

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT OF CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2012

**THEATRE ARTS
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Theatre Arts examination consists of three components. Paper 01, an essay paper, consists of six compulsory questions each worth 10 marks. Paper 02, the practical examination, is examined externally by the Theatre Arts teacher and a specialist in the field. Paper 03, the School-Based Assessment (SBA), consists of two projects — a research paper and a critique. The research paper is based on a Theatre Arts or cultural practitioner and the critique on a dance or drama production.

Since 2003 when the Theatre Arts syllabus was examined for the first time, new centres and territories have registered for the examination each year. It has been noted that on some occasions these new centres may misinterpret areas of the syllabus. Teachers, however, learn quite quickly and use feedback to improve their teaching. There are some centres, however, which continue to do the wrong thing and this affects candidates' performance.

This is the first year of examination for the revised syllabus. In the revised syllabus, there was a change in the allocation of profile marks in Paper 01. Five (5%) of the 60 marks that were previously assigned to Profile 1 (Analysing and Appreciating) were assigned to Profile 3 (Creating). In the 2012 examination, Question 3 assessed Profile 3.

Amendments to Paper 02 in the revised syllabus included the inclusion of 10 marks (5 %) for Profile 1. This change ensured that the three profiles were assessed in the three components of the examination.

Amendments to Paper 03 (school-based assessment) included: specific instructions for the research paper to be presented in an essay-type format and the increase of Profile 1 marks, from 20 to 30 marks and a decrease of the Profile 3 (Creating) marks from 20 to 10. More detailed marking criteria were also developed.

Overall performance on the 2012 examination was very good. Approximately three per cent more candidates in 2012 earned Grades I–III than in 2011. Performance in Profiles 1 and 3 also improved while performance in Profile 2 (Performing) was consistent with that of 2011.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01– Essay Questions

Paper 01 is designed to test core objectives of the Syllabus. These include knowledge of cultural forms, knowledge of types of theatre spaces, the function of theatre personnel and theatrical action as elements of theatre, the analysis of dramatic action and knowledge of the personal and social value of theatre processes.

This paper engages candidates in the recalling of facts, describing, observing, analysing, imagining and reflecting.

The structure of Paper 01 is as follows:

- Question 1 Functions of theatre personnel
- Question 2 Cultural forms
- Question 3 Stimulus (This could be text or a visual, for example, a picture.)
- Question 4 Elements of theatre
- Question 5 Reinforcement of work done for Paper 02 and 03
- Question 6 Reflection /Social function of theatre/ Reinforcement of work done for Paper 02 and 03

Overall performance on this paper was good. More candidates are referencing cultural forms beyond their own territories and providing persuasive testimony to the impact of Theatre Arts on their lives. On the other hand, many candidates continue to be unable to apply knowledge or factual information learnt in the classroom to a new or given situation.

Question 1

This question tested candidates' knowledge of theatre terminology and understanding of the function of these elements (Specific Objective 1).

Part (a) of the question required candidates to define three of the eight theatre terms given. The selection of theatre terms allowed for candidates in any of the three options: drama, dance or stage crafts to respond. The question was set at the cognitive level of knowledge and many of the candidates performed well on it. Candidates particularly chose to define the terms box office, downstage, flat and masking. Candidates found it difficult to define rigging the lights and fourth wall. A response which gained full marks for the definition of rigging the lights was *rigging the lights is the hanging and installation of stage lanterns in their proper positions for a show.*

Candidates experienced difficulty in responding to Part (b). This question was designed to assess application of knowledge. Although candidates were able to define the terms, many were unable to give two ways they could be used in a theatre production. A response for rigging the light which gained full marks was *rigging the lights can be used in a production to provide illumination on stage and to implement a lighting design.*

Performance on this question was fair with a mean of 4.73 out of 10. Sixty (4.63%) of the 1,296 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 2

This question assessed candidates' knowledge of cultural forms, one of the two major components of the syllabus (Syllabus Objectives 5, 6, and 8). For this question candidates needed to draw on the knowledge gained in the classroom as well as the experience they would have gained in their preparation for the Paper 02 examination, where they are required to devise a drama or dance based on a cultural form.

Part (a), which required candidates to name a Caribbean cultural form and country where it is practised, was well done by the more able candidates. Weaker candidates gave countries outside of the Caribbean as their responses. Marks were also lost where candidates did not use the prescribed cultural forms. A list of Caribbean cultural forms and the countries where they are practised can be found on pages 13–14 of the syllabus.

Part (b) of this question proved challenging for candidates. Many of them were unable to state two ways that the named cultural form could be used in a dance or drama production and so were not able to gain the two marks for Part (b). A response which gained full marks for Part (b) indicated that the cultural form of storytelling can be used by a lead character or soloist in a narrative work and that it could be used for dramatizing a story.

Performance on Part (c) was not as good as anticipated. Candidates were required to “Explain TWO ways that the cultural form named in (a) can contribute to any ONE of the following:

- (i) Entertainment
- (ii) Education
- (iii) Community development”

Some candidates misunderstood the question and attempted to give two ways the cultural form could be used in two of the areas specified.

Performance on this question was good with candidates achieving a mean of 5.34 out of 10. Thirty-six (2.74%) of the 1,312 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 3

This question was designed to assess Profile 3. The skills that candidates needed to adequately respond to the question were the ability to observe, imagine and create. The question also tested candidates' application of theatre elements (Syllabus Objectives 1, 4 and 5). A picture was used as the stimulus for this question. Candidates needed to identify significant details in the picture in order to respond to the question.

Part (a) required candidates to suggest a title or theme for the picture and provide justification for their choice. Most candidates were able to gain the two marks awarded for this part of the question. Responses that earned full marks included: *Bacchanal in Church*, *Sunday Morning Confusion*, and *Church Meeting*. The justification provided included, *there is a cross on a podium on a stage or altar, the chairs are arranged in rows and the elderly lady is wearing a church hat*.

Part (b) was fairly well done. The better candidates appeared to be limited by the one paragraph requirement for this part of the question, but still managed to respond quite well. However, the weaker candidates failed in many instances to identify the elements of a story.

Part (c) proved to be a challenge to most of the candidates. This part of the question required candidates to apply two elements of theatre to the staging of the story developed in Part (b). The application of these elements to the story was quite weak. In many instances candidates failed to provide a response for Part (c).

Overall, candidates gave a fair performance on this question with a mean of 4.94 out of 10. Three (0.23%) of the 1,314 candidates who attempted this question gained full marks.

Teachers need to provide more opportunities for students to view live theatre or filmed theatre productions to enable the students to see the elements of theatre at work. In addition, teachers should provide students with classroom practice in responding to questions such as this to allow them to develop their creative and application skills.

Question 4

This question assessed the elements of theatre. Responses required knowledge of major theatre processes and reflection on the experience of engaging with them (Syllabus objectives 5).

Most candidates were able to earn the maximum mark of 4 for Part (a) of the question, which required them to define the terms stage management and production management. It was clear that the candidates were very familiar with the terms and understood what they involved. However, some candidates did encounter problems with defining production management. A response which gained the full two marks was *production management is the control of the financial, scheduling, programming and public aspects of the show, and the documentation of the requirements of the show*.

Part (b) proved challenging to some of the candidates who merely stated, for instance, that *production management was the management in charge of the production*. A response which gained the full two marks was *production management is important because it ensures that everything that is needed for the production to be successful is addressed. This includes approaching various sponsors for funding, ensuring that the public knows about the show and providing the requirements for the show, for example, box office and ushers*.

Candidates who performed well on Part (b) also performed well on Part (c). It was clear that the experience of working on their productions for Paper 02 influenced their responses.

Performance on this question was fair with the mean of 4.62 out of 10. Thirty (2.30%) of the 1,305 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 5

This question assessed the candidates' ability to assess the contribution of practitioners to theatre and the contribution of the practitioner to the candidates' appreciation of Theatre Arts (Syllabus Objectives 4 and 8). Candidates could have drawn on the research of the theatre arts practitioner done for the Paper 03. The question required knowledge of a theatre arts practitioner and his or her contribution to theatre in the Caribbean.

Performance on this question was generally quite good. Nonetheless, some candidates still named popular deejays and musicians as theatre arts practitioners for Part (a). No marks were awarded for such responses.

Part (c) which was worth eight marks and which required candidates to state four ways the practitioner influenced their appreciation of Theatre Arts was fairly well done. Responses included that *they now have a better understanding of the effort and commitment that are necessary in order to succeed*. It was noted, though, that some responses did not take into consideration how the practitioner 'has influenced your appreciation of Theatre Arts' and therefore such responses could not be awarded the maximum mark.

The mean for this question was 5.77 out of 10. Sixty-nine (5.36%) of the 1287 candidates who responded to this question earned full marks.

Question 6

The question draws on candidates' experience of seeing live dance or drama and their reflection on the study of the subject and its value. This question assessed candidates' application skills, but with reference to a situation with which candidates should be familiar; namely a theatre arts festival.

Some candidates misinterpreted Part (b) as an activity for performers rather than patrons and were unable to say how their proposed activities would be included in the festival.

Candidates performed very well on this question, achieving a mean of 6.33 out of 10. This was the highest mean achieved in any of the questions. Sixty-five of the 1,274 candidates who responded to this question scored full marks.

In summary, candidates generally performed quite well on this paper. The questions were structured to assess simple recall and application. It was surprising to find weaknesses in the recall of basic definitions and use of correct terminology. Candidates seemed unable at times to move beyond simple recall to application, analysis and synthesis.

Recommendations for Paper 01

1. Students should be provided with the behavioural terms used in setting the questions for the examination which are included in the syllabus (pages 54–55). Teachers should ensure that students understand the requirements of each term.
2. The glossary of theatre terms included in the syllabus (pages 49–53) should also be given to students and referenced as they prepare for their Paper 02 examination and in class assignments.
3. Students need to know and practise correct use of Theatre Arts terminology.

4. Teachers need to explain the difference between ‘function (what)’ and ‘process (how)’ of a role.
5. Students need to be given practice in answering written questions.
6. Students should be exposed to more live theatre.
7. Students need to be presented in the classroom with more opportunities to analyse, synthesise and evaluate.

Paper 02 — Practical Examination

The only evidence of school-based performances available to the Examining Committee is the External Examiners’ Report. The Examining Committee advises the following:

1. Teachers and Examiners are to mark the exercise **separately**. Their marks are to be recorded in the appropriate column and an **agreed mark** also entered.
2. Examiners are expected to enter comments on each school’s performance in the report. Reports devoid of comments are of no help to teacher, students, the school or the examining body.
3. Drama and dance teachers are encouraged to work together in conducting “mock” marking exercises in order to discuss the issues of the work which students present and the methods of assessment.

These recommendations were made in the 2011 subject report, however, the problems noted in the reports submitted this year were the same and appeared to be from the same centres and the same specialists who examined the students at the centres.

Paper 03 — School-Based Assessment (SBA)

Many schools did not use the new marking criteria for the revised syllabus. Adjustments were made, as far as possible, during the moderation process so that the candidates were not disadvantaged in any way.

The Research Paper

In 2011, there were a number of instances where candidates chose musicians, calypsonians and visual artistes as the practitioner to be interviewed for the research paper. Some chose practitioners whose contribution to the territory and/or Caribbean was either minimal or negligible. This was also the case in 2012. Again, this must be discouraged. Unless the individuals have made significant contributions to dance, drama or a cultural form identified in the syllabus, candidates must not choose these individuals. Teachers must be vigilant and assist candidates in their selections to ensure that their research meets the requirements of the syllabus.

In 2011, some candidates chose to present published interviews of practitioners from the Internet or other texts. This was repeated in 2012. Candidates must conduct their own interviews. Teachers must also ensure that this is done and that the candidates do not use an interview from the Internet or another SBA project.

There were also candidates who “interviewed” individuals who are deceased and therefore fabricated responses. This is quite unacceptable and marks will not be awarded in these instances. There were a number of instances where SBA assignments were submitted and in which candidates had copied each other’s work and clearly plagiarised. It is a concern to the Examining Committee that some teachers fail to recognise these instances of copying and plagiarism. Plagiarism and copying are treated as serious offences by the Council. Where these are detected during the moderation process the candidate is subjected to severe penalties.

Teachers must be mindful of the following:

- All candidates' work must be clearly marked and presented as marked.
- All candidates' work must have either on the front or on the back the CSEC marking criteria with their marks clearly written for the SBA moderation process.
- All candidates must present the critique and the research paper as two separate typed documents with all the necessary information of school name and candidates' registration number on the front of each assignment.
- Marks must be awarded according to the CSEC marking criteria. There were instances where marks were awarded for specific areas that were not evidenced by the candidates' work; for example no rationale or supporting materials were provided but the teacher awarded marks.
- The interview and the full responses are to be included as an appendix. Some candidates included their interview as a cassette or DVD and this is commendable. The outstanding candidates provided support material which was clearly typed and labelled and used the material to support the various facets and work of the practitioner.

Candidates must be given the opportunity to develop the skills of formulating their *own* questions. In some instances, there was a collective approach to the interview and all candidates asked the same questions of the same practitioner. This is to be discouraged so that candidates' work is original; this also encourages a personal voice.

The Critique

In 2011, candidates were generally able to discuss the summary/plot of the play but were generally weak in their discussion of the theatrical elements of the production. This was again the situation in 2012. Candidates do not appear to be particularly clear with regards to the social impact or the impact on the audience of the production. This area of discussion was lacking. **The dance critiques are of particular concern since candidates do not describe the dances seen with any clarity.** Candidates, for example, do not refer to the choreography or dancemaking elements. Nor are the candidates clear about why, for example, costume or lighting impacts on a dance whether negatively or positively. Attention must be paid to the theatrical elements of both the dance and drama critique. Candidates must be encouraged to use the appropriate theatrical and/or dance terminology. However, there was evidence of a better handling of the drama critiques.

Teachers need to ensure that the

- Marking criteria with the breakdown of how each mark was awarded are included and placed at the end of each assignment
- Candidates do not engage in plagiarism and copying of other candidates' work
- Candidates submit the research paper and critique as two separate documents and NOT include them in one folder.

Teachers, students, parents and school administrators are asked to note page 43 of the CSEC Theatre Arts syllabus on CXC's position regarding plagiarism.