

THEATRE

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

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

Standard level

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

Independent Project Portfolio

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-6	7-13	14-19	20-26	27-32	33-39	40-50

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-5	6-10	11-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-40

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Generally, this session produced the most sophisticated work since the introduction of the current course; particularly, in reference to the quality and depth of research, which underpins much work at standard level, as well as a clearer understanding of the options at higher level and the importance of the theoretical underpinning. For a second consecutive year, more candidates attempted option B projects, with many exploring more than one theatre practice. Again, it is worth noting the focus of option B project is an exploration of theatre practice/s and that the exploration may lead to a performance but does not have to. The most

successful projects at standard level were those where the candidate had chosen a clear area of skill development and then conducted research into the area with the intent of practically developing the related skills. Unfortunately, there were still a small number of projects based in disciplines other than theatre, such as dance and film – these are not suitable areas of study for the independent project.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A – Preparation

This session produced better and more consistent evidence of independence, particularly in the choice of topics at both standard level and higher level. Students are more consistently presenting evidence of initiative and perseverance rather than simply stating that it took place, which seemed to be the case quite often in past sessions. Candidates must strive to indicate and produce evidence of independence; particularly, when working with others also involved in the independent project. The range and quality of choices candidates are making in preparation and during the projects is improving; choices are consistently relevant to not only the topic or role but also the type of skill development required.

Criterion B – Process

This criterion still remains the most difficult for candidates as too often they do not have a clear enough understanding as to the skills associated with a particular role, and therefore have difficulty demonstrating skill development. However, this area of concern improved slightly this session, particularly in the areas of directing and devising, where visuals are more consistently being used to show skill development. Candidates must submit clear evidence of skill development; this could take the form of visuals, photos, written text, for example. Whatever the form, the evidence must be explicit and clearly related to the chosen area.

Criterion C – Reflection

Reflection is clearly an area that many teachers have worked on and improved in their respective courses. Considerably less-emotive, descriptive writing has been replaced with more critical accounts of learning and development. A difficulty comes when the candidate limits reflection to one final section in the portfolio. This limits the ability to demonstrate reflection from throughout the process and throughout the portfolio; learning and development should take place throughout the project, which should be reflected in the portfolio. The most successful students were able to demonstrate skill development through written reflection, thereby meeting to some extent, the requirements of criteria B and C.

Criterion D – Presentation

The register in terms of format and subject matter was generally very solid. There are very few portfolios now being submitted that do not represent an independent project. Formal requirements were also much better as academic honesty and proper acknowledgement of sources seem to be taking a higher status in centres - the effects were evident. Candidates were much better at properly acknowledging sources, though this is an area that needs considerable attention for many schools. All influences and inspirations must be

acknowledged; this includes images, quotations, ideas and photos. It is worth noting again that even one word over the limit will result in the candidate receiving a maximum of 4 for this criterion. 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 in some of the assessment criteria.

Criterion E (HL only) – Application of research and practice

Evidence of success in this criterion was found in the portfolios of many schools this session. Candidates at higher level are consistently underpinning the project with theatrical research. In some instances this is still too heavily taken from the course and in other instances social/cultural research is still the only research applied; however there is clear improvement in this respect. The strongest candidates showed explicitly how the theoretical underpinning was not only relevant, but necessary to the development of the project. The less successful candidates are still researching multiple practices to underpin the project; in these instances there was a lack of focus and the candidates had difficulty in demonstrating the relevance to the development of the project

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

In past subject reports, the advice of structuring mock independent projects and portfolios into the course, as well as project planning templates were made and remain recommendations for the teaching of future candidates. In addition, it is recommended that aspects of the portfolio are incorporated directly into the journal writing process from the beginning of the course. So for example, when journal expectations are outlined early on the course, some of the requirements could reflect the assessment criteria for the independent project portfolio. Journals could then be assessed for evidence of independence, perseverance, initiative, skill development, learning/development and application of research. This will directly prepare students for the type of evidence needed in the independent project portfolio.

Practical Performance Proposal

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-2	3-4	5-8	9-12	13-15	16-19	20-25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Mark range: 0-1 2-2 3-4 5-8 9-13 14-17 18-25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

At higher level, there seems to be a greater understanding of the demands of the task with presented work varying according to the quality of completion of the task as opposed to misunderstandings of procedure.

At standard level, the standard of work is generally poorer with often simply a presentation of undeveloped ideas which do not reflect what one would anticipate after 4 weeks work. There are also many cases at standard level of candidates misunderstanding the task which suggests lack of informed teacher direction

Cover sheets are generally completed correctly with the occasional exceeding of the word count in Section 3 being displayed at higher level.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Section 1

There is still a tendency at both HL and SL to use the pitch to either:

- give a plot outline
- discuss themes and focus
- begin to explain a devising process

rather than

- give ideas of possible performance spaces
- offer some description of envisioned onstage action
- offer some description of design choices.

Whilst the information on both lists is important, the latter list offers points by which it is easier to envision the performance and thus, as is stated on page 28 of the guide, "present the proposal in a dynamic manner"; this was done in the better samples.

Section 2

The top band work at both higher level and standard level used this section of the work to show their creative process from stimulus to product through a mixture of visuals, brainstorming and research. The lower band work often made little or no reference to the stimulus or failed to show

how it had been explored. Justified artistic choices with a concept for performance marked the better proposals. In the middle bands, choices were often justified but a lack of overall coherence suggested no real understanding of a concept for performance. In lower band higher level/standard level work, ideas were often presented by downloaded images which had not been developed or annotated to show how these inspirations led to specific artistic choices. In the better quality work, downloaded images were clearly shown to be an early phase in the artistic choice process, which led to unique choices in design. The 'devising vs. developing a vision' debate is omnipresent in this component. "Students at HL and SL must adopt a directorial perspective" from page 27 of the guide clarifies this issue where the most important aspect of the PPP is the act of realization or mise-en-scene process. The nature of the task with a starting stimulus means some devising must take place but this should not be to the detriment of conveying mise-en-scene understanding. The better proposals find a good balance between doing enough devising to convey a vision of onstage action and explaining how they intend this to happen.

In section 2, candidates could be encouraged to present their ideas with more frequent use of appropriate theatrical formats, such as lighting plots, set plans and to do this in theatre language. This helps show the student's theatrical literacy (i.e. that they understand the format and how to effectively use it).

Candidates, both higher level and standard level, should be careful not to simply download images from the internet as personal involvement is paramount; a sketch for a costume proposal is so much more valuable than an image found online.

Some candidates produced very clear and useful storyboards and set diagrams to facilitate the communication of their ideas. Most candidates offered costume diagrams with the best giving ideas for line, colour, period and weight. However, there were many students who seemed to lack even a basic understanding of how their ideas would work in practice with scene changes, transitions and costume changes glossed over or totally ignored.

Candidates should strive to understand what each part of the assessment task demands, too often elements of section 2 are included under section 3 to the detriment of both parts

Section 3

Two major issues differentiate the middle band and top band work. These are the depth with which the theory/research is presented and clear examples of 'practical outcomes' of this research. The top band work keeps focused and by explanation shows understanding of the "wider theoretical context' (subject guide, page 27) based on their research. There is usually only one, perhaps two, areas of research introduced and these are presented in such a way as to show understanding and are then clearly integrated into the concept of the performance. Middle and lower band work often has scant evidence of research with names being mentioned without any real development of the theories and why they are being used in the proposed performance. Strong proposals in Section 3 always have clear 'practical effects' which show how the research has been applied on stage.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Effective work in the best-proposed performances (higher level and standard level) begins in the classroom.

Teachers need to ensure that the possibility is available for students to see live theatre (or, if impossible, then recordings of live productions), discuss them and acquire the tools to critique the work in an informed manner.

Once these skills have been learned, then procedure of the task and corresponding criteria *must* be explained, explored and practised. The PPP consists of real applied theatre skills where imagination and knowledge combine to create an original and feasible proposal of a performance. The communication of this vision to other artists and of the process of possible realisation lies at the heart of this task. All these areas need to be worked upon in class.

Another aspect, which needs to be highly stressed in teaching for the PPP, is the importance of recognising, sourcing and attributing all used materials i.e. "words and ideas of another person" which contribute to the creative process. Although the PPP has no reference to sourcing and attributing in the criteria, the IB policy on academic malpractice clearly states that sources of all non-original material in presented work must be cited and attributed. On the cover sheet 6/T proposal (higher level or standard level) the candidate must sign a declaration confirming acknowledgment of sources.

Further comments

In work presented, communication is imperative and so word-processed materials are clearer than handwritten efforts. Care of clarity and legibility should be taken when presenting brainstorm and other diagrammatic materials

Candidates should refrain from writing in red ink as this is used by the examiner for explanatory comments and could lead to confusion.

It is advisable to present original material. At both higher level and standard level many candidates presented photocopied work, which affected the quality and legibility of diagrams, sketches and writing thus impairing the ability of the examiner to assess the proposal.

It is strongly advised that teachers attend a theatre workshop to develop a better understanding of the mechanism of the task and share ideas with others.

Finally, as intimated last year, 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

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Mark range:	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-40
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Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-16	17-19	20-30
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The range and suitability of the work submitted

This year more candidates followed the criteria closely and as a result the quality of the work was generally of a higher quality. Most candidates had understood the task and had researched into appropriate theatre practices. Though higher level students still find critiquing a source (criterion D) challenging, the majority were able to address the relevance of the source and demonstrate how they had used it. Generally students are attributing sources but there are still whole schools that do not attribute any sources in the body of the essay, relying on the bibliography as adequate sourcing. This is not appropriate. Sources should be attributed within the essay as well as in a bibliography.

The majority of candidates chose a practice and a piece pertaining to the practice. The range of theatre practices/traditions was varied and there was clear evidence of learning and development. Those who picked a theatre practice with sufficient resources, and chose a play/piece from the practice, as well as clearly understood how to pick an aspect from the practice or play to focus the research did very well.

The students who had a clear understanding of the task (criterion B) also generally seemed to do well in the other criteria; for example, a focused question also seemed to provide great research into the chosen practice (criterion A) and also created an organized, structured essay that set out to answer the question (criterion C). The investigations that focus tightly on one aspect within even one or two scenes of a play tended to do better.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A – Research skills

The research this year seemed to be more thorough and students seemed to understand the definition of a 'range of sources' more clearly.

Students who cross-referenced and consistently attributed observations and visuals did well in this criterion. *All* sources need to be attributed and the candidate must clearly show the origin of all observations even if this means attributing every sentence.

There is an increase in range and variety of sources available and sources consulted by

candidates. Students are also much more easily able to access video performances of their chosen play/practice and this seems to really help understanding. Occasionally, however, it seems that students are relying solely on watching something on YouTube and then 'interpreting' what they have seen into their essay and passing this information off as 'research'. This needs to be corroborated by other sources.

Observations sometimes seem to appear out of nowhere and seem to be the opinion of the candidate. Observations need to be supported by research and evidence.

Criterion B – Task relevance

Most candidates showed adequate initiative and perseverance though in some instances, where there are a wide range of resources (for example, Commedia and Kabuki); candidates could go further with their explorations.

Candidates generally created appropriate research questions, though some still resort to questions which result in a simplistic 'How to . . .' focus.

Research questions were sometimes unhelpfully broad, vague or poorly focused. As a result of this, the responses were also poorly focused and candidates either did not apply their research directly to a play or didn't address the question. Successful candidates had set out a clear question, presenting relevant research and made clear, insightful observations without digressing.

Questions should avoid focusing on the treatment of particular themes in the play/piece of theatre as these lead to text analysis rather than focus on the theatre practice. For example, "Treatment of time in...".

Candidates who do not select a play from the practice are not meeting the requirements of this task. This is clearly indicated in both the guide and the cover sheet.

The exercise is not about adapting/modernizing or altering the play/piece of theatre in any way. Some candidates focus on how a piece can be adapted for a modern audience or for an audience unfamiliar with the practice. This is not the basis of the task and shows a lack of understanding of the requirements. The task must focus on research into the theatre practice and how it is applied *unchanged* to the play/piece of theatre. In some instances, students wrote the Research Investigation from the perspective of the practitioner, focusing on how they would creatively interpret, design or adapt the play/piece of theatre. For example, "I will direct this scene like...." This is not the task and it has a great impact on the register that needs to be a formal essay.

Candidates who focused on particular scenes or moments from a play/piece of theatre were most successful.

Research Investigations that deal with actor training or rehearsal techniques often fail to address and apply the research to the play as training and rehearsal technique can be very generic.

Criterion C – Presentation

The most successful Research Investigations under this criterion were formal in tone and were well planned and structured. Any visuals or text included (often in an appendix) were relevant, of good quality and well presented.

Some candidates still do not realize that the word count excludes quotations. This resulted in a large number of students not meeting the word count.

Visual material sometimes came across as decorative rather than necessary. This was particularly the case when the images were not captioned so that it was not clear why they were included.

Plot summaries of plays/pieces of theatre should be limited otherwise they are considered irrelevant material.

Criterion D – Critique of sources

Most candidates were able to judge which sources were helpful. They were also able to explain the relevance of the source to their research and how it was used. Many students, however, neglected to consider the reliability or credibility of the source.

Many critiques are also very brief and unclear. Candidates should bear in mind that this criterion represents a quarter of the total mark.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- All the requirements of the task and all information about assessment is in the subject guide. The guide should be read thoroughly and carefully. Candidates should also be made aware of the criteria, ensuring that they have understood what is required of them.
- Candidates need to make more specific links made between research, play/piece of theatre and action. This needs to be addressed in class and is best understood through practical exploration. Preliminary research tasks should be assigned throughout the course in order to introduce the student to the world of theatre itself, the presentation of research and the critiquing of sources. The teacher could even assign small projects asking the students to bring in practical research for the play that the teacher has chosen as part of their extra-curricular productions; for example, maybe a teacher is directing 'Noises Off' and every IB student must find research on farce that would be useful to those involved in the production: actor, director, or designer.
- The investigation should provide practicable information towards an authentic production of the chosen piece/play. It is important that the play/piece of theatre remains authentic to its time and place and should not be adapted.
- In some instances students do not attribute the source until the end of a paragraph. It would be better, in this instance where a lot of ideas have been taken from one particular source to begin the paragraph with 'According to....'
- Candidates should resist the temptation to explain the entire context of the theatre

practice (its cultural and historical context) unless this is relevant to the question.

- Candidates should not adapt, modernize or reinterpret the play/piece of theatre for a specific audience nor should they present their own directorial vision or stage or costume designs.
- Candidates selecting Theatre of the Absurd and Theatre of Cruelty found the task problematic and ended up doing either a literary analysis of text or a presentation of their own interpretation of the practice or play from that practice. Candidates looking at Naturalism and design ended up researching fashion and furniture of the period rather than the theatre practice. These practices should be avoided.
- Visuals must be of good quality, relevant and clearly annotated. When discussing colour, it is appropriate for the visuals to be in colour. Some students would also benefit from including visuals especially in any area of design or stagecraft.
- Dividing the essay into sections and titling these often impedes the flow of the essay and makes it fragmented. Candidates should avoid dividing the essay into too many sections.
- Candidates are advised to write the Research Investigation in the third person as this makes it easier maintain a formal, academic register.
- Take time to critique each source properly. The source should be critiqued not only described. Examine each source fully from the point of view of credibility, usefulness to the specific research, usefulness to understanding the practice in general, scope of the work, origins, limitations, comprehension, are there helpful illustrations etc.
- Candidates are advised to number the pages.
- Make sure that the word count on the coversheet is accurate and that this does not include quotes.
- Teachers are required to sign the cover pages.

Theatre Performance & Production Presentation

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-5	6-10	11-16	17-21	22-25	26-30	31-40

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-10	11-14	15-18	19-22	23-30

General comments

There are still problems with the format and documentation of the examination that bear repeating. All images should be single images on A4 sheets. Collages or more than one image are not acceptable. In line with the academic honesty guidelines set by the IB, all images need to be attributed to a source if they are not the property of the candidate. Cassettes should not be used for recording. CDs should be carefully packaged and the recording should be tested before being dispatched. The sound quality of too many was too low; candidates should present in a quiet area. Teachers must not intervene with questions unless the candidate is clearly struggling - any intervention/question should not anticipate fresh material. Candidates should not refer to any other assessment component. Candidates should strive to speak for the recommended time. Form 6/T should be filled out by the teacher in a way that indicates candidate performance against the criteria. Candidates should refer to notes; they should not read from a script.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Many examiners concurred that work in this session was generally of a higher standard at both levels. While residual issues like the tendency to narrate experiences rather than analyze them remain and while an inability to connect the demands of each of the criterion still characterize weaker candidates, it could be claimed that candidates are often successful in choosing two pivotal theatrical experiences to scrutinize and are highly communicative in their efforts to register how, with these experiences as a foundation, they have met the specific requirements of the task. Not all candidates follow the recommendations of the subject guide in this respect. Some look to sequence work from the beginning to the end of the course with the consequent dangers of falling into narrative, while others, perhaps reflecting the kind of teaching they have been subject to, deal with the presentation by moving from unit of work to unit of work with little to connect them.

The important matter of the schemes of work devised by teachers for this component must be highlighted. The candidate needs to be taught to see that the mere listing of characteristics of a tradition or the work of a theorist, while it may convey information, does not relate to the criteria. If practitioners and traditions/practices are taught as discrete items then they will be spoken of as such. Likewise, a presentation that focuses on the school production as the high point of the course may not find within it the requirements to appreciate different kinds of world theatre or find in it the diversity of performance style the course demands.

Many candidates continue to focus on the likes of Brecht, Artaud and Stanislavski are the most frequently quoted. There is a Eurocentric tendency in much of what was presented. In this respect and indeed in relation to most of what is written here a greater knowledge of the

IB learner profile might help teachers as they begin the task of facilitating work for their classes. The importance of risk taking and the crucial discovery the candidate must make in finding a voice of his/her own is fundamental to a course that is content free but entirely reliant on the explorations of the individual and the ensemble.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A – Analysis

The ability to analyze should not be confined to the most able candidates. Analysis must be encouraged by the way theatre is taught and the nature of the work will condition the response. Authentic not second-hand knowledge is important and the kinds of questions the candidate asks of the material can safeguard the generation of such knowledge. The candidates require opportunities to explore diverse kinds of theatre and this will depend on how the course is designed. The importance of establishing holistic approaches to theatrical experience is paramount since only through experiencing and analyzing the composite nature of the art can an understanding of the subject be consolidated.

Criterion B – Synthesis

The scheme of work that brings different forms of theatre into play and asks the candidate to establish connections between one kind of work and another is important. This cannot, however stay at the level of theory; too often candidates drew up comparisons between different aspects of the subject without testing these relationships in practice. Content knowledge in Theatre is not simply about language but about a combination of code and action. Successful candidates drew up some magnificent edifices of understanding drawing on tradition, plays seen by way of reinforcement, work-shopping aspects of the tradition, and establishing links with other work. Many of the better examples of this were convincingly articulated in the individual voice of the student-practitioner and made for some excellent work.

Criterion C – Reflection

This was often a strength as long as the focus was the work, not the individual. Many candidates now appear to be keeping a journal and this acts as an aide de memoire or a chart of a developing sensibility is certainly recommended. The use of images to support reflections was well done but too often the image took the candidate away from the work and some, like the inevitable spider's web, represented an artificial way of reminding the examiner of the candidate's interest in synthesis. Reading a script at a hectic pace did little for reflective passages of thought.

Criterion D – Application of research

This needs to be explicit and research sources require citation. It is important that a candidate receive credit for engaging in active research as long as this is practically applied. Too often the examiner is uncertain if what is being said is the product of analysis or research. They are not always the same thing. This was done very well when it was done but it was often

neglected. Few images were used to support dramaturgy and this is certainly an area that thoughtful candidates might like to develop.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- In devising schemes of work, the foundation areas and the demands of the criteria need to be responded to through holistic approaches to whatever aspect of the subject is being explored.
- In light of the above, the production elements and their uses are subject to considerable alteration and radical re-designing depending on the practice, theory or tradition being discussed. Too often an element like lighting is generically described as if it is never subject to the context of the style or approach.
- The more self-sufficient and independent the candidate can become in the two years of the course, the more authentic will be the TPPP. Independent learners, risk takers all welcome the “new” and find a way of talking interestingly about it.
- One of the simplest but most inspiring steps a teacher can take is to introduce the class to new ways of seeing. Trips to the theatre are essential to explore diversity in the subject; classroom practice is equally important.
- The task requires practice; trial runs at this component are encouraged since the use of time, the structuring of the presentation and the selection of suitable material and emphases require preparation.