

16+ PAST PAPER PACK

Rugby School 16+ Drama

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RUGBY SCHOOL

Sixth Form Entrance Examination

DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES Specimen Paper

Time allowed: 1 hour

Instructions to candidates:

- There are two questions. You must answer **both** questions.
- You can type in the box below each question (the box will expand) **or** you can hand write on lined paper with black or blue ball point and then scan your document.
- There are **30 marks** available in total.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets – use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.
- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- It is recommended that you spend 30 minutes on each question.

Name: _____

1. As a performer or designer, **analyse** and **evaluate** your intended impact on your audience based on **one** production you have been involved in.

Analyse = **how** did you achieve your intended impact on your audience?

Evaluate = **how effective** were you? What were your strengths and weaknesses?

[15 marks]

2. Live theatre should have something important to say to an audience, otherwise it is a pointless event.'

Discuss this statement with reference to a performance you have seen live or on a digital platform. You should **analyse** and **evaluate** key moments of the performance. You can refer to:

- directors
- actors
- designers

Analyse = **how** did the actors/directors/designers achieve their intended impact?

Evaluate = **how effective** were they at achieving their intended impact?

[15 marks]

Paper Notes: 16+ Drama Specimen Paper (16+ Drama Specimen Paper)

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This is a **specimen paper for sixth form entrance** in **Drama and Theatre Studies**, published by **Rugby School** for students applying to enter Year 12. It provides a preview of the written component used to assess candidates' practical and critical engagement with theatre. The paper requires applicants to demonstrate reflective analysis of their own performance or design work and to evaluate a live or digital production they have seen.

The examination lasts **one hour** and carries **30 marks** in total, divided equally between two essay-style questions. Candidates may type their responses or handwrite and scan them. The first question asks applicants to analyse and evaluate their contribution to a production they have participated in, while the second invites discussion of a statement about theatre's purpose, supported by reference to a performance they have watched.

This paper suits **Year 11 students** applying to study Drama and Theatre Studies at sixth form level, particularly those with experience in school productions, youth theatre, or community drama. It tests not only knowledge of theatrical conventions but also the ability to reflect critically on performance choices and articulate informed opinions about the role and value of live theatre.

How this paper is organised

The paper consists of **two questions**, each carrying **15 marks**. Candidates must answer both questions and are advised to spend **30 minutes** on each. The allocation of time and marks is straightforward, with equal weight given to reflective analysis of personal practice (Question 1) and critical evaluation of professional or semi-professional work (Question 2).

Question 1 requires candidates to choose one production they have been involved in, either as a performer or designer, and to analyse how they achieved their intended impact on the audience. They must also evaluate their own effectiveness, identifying strengths and weaknesses. The question provides clear definitions of 'analyse' and 'evaluate' to guide responses.

Question 2 presents a provocative statement about the purpose of live theatre and asks candidates to discuss it with reference to a performance they have seen live or on a digital platform. Candidates may focus on the work of directors, actors, or designers,

and must again analyse how these practitioners achieved their impact and evaluate their effectiveness. The paper allows flexibility in choice of productions, enabling candidates to showcase their individual theatrical experience.

Topics covered

- Reflective analysis of personal performance or design work in a specific production
- Evaluation of one's own strengths and weaknesses as a theatre practitioner
- Critical discussion of theatre's purpose and social or artistic value
- Analysis of directorial choices and their impact on meaning and audience response
- Evaluation of actors' technique, including vocal and physical skills, characterisation, and interpretation
- Assessment of design elements such as set, costume, lighting, or sound and their contribution to overall effect
- Use of subject-specific terminology to describe theatrical techniques and conventions
- Articulation of how specific moments in performance achieve intended impact
- Critical engagement with live or digitally streamed theatre productions
- Construction of coherent written arguments supported by specific examples from practice

How to use this paper for revision

- Choose a production you remember in detail and can discuss with confidence. The richer your recall of specific moments, the stronger your analysis will be.
- Before the exam, watch at least one professional or high-quality amateur production and make notes on key moments, directorial choices, and design elements.
- Practise using technical vocabulary accurately: terms like proxemics, spatial relationships, voice projection, blocking, subtext, and stylisation will strengthen your responses.
- For Question 1, prepare a mental framework of your own performance or design work, identifying two or three clear examples where you made deliberate choices to achieve impact.
- For Question 2, develop a clear position on the statement about theatre's purpose. You can agree, disagree, or take a nuanced view, but make sure you argue coherently.
- Time yourself writing practice responses to both questions. Thirty minutes is tight, so learn to structure your ideas quickly and write fluently.
- Read reviews of productions in outlets like The Guardian or WhatsOnStage to see how professional critics analyse and evaluate performance.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Writing a narrative account of a production rather than analysing specific choices and their effects. Description alone does not answer the question.
- Failing to evaluate. Many candidates analyse well but forget to assess effectiveness, identify weaknesses, or weigh up success and limitations.
- Using vague or generalised language such as 'it was good' or 'the actor was convincing' without explaining how specific techniques created that effect.
- Choosing a production you barely remember or can only describe in superficial terms. Depth of detail is essential for high marks.
- Ignoring the definitions provided in the question. The paper explicitly tells you what 'analyse' and 'evaluate' mean; follow those instructions.
- Spending too long on one question and rushing the second. Both carry equal marks, so balance your time carefully.

Exam technique

Read both questions carefully before you begin and decide which production you will discuss for each. For Question 1, select a production where you had a clear role and made conscious artistic decisions; for Question 2, choose a performance you found theatrically interesting, whether you loved it or had reservations. Jot down a brief plan for each answer, listing two or three key points or moments you will explore.

Allocate your time strictly: **30 minutes per question** is non-negotiable given the equal weighting. Aim for four or five well-developed paragraphs per question. Each paragraph should make a clear point, support it with a specific example from the production, analyse the technique or choice involved, and evaluate its effectiveness. Use technical vocabulary naturally and accurately; this demonstrates your understanding of theatrical craft.

In your evaluation, be honest and critical. Identifying a weakness in your own work or a limitation in a professional production shows maturity and analytical depth. Always link your comments to audience impact: how did a choice affect what the audience understood, felt, or experienced? Finally, leave two or three minutes at the end to reread your answers and correct any errors in spelling, grammar, or clarity.

What to revise alongside this paper

To prepare thoroughly for this paper, revisit the productions you have been involved in during Year 10 and Year 11. Reflect on your own performance or design process: what were your objectives, what techniques did you use, and how did the audience respond? Keep a reflective journal if possible. Watch a range of live or streamed productions before the exam, making notes on directorial vision, acting styles, and design choices. Consider different genres and styles, from naturalism to physical theatre, to broaden your frame of reference.

Read around the purpose and value of theatre. Explore essays or articles by practitioners such as Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal, or Katie Mitchell on what theatre can and should do. Familiarise yourself with key practitioners and their approaches, as this will help you contextualise your own work and the productions you discuss. Study the vocabulary of performance analysis: how to describe voice, movement, space, and design with precision.

Finally, practise writing timed analytical essays. The ability to structure a clear argument, support it with specific examples, and evaluate effectiveness within 30 minutes is a skill that requires rehearsal. Work on integrating technical terminology naturally and expressing your ideas with clarity and confidence.

Key terms

Analyse, Evaluate, Intended impact, Proxemics, Blocking, Characterisation, Vocal technique, Physical theatre, Directorial concept, Design elements, Staging, Audience response, Subtext, Stylisation, Performance space

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RUGBY SCHOOL

Sixth Form Entrance Examination

DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES Specimen Paper

Mark Scheme

Section A: Practical work reflection

Performer

| | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 1. | Answers in this band will make limited use of subject specific terminology. There will be limited evidence of the pupil's understanding of the role/s played. There will be limited references to vocal and physical skills. There will be limited or no reference to their interaction with props, set and/or costume. | 0-3 |
| | Answers in this band will make basic use of subject specific terminology. There will be basic evidence of the pupil's understanding of the role/s played. There will be basic references to vocal and physical skills. There will be basic references to at least one of the following: interaction with props, set and costume. | 4-6 |
| | Answers in this band will be increasingly well organised. There will be satisfactory use of appropriately applied subject specific terminology. A satisfactory understanding of their role/s will be in evidence, including relevant references to strengths and weaknesses in their performance. There will be satisfactory references to at least one of the following: interaction with props, set and costume. | 7-9 |
| | Answers in this band will be well organised. There will be good, consistent use of a wide range of accurately applied subject specific terminology. A good understanding of their role/s will be in evidence, including insightful references to strengths and weaknesses in their performance. There will be insightful references to at least one of the following: interaction with props, set and costume. | 10-12 |

| | | |
|--|--|-------|
| | Answers in this band will be in a form and style of writing appropriate to the purpose and complexity of the subject matter. A thorough knowledge and understanding of a wide range of subject specific terminology will be in evidence throughout the response. An excellent understanding and evaluation of their role/s will be in evidence, including insightful references to a wide range of strengths and weaknesses in their performance. There will be an in-depth reference to at least one of the following: interaction with props, set and costume. | 13-15 |
|--|--|-------|

Designer

| | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 2. | Answers in this band will make limited use of technical and theatre terminology. There will be limited evidence of the pupil's understanding of their design role. There will be limited references to their design ideas in response to an identified text. There will be limited or no reference to the development and practical realisation of those ideas for an identified target audience. | 1-3 |
| | Answers in this band will make basic use of technical and theatre terminology. There will be basic evidence of the pupil's understanding of their design role. There will be basic references to their design ideas in response to an identified text. There will be basic references to the development and practical realisation of those ideas for an identified target audience. | 4-6 |
| | Answers in this band will be increasingly well organised. There will be satisfactory use of appropriately applied subject specific terminology. A satisfactory understanding of their design role will be in evidence, including relevant references to strengths and weaknesses in their work. There will be satisfactory references to their design ideas in response to an identified text. There will be satisfactory references to the process of development and practical realisation of those ideas for a clearly identified target audience. | 7-9 |
| | Answers in this band will be well organised. There will be good, consistent use of a wide range of accurately applied subject specific terminology. A good understanding of their design role will be in evidence, including insightful references to strengths and weaknesses in their work. There will be good references to their design ideas in | 10-12 |
| | response to an identified text. There will be good references to the process of development and practical realisation of those ideas for a clearly identified target audience. | |
| | Answers in this band will be in a form and style of writing appropriate to the purpose and complexity of the subject matter. A thorough knowledge and understanding of a wide range of subject specific terminology will be in evidence throughout the response. An excellent understanding and evaluation of their design role will be in evidence, including insightful references to a wide range of strengths and weaknesses in their work. There will be an in-depth reference to their design ideas in response to an identified text. There will be insightful reference to the process of development and practical realisation of those ideas for a clearly identified target audience. | 13-15 |

Section B: Live Theatre Evaluation

| | | |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | <p>The pupil selects a valid production but is largely unable to explain why it was so successful. There is a limited appreciation of the aims of the production team. A limited attempt is made to assess the success of the chosen performer(s) use of acting skills to engage the audience. There will be limited or no evaluation of the following production elements and their contribution to the success of the play: set; lighting; sound; special effects; costume and/or make-up. There may be a number of lapses in expression and frequent errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation which may make the answer difficult to follow.</p> | 0-3 |
| | <p>The pupil selects a valid production and there is a basic appreciation of the aims of the production team. There is some basic analysis of the production elements that combined to make the show a success, with reference to <i>particular</i> moments from the show. A basic attempt is made to assess the success of the performer(s) use of acting skills to engage the audience. There will be a basic evaluation of at least one of the following production elements and its contribution to the success of the play: set; lighting; sound; special effects; costume and/or make-up. There is some insecure expression with occasional, accurate use of appropriate terminology.</p> | 4-7 |
| | <p>The pupil selects a valid production and there is a good appreciation of the aims of the production team. There is some good analysis of the production elements that combined to make the show a success, with purposeful reference to particular moments from the show. A good attempt is made to assess the success of the performer(s) use of acting skills to engage the audience. There will be a good evaluation of at least one of the following production elements and its contribution to the success of the play: set; lighting; sound; special effects; costume and/or make-up. Expression is mainly clear, including accurate use of appropriate terminology; there are infrequent errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation</p> | 8-12 |
| | <p>The pupil selects a valid production and there is an excellent appreciation of the aims of the production team. There is excellent analysis of the production elements that combined to make the show a success, with insightful reference to particular moments from the show. An excellent attempt is made to assess the success of the performer(s) use of acting skills to engage the audience. There will be an insightful evaluation of at least two of the following production elements and their contribution to the success of the play: set; lighting; sound; special effects; costume and/or make-up. Expression is very clear, including a confident and accurate use of appropriate terminology; there are few, if any, errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.</p> | 13-15 |

Paper Notes: 16+ Drama Mark Scheme (16+ Drama Mark Scheme)

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This mark scheme for Rugby School's sixth form entrance Drama paper uses level-based descriptors rather than simple right-or-wrong answers. Read each band carefully to understand what distinguishes a 'satisfactory' response from a 'good' or 'excellent' one. The key differences lie in the precision and range of terminology, the depth of self-reflection, and the quality of evidence cited from production work.

When marking Section A, look for **specific technical vocabulary** (upstage, inflection, proxemics, sightlines, etc.) and honest evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. Generic statements like 'I spoke loudly' score lower than 'I varied my intonation to suggest subtext in the confrontation scene, though my pitch dropped when projecting upstage left'.

For Section B, the scheme rewards detailed analysis of specific moments. A response that names a production and mentions 'good lighting' will not reach the higher bands; one that explains how a crossfade during a monologue isolated the protagonist and heightened tension will. Use the descriptors to place the answer in the band that best matches its overall quality, then assign a mark within that range.

How this paper is organised

(empty)

Topics covered

(none)

How to use this paper for revision

(none)

Common mistakes to avoid

(none)

Exam technique

(empty)

What to revise alongside this paper

(empty)

Key terms

(none)

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