

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

The administration of the component and use of appropriate forms were effective this session including deadlines and general procedures, which generally were met. The quality of teachers' comments appeared to be relevant, with more consistent references to criteria descriptors thereby supporting the marks awarded by teachers. There also appeared to be a more, and better, range of projects attempted at both SL and HL, including significantly more explorative-based projects, rather than the high number of performance-based projects that have appeared in years past; as such, a greater range of Option B projects were

attempted, to the point where there appeared to be a relatively equal balance between Option A and B projects. This is an indication of confidence with the assessment task as well as a willingness to take risks with projects.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

The projects represented better indications of independent work, with fewer candidates relying on the teacher or school to provide the context in which the projects happen. Candidates appeared to be engaging with the nature of the task, as in pursuing an independent interest in an area of theatre practice. Also, it was encouraging seeing explicit evidence of perseverance and initiative, rather than simply mentioning that these qualities were evident during the development of the project. In many instances, candidates demonstrated details and then evidence in the form of visuals or written accounts throughout the work, rather than just during the early stages of the portfolio.

Criterion B

Evidence of skill development still remains the most challenging aspect of the task. In fact, identification and understanding of a skill area still appears to be a missing component of the project for a significant number of candidates. Candidates must identify the skills required of the chosen role and then apply the development of those skills to the demands of the role. Some candidates are approaching projects in the role of director, designer or performer without any indication or understanding of the skills particular to that role. However, when the demands of the chosen role were identified, including its specific skill-base, and evidence was provided of how those skills were developed, candidates did extremely well overall, as this assessment criterion quite often influenced success in the project and portfolio as a whole.

Criterion C

Reflection, like other aspects of the portfolio, appears to have improved this session, as there were fewer examples of descriptive, narrative-type accounts of what the candidates did, but instead reflection on the quality of progress and learning with direct evidence in the form of visuals and written descriptions. This was particularly effective for candidates who showed sustained reflection throughout the portfolio. Candidates should also be encouraged to make connections to the course, and at very least to indicate the project's starting point or influences.

Criterion D

Requirements for this criterion were generally met, with the word limit in most instances under the limit; portfolios over the word limit could not achieve higher than a 4 for this criterion. All visuals must be properly sourced, particularly those from the Internet; failure to do so represents academic malpractice and will be forwarded to the academic panel for review. Images taken by the candidate or class members should also be acknowledged. Sources were more consistently and accurately attributed and the range of sources improved during this session – this practice is to be commended as range and quality of sources quite often

determined the depth and scope of a project. The Subject Guide indicates as a formal requirement that the portfolio must have clear headings; the Guide does not however, indicate that they must be based on the three headings: preparation, action and reflection. Not to do so in many instances meant that evidence of independence and research was limited to an opening section and that reflection was contained within a final section rather than throughout, as indicated in the assessment descriptors. It is recommended that candidates title and section their headings based on whatever is appropriate to the particular project/portfolio and ensure that evidence of research, independence and reflection is apparent throughout the portfolio.

Criterion E (HL Only)

The theoretical underpinning represents the area of most improvement since the past session. Though some candidates still approached this part of the task as a preliminary research stage, the majority were authentically integrating and applying research to the development of the project. In addition, it is worth reiterating the importance of the underpinning as being fundamental to the development of the project; in order for this to happen, the research must, at least to some extent, be referred to throughout the portfolio. In these instances, it was clear that the underpinning was truly fundamental to understanding the development of the process.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

In the future teaching of the candidates, the consistent and effective use of the journal should be stressed. It was clear from the work sampled that the very best portfolios developed from creative and effective use of the journal. Too often the structure of the project and portfolio did not represent the type of work taking place in schools. More consistent contributions to, and editing of, the journal would better prepare candidates for the demands of the 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
Mark range:	0-1	2-2	3-4	5-8	9-13	14-17	18-25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall, there seemed to be a good general understanding of the task although there are still some schools at both HL and SL, which do not seem to realise the intent of this assessment component i.e. to communicate a proposal for performance based on a prescribed stimulus. This lack of understanding makes the task extremely difficult for the candidate to succeed even though there are often signs that a candidate is capable.

All administrative aspects of the task, including filling in of cover sheets, were generally well completed. Some schools, however, did not check on word counts for pitch and rationale. Choice of stimulus was clear apart from one school that used the stimuli from the previous session. Schools should ensure that the correct stimuli for that session is being used as detailed in the November Coordinators Notes.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Section 1: The Pitch

There is still a tendency for the pitch to fall into one of two categories. Either the pitch focuses on details of a plot stemming from the stimulus or a design description of a performance with little or no stage action is described. Top candidates were able to approach the task from true directorial vision - a holistic approach. They knew how to guide the reader to envision an onstage performance. They were able to "select and edit" material. They understood the need for the different elements to combine in order to create a desired effect, outlined action on stage and briefly introduced these in the pitch in dynamic language.

Section 2: Supporting materials

The stimulus - is mentioned in two elements of the assessment criteria and so needs to be considered for 'imaginative interpretation' and 'genuine response'. The top band of candidates at both HL and SL used this section to go through their creative process from stimulus to

product using a mixture of visuals, brainstorming, personal response, secondary inspirations and research to communicate a directorial concept thus responding to both requirements. The lower band work often showed little or no response to or exploration of the stimulus. Some proposals introduced the stimulus and then quickly made a tenuous link to a clearly pre-chosen script which showed 'little or no imaginative interpretation of the stimuli. However, most candidates who mentioned the stimulus were able to come up with an imaginative interpretation to a lesser or greater degree.

Performance concept – HL/SL candidates, overall, seemed to do this fairly well, with the concept underpinning a number if not all their creative choices in terms of plot, performance and design. The best proposals had a clear, coherent performance concept that permeated everything the candidates wrote. Weaker proposals were confused in terms of their coherence and there was much muddle about the meaning of key theatre terms.

Onstage action – The better HL/SL proposals often offered a plot/action synopsis (storyline) supported by an annotated storyboard showing how space and production elements were considered. Sometimes a script extract (or, occasionally an entire script) gave evidence of an understanding of how stage instructions helped communicate action qualitatively. Weaker proposals sometimes only vaguely mentioned (or sometimes not at all) a storyline or stage action i.e. a 'what' happened but not a 'how'. In those proposals that chose predominantly movement or Physical theatre, strong work described shapes, rhythms, tempos and qualities of movement as well as sequences of events. Sometimes when a set script or stimulus with a storyline was chosen this narrative went directly on stage with little imaginative engagement in either storyline or staging choices. These pieces did not do well in the 'imaginative interpretation of the stimulus' element of the assessment criteria.

Production elements - The better HL/SL proposals showed a practical understanding of choice of performance space, use of design principles in several areas and combinations of production elements to create desired effects communicated in visuals, annotations and text. In work at the lower end of the assessment spectrum, most stage spaces (in particular a proscenium arch stage), were chosen regardless of intended style and only a few even considered alternatives. A number of candidates used GoogleSketchUp for their set design, which helped them to demonstrate their creative ideas very clearly. In middle and lower band HL/SL work there seems to be a trend in the areas of costuming and set design of using downloaded images from the internet as "final designs", often with minimal comment, explanation or justification. This work does not do well in assessment, as it does not **convey** understanding of the mise-en-scene process (even though the process may be understood). Lighting and sound ideas, in poorer example work, were often painfully inadequate, revealing a lack of understanding of how these elements are used to direct the audience's attention by the director and employed in the creation of atmosphere on stage. Better HL/SL proposals showed an understanding and use of theatrical terminology to describe events and intended effects.

Section 3: The Report (HL only)

There is still a clear difference in the report between candidates who understand the task and those who don't. Three of the report areas (Philosophical rationale, Socio-historical influences, and Traditional/cultural influences) relate to assessment of an understanding of

how theory/research can **lead to 'practical effects' on stage** i.e. applied research. The fourth possible report area (Possible impacts and resonances) invites the candidate to show an understanding of how intended impacts and resonances can be brought about **using 'practical effects' in performance**. Better HL reports clearly show well researched or studied theory which was completely understood, then integrated with the performance concept of the piece and supported by clear practical examples of effects intended in performance. Often those who misunderstood the task and so scored poorly, reiterated general artistic choices or plot developments more appropriate for Section 2 i.e. not applied theory/research.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Despite warnings in last year's Subject report, stressing in PD workshops and being highlighted and signed about on form 6/T proposal (HL) +(SL), there is still some work which uses extensive internet downloading of images without proper sourcing or attribution. This is considered academic malpractice and will result in action being taken by the IB Assessment School. *

Presentation of work is often well considered and offers clear access to examiners. However, on some occasions schools send either illegible hand-written work or unclear photocopies. This makes the assessment process very difficult and, sometimes, key ideas are not communicated because of a lack of clarity.

Candidates should attempt at least one complete practice PPP over the two years as well as exploring the component parts of the task in a practical way.

Examiners are committed to giving clear feedback on work by annotations throughout proposals based on the marking criteria. Some schools send work in plastic folders. Whilst this protects the material, it makes annotation unwieldy and time consuming. It would be appreciated if this practice was avoided.

Research Investigation

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-16	17-19	20-30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was, as always, a wide range of work submitted. The best examples were those that had clearly researched a clear aspect of a practice and then applied their research to an appropriate part of the play/piece of theatre from that practice. Those who had a clear understanding of the requirements of the task (Criterion B) also seemed to do well in the other criteria. A focused question seemed to inspire more in-depth research into the chosen practice (Criterion A), and led to a structured, thorough response to the question (Criterion C). Candidates who chose a theatre practice with specific conventions seemed to have more success overall.

Inaccurate word counts were a major problem this session with candidates underestimating the word count or including quotes in their word count. Teachers sign the cover sheet and this should be verification that the work is the candidate's and that the word count is accurate.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A Research Skills

Some research was thorough and diverse. Many candidates corresponded with or interviewed practitioners, or cited solid academic journals and books, as well as reputed websites.

The consistent attribution of sources, however, still seems to be a problem, though this is often due to a lack of attribution skills rather than negligence. There seems to be a wide variety of sourcing systems and some confusion regarding whether a candidate needs to attribute the source if the information is general knowledge about a practice. The practice should be unfamiliar so the candidate should be able to identify the provenance of all their

information. Many candidates, for example, still fail to attribute every piece of information, believing that providing a source at the end of a whole paragraph or even page is an indicator of having attributed all the information.

Several candidates made very broad/general statements about the theatre practices, without consistent support from source material to justify their claims.

There is also a tendency to examine YouTube performances (of Brecht, or Restoration Comedy for example) as a basis of research and this leads to a performance analysis rather than research into a practice.

Research investigations, in some instances, became 'research reports,' rather than focused arguments, with research materials being paraphrased and presented without any observations from the candidates.

Some design-focussed research ended up being socio-historical and not theatrical.

Criterion B Task Relevance

In many cases, research into theatre practice was extensive-- but not all candidates were then able to successfully connect this general research to the chosen play/piece of theatre (and, ultimately, to the research question). Meeting the specific requirements is still challenging for some candidates. An aspect of practice applied to an aspect of the play, where the play must derive from the practice, is still very difficult for some candidates to understand.

The formulation of questions is generally better than previous sessions and most investigations started with a fairly clear beginning point but even when research is applied there is predominantly too little reference to the play/ piece of theatre.

In some cases, candidates interpreted the task as creative and attempted to provide costume and make-up design for multiple characters in a play, often turning the research investigation into a justification of their own design concept.

Criterion C Presentation

Most candidates present the essay in the appropriate formal register though some still perceive it as an exercise in providing information to a practitioner and as a result address it to a particular theatre specialist. Depth is more of an issue than register.

Often the visual material was not clear, that is the images were blurry and unclear, too small or in black and white when the candidate specifically notes the use of colour. Some candidates included the Critique of sources (D) and direct quotations in the total investigation word-count. This did affect a number of candidates when the grade was awarded for this criterion.

Criterion D Critique of Sources (HL Only)

Higher level candidates now seem to have a better understanding of the critiquing of sources and there seems to be some improvement in the execution of this. Candidates still largely focus on the relevance and use of the source in their work, without necessarily paying enough attention to the credibility, validity or reliability of the source material used. For the most part, opinions, newspaper reviews/articles, blog sites, were not acknowledged as biased.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates must have practice conducting research, and should be taught how to properly attribute observations, to cross-reference sources, and to cite sources for images.
- The practice needs to be identified first and then the play or piece **MUST** be selected from the practice. Part of a regular class exercise can be identifying a tradition/practice, listing its conventions and looking at performance texts from the tradition/practice.
- Candidates should be taught how to attribute source material, especially when they are paraphrasing.
- At the start of the process, attention needs to be paid to the specific requirements of the task and forming an appropriate RQ.
- Structuring the questions is pivotal to the success. Teacher must spend time from Year 1 demonstrating and honing the skill of formulating a focussed and answerable question.
- Candidates need to understand how to write an introduction, to structure an argument, to use quotes, and to draft a conclusion. Word count minus quotes must be clear.
- HL candidates must learn how to evaluate their sources' reliability and credibility.
- Candidates should assess the relevance of visual and text material they have used.
- A tighter focus on one aspect and even one section of a play is more effective.
- Many candidates still don't appreciate the importance of forming the right question or even what a good question is. This is a skill that needs to be taught and questions need to be redrafted as the candidate's knowledge of the theatre practice develops.

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

It becomes clearer year by year that the subject report is simply not read by a number of schools since basic errors in procedure are repeated and there are still many examples of inappropriate interference by the teacher during presentations. These range from actual modification of the recording to repeated questioning of the candidate, often in a manner that could be considered “leading”. Examiners have been instructed to discount all responses to such questions from their deliberations when awarding marks so this approach will seriously compromise the performance of the candidate. All recordings that have been tampered with will be referred to the IBO who will decide on a course of action to pursue. All previous comments regarding the actual assessment task still stand: one image per A4 sheet, no collages. Teachers should ensure that 6/T forms are carefully filled out. Candidates should speak for the recommended time. No more than two presentations should be recorded per CD to ensure quality. Candidates can refer to notes but should not read their presentations; they should use the requisite number of images per level.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The work was wide ranging with all levels of ability represented. There were many interesting presentations and a good number of outstanding ones, those who performed well followed the format of the examination as laid down by the Subject Guide very carefully. Those candidates who struggled often did so because they either had not understood the task or had made little effort to familiarize themselves with the specific demands of the assessment criteria. The neglect of images continues to be a problem. Many candidates do not refer to images and some, while doing so, do so only in a cursory manner. Again those who take trouble over this aspect of the task and use images in a creative manner ensuring their relevance to the presentation are often among the high level performers in the task. The ability to ensure that all points raised in the presentation are placed under analytical scrutiny, are appropriately

related to each other, or contested against one another, and are reflected upon in a careful and informed way, is still central to the performance of the task. In HL the ability to use research into theory and practice in a specific way through application in the work of the candidate is an additional demand under Criterion D. The candidates who could see the demands of the criteria as fundamentally connected to one another, thereby treating them as holistic, were able to make their 20-30 minute presentations relevant and rewarding. The selection and editing function needs to be carefully applied to the work before the presentation happens and candidates need to rehearse their presentation carefully so they can present fluently while not falling into the trap of including irrelevant material or not actually making the best of the material they are using.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A Analysis

The ability to analyze should not be confined to the most able candidates. The tendency to narrate the course should be resisted but is more likely to happen unless a careful selection is made from the course for the presentation. The Subject Guide recommends that one or two key experiences which are comprehensive enough to embrace content from theatre in the making, theatre in the world and theatre in performance are used as key foundation content for the presentation. Wider applications to other work can and should be made but only in so far as links are established to the core experiences. Analysis must be encouraged by the way theatre is taught and that is the responsibility of the teacher. The accumulation of experience for its own sake is not the point of the course. Material has to be carefully selected, it should be diverse but it should also be compared. This year there was a general neglect of the role of the spectator that each candidate needs to assume, either within the ensemble or in visits to the theatre. While the examiner acknowledges that a visit to the theatre to see a diversity of performances is not always easy, teachers need to appreciate the inspirational qualities provided by different approaches to theatre making.

Criterion B Synthesis

This remains a problematic criterion and many candidates struggle to understand what the term “synthesis” means. In similar manner teachers appear too often reluctant to foster schemes of work that bring different forms of theatre into play and ask the candidate to establish connections between one kind of work and another. Such schemes of work need to examine theory in terms of connection and antithesis. Theories are too often treated by candidates and teachers as if they were so many ingredients in a cake. The individual dynamics within a theory can only be explored in action and this is usually where the practical usefulness of theories becomes apparent to the candidate. The synthesizing energy is seen by the attempt the candidate makes to appreciate difference, and works to make something creative out of it. The better candidates were accomplished in making theatre through a diversity in their approaches, the less accomplished relied on the conventional Teacher (director) candidate (actor) relationship which is limited and not always particularly interesting. The school play is not always the best way of exploring diversity in theatre.

Criterion C Reflection

This was often strong as long as the focus was dispassionate and objective rather than an anecdotal journey through the psyche of the candidate. Many candidates now appear to be keeping a Journal and this, functioning 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. Reflection needs to be focused on the analysis of the work and the diverse relationships emerging from a curiosity about how theatre works. Much of the reflection needs to be done before the presentation and needs to be built into the course as one scheme of work follows another not as autonomous units of knowledge and understanding but as patterns of theatrical experience that are closely linked to one another, either because they are intrinsically different (therefore contrasting one way of making theatre to another), or because they share common characteristics (therefore complementing each other and reinforcing certain approaches to theatre making). These relationships need a great deal of reflection if they are to produce understanding and relevant action.

Criterion D Application of research

Candidates do not always realize the need to ensure that research methodology is properly cited and the application of this research carefully applied within the context of the work of the candidate. Again, research for its own sake is entirely useless, only practical exploration can transform this information into an agency for dramatic action. Candidates who struggle with this task think they are doing research when they convey information about a theory, tradition or practice. The quoting of Beijing Opera is of little value, the detailing of make up in Kabuki is likewise irrelevant unless this data has been applied to exploratory work the candidate has done. There were some splendid examples of candidates using quite esoteric research into unfamiliar theatre practices as a basis for work of their own. The courage to strike out on a research path that is not well trodden will always receive credit if the influence is made active in their effect on the work of the candidate.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Make all work relevant to the criteria
- See as much theatre as possible
- Set up synthesis through an awareness of contesting theories and practice as well as complimentary ones.
- Select and edit before the presentation
- Apply research
- Analysis not narrative
- Use images
- Keep a journal.
- Take risks
- Be subversive and individual