

For the AS Drama examination of 2016 a total of 5 candidates selected 3 questions (out of a possible 24) from 2 plays (out of 12.)

In general, responses this year were well-expressed and clearly written with few egregious spelling and factual errors. The one consistent weakness across the range lies in the inability of candidates to maintain focus on the questions as asked. The temptation to include unrelated (but well-drilled) material from other aspects of theatrical analysis or experience sometimes proves too great. This has the unfortunate effect of a double penalty - candidates struggle to score marks for irrelevant material, and time is wasted on it that could have been spent accumulating marks with better ideas and evidence.

The responses about *Mother Courage* showed a good grounding in Brecht's approach to theatre and covered most elements of the OPC well. The limits to the relationship described between what can be created onstage and what an audience will make of it are often ignored ("the mud will tell the audience that capitalism has ruined the characters' lives") but there were some very interesting staging, set and costume ideas proposed, some quite original, some very much in line with Brecht's thinking.

The responses on *Top Girls* tended to find some good detail in the relationships between the characters and demonstrating an understanding of different dramatic situations (in different acts). The responses made confident use of 'feminist' in describing the play and playwright, although this was not followed up in discussing the larger forces at work on the characters during their interactions. The points made about family tension, assuming other identities, and workplace demands contributed to the best responses.

A small cohort this year but generally solid and well-informed answers, expressed clearly.