to in a number of different ways. Exploration of word and image together often created a stimulating presentation. Failure to use any images at all frequently led to a less engaging presentation.

The tendency to “play safe” and focus on familiar practices and traditions and to support this by research into western theories of performance was a dominating feature of the work. The notion that theatre somehow defines itself as a comparison between Brecht and Stanislavski both narrows the time frame to less than a century and conditions notions of performance around episode or plot and different forms of realism. If candidates persist in confining themselves to the general tenets of a few theorists with some wider reference to familiar traditions they will simply be saying what hundreds of their fellow candidates are saying. They are not exploring they are merely passing through hoops and their knowledge of theatre is constrained by this.

A way out of this is to look for familiar theories being played out in older forms of theatre or more contemporary performance. The difficulties candidates have with criterion B and, in the case of HL candidates with criterion D are explained by a lack of interest in the act of exploration and a hapless dependence on the well worn path. This is a course that requires the candidate to challenge the easy assumptions of his/her sensibility. Hamlet’s line to Horatio in Act 5 where after the delivery of the challenge by Osric he abjures his friend to give a welcome to the new, strange, provocative, or dangerous is relevant here: “therefore as a stranger give it welcome”. Too few candidates do this.

For those who do the first step is to discover in their work unlikely links and correspondences by testing theory against practice through the act of doing theatre. The importance of the foundation principles in theatre in the making are often the key to providing a central experience here to reflect upon. The encounter with the unfamiliar is always enhanced by a physical rather than a merely intellectual exchange. Too many candidates think they know because they can intellectualize but knowing in the theatrical sense is about concrete physical experience and the true test of any idea lies in an active exploration of it on stage in front of an audience.

One aspect of the work that needs urgent review is the exposure a candidate is given to performance work in the theatre, or in the absence of this, or as a compliment to it, the habit of watching peers on stage. Too many candidates do not take on the role of audience and there has been a falling off in this important aspect of the course. Again there may be cultural explanations for this or simple problems in the physical location of a centre, far from theatre, far from a big city. The solution to this is to use the work of the group as a focus for the kind of action research that evaluates performance in relation to the developing work of the onlooker. A candidate watches another candidate and learns as much about his own performance levels by watching others as may be understood through evaluating his/her own performance.

The approach to the task is always a controversial matter since there is one school of thought (supported by the rubric of the task in the subject guide) which argues that the most effective way of doing this exercise is to base the presentation on key theatrical experiences, perhaps two, thereby achieving the important aim of speaking in specific detail about these experiences and using them as a basis for further discussion that may embrace other key moments in the course. This approach is often highly successful and is open to a number of

variations within the basic methodology. Another is to focus on a particular approach to theatre work: masks is a popular example of this kind of performance convention which can be a central focal point for the presentation in a number of ways, as performance, as world theatre, as a metaphor for the art, as a basis for clowning and the theory of Le Coq. Again there are many tremendous examples of success in this more thematic approach. The requirement that is not negotiable in the presentation is that the candidate covers the requisite areas in criterion A, establishes active relationships within the work to fulfil criterion B, reflects on the areas and their relationship to each other and the subject of the candidate's own work in criterion C and ensures (in relation to HL candidates) that this reflection is fuelled by appropriate research that is not only intellectually encountered but practically applied in criterion D. The images either play at the edges of the presentation or are required to play a more central role in the work of those who have fully appreciated what the assessment task is designed to elicit from the candidate.

One method that usually betrays a less than analytical approach to the course is the choice of narrative as a methodology for the presentation. Here the candidate tells the story of the two year course, often highlighting specific areas but rarely tarrying long enough to pursue the specific detail that can transform narrative into a more critically aware analysis. It is rare that the act of "telling the course" achieves very much, no matter how frenzied the telling and how copious the content. Some candidates begin their presentations at a gallop and never let up but seem unable to distinguish between what is essential, what requires further emphasis or scrutiny and what is hardly relevant. The ability to select and edit, apportion the requisite balance in the perception of things, as well as an instinct for the telling link ,or the provocative comment that may reveal a new way of seeing a familiar picture, all these qualities of mind and eye are being assessed in the presentation.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A

The fundamental issue here is that candidates understand the difference between analytical and narrative discourse. The criterion is entitled "analysis" which argues for the importance of actually engaging with this skill. The TPPP actually starts at this point in the analysis of different kinds of theatre from different world traditions and practices, in the analysis of theatrical performance either seen at the theatre or scrutinized through the work of peers. The more candidates accept the challenge of variety in their explorations the evidence is that they will have more substance to what they analyze. Too often candidates try to analyze through a reliance on the general rather than the specific and a faith in the narrative of their experiences seen through the lenses of subjective perception rather than objective thought. Candidates who do well in this criterion have explored world theatre, are not content with merely "knowing" they have put that knowing to the test through practical work. They have not visited the theatre for a few hours of relaxation but have taken a forensic mind to the theatre and applied it to the play under consideration. They have thought and reflected on the pattern of their experience and found a place for each new insight in that pattern.

### Criterion B

Synthesis, a difficult word for many, relatedness, the association of one thing and another in a creative relationship, the understanding that a theatrical element like a mask can be



employed for comedy, for tragedy, for disguise and subterfuge, it can stimulate pathos in an audience or alienation. It can do many things. The multiplication of effects, the similarity and difference between things, the relationships that exist in theatrical experience combine to form the challenge of this word: synthesis. In a purely mechanical sense we expect the composite art that is theatre to unify in performance. Candidates make much play in making theatre and performing theatre and through this they are able to see how the work of a light designer illuminates the work of an actor. This kind of synthesis is important and is generally well done. The deeper synthesis between varieties of tradition and practice is more rarely noticed. Candidates too often highlight different practice to point out differences rather than taking a deeper look at tensions between practices, the points which intersect as well as the points which diverge, the tension pulling one practice away from another while still inclining to it.

### **Criterion C**

Reflection is often undervalued by what the candidate decides to reflect on and the quality of that reflection. The content of the TPPP is a question of selection and editing from the course. The candidate should not reflect on the feelings generated by the work but on the work itself, on the pattern that candidates need to see evolving as they cover the course. After the first year covering making and exploring world theatre and looking at and performing theatre they should be ready to consider a wealth of material. The act of consideration, of forming the pattern, of testing the relationships between different aspects of the work will signify the quality of their reflection. The successful candidates reflect on this process usually looking very closely at a number of key events. The more challenged candidates tell their stories about the course but with little sense of focus, a wide sweep of narrative where reflection is reduced to enumeration of experience. The use of images can really help here, they can be used as milestones but perhaps it is more effective to use them as visual cues for the pattern, for the synthesis of the work, for its analysis, for the research outcome thereby tying them into a constructive relationship to the criteria. Too often images do not form part of the structure of the TPPP and as powerful stimuli for reflection they most definitely should.

### **Criterion D**

The candidate needs to be explicit when research is mentioned in the TPPP. Too often high marks are awarded for this criterion by the teacher and it is difficult to find evidence to support this assessment in the presentation. The candidate at Higher Level needs to be an explorer but also needs to accept that the research into theatre no matter how exciting in itself as an academic exercise can only be validated through practical application. The marriage of theories, ideas, even ideologies of theatre to a sustained application in concrete terms on stage or in workshop is what the candidate needs to do and furthermore the explicit description of this process needs to be in the TPPP.

## **Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates**

The teacher should pay close attention to the foundation areas: theatre in the world, theatre in the making and theatre in performance. The physical experience of doing and making theatre under these guiding frameworks will provide the candidates with the basic skills across a variety of roles that they certainly will need as they approach the assessment task.

The importance of establishing a holistic view of different practices by understanding their relationship to the subject cannot be underestimated. This broader view of the position of

things alternates throughout the course with the candidate's narrower focus on the work he or she directly experiences. Synthesis must be in the approach to the teaching and reception of the subject, it cannot be an artificial add-on for the purposes of the assessment task, nor can research.

Theatrical productions and the work of peers need to be assimilated to the work of the candidate, or better the candidate needs to ensure that any performance that is becomes part of a larger pattern developing a sensibility.

The sudden introduction of a pedagogy associated with the visual aspects of theatre as the candidate prepares the assessment task should not happen. The visual needs incorporation into the course from the start since theatre is a visual and spoken art. To expect the candidates to have the visual awareness and sophistication to be able to make a success of pairing image to complicated analytical discourse without practice is absurd. Just how hapless some candidates are when attempting to incorporate image to words demonstrates how difficult that task can be.

Reflection needs to be substantiated by examples, it needs to be specific, and it should bring all the other criteria into play. In the case of HL candidates, the uses of research and the findings deriving from practical application should be an explicit part of the candidate's reflection. It is sometimes difficult for the moderating examiners to know when a candidate is quoting "research" findings unless this is explicitly stated along with the sources of that research.

Do not make token reference to production elements, too often candidates do this as an afterthought and generalize in a meaningless manner about design: sound, lighting, costume, set, props. If this is worth doing it is worth doing properly. The moderating examiner expects skills to be pursued through meaningful action not general commentary. It is worth bearing in mind that many world traditions and practices have unique design approaches as well as acting styles.