

Task 2: Director's notebook

SL 35%, HL 20%

Introduction

Students at HL and SL independently choose a published play text, read the text and record their personal responses. They then:

- research and record the cultural and/or theoretical context of the play and identify ideas the playwright may be addressing
- explore the play and record their own ideas regarding how this play may be staged for an audience
- explain their directorial intention(s) and explain how this will inform their staging of two particular moments of the play; these can be moments of atmosphere, emotion or tension or which communicate the meaning(s) of the play; they must demonstrate an understanding of how performance and production elements function together to create these moments
- reference live performances they have experienced and how these have influenced, inspired or informed their directing of these moments. The live theatre performances must not be productions of the same play text selected for study in this assessment task.

This process is recorded and presented in the form of a director's notebook (20 pages maximum) which is made up of visuals and words.

This is a theoretical exercise. The play text is not actually staged as part of the assessment task though a student may choose to work practically as part of the process of exploring the play or examining particular moments. Students are not permitted to edit, make additions or alterations to the play text selected for study.

All sources must be acknowledged following the protocol of the referencing style chosen by the school.

Perspective—candidates should approach this task from the perspective of director.

Aim—the aim of this task is for students to explore the processes involved in transforming a play text into live action by developing a directorial vision for staging the play text.

Understandings—through this exploration students will understand:

- the importance of research into the context of a play text and how this can inform directorial intentions for staging the play text
- the artistic processes required to transform text into action
- how meaning is communicated on stage and how to create moments of atmosphere, emotion and tension

- how performance and production elements function together to create an intended impact for an audience
- how live performances they have experienced influence, inspire and inform their work as directors.

Each student chooses a play text that they have not studied in class, and for which they can clearly identify the potential for success in transforming it from page to stage. Once selected, the chosen play text cannot be used by the student in any other assessment task for this course.

Assessing the task

Students then undertake the following process for assessment.

Theatre in context

- Each student carries out research into the cultural context from which the play originates and/or research into the play text's theoretical context, focusing on its style, form, practice or genre.
- Each student identifies the key ideas presented by the playwright (such as intended meanings, motifs, themes or throughline). As the author(s) of the text, the playwright might be one person, more than one person or in some cases a theatre company.
- Each student documents this in their theatre journal.

Theatre processes

- Each student records their interpretation of the selected play text and their artistic responses to the entire play text as a director, making links to live theatre performances they have experienced as a spectator that have influence, inspired or informed them. The live theatre performances must not be productions of the same play text selected for study in this assessment task.
- Each student records their exploration of the selected play text and their own ideas regarding how this play may be staged for an audience.
- Each student documents this in their theatre journal.

Presenting theatre

- Each student explains their directorial intention(s) and their intended impact on audience and demonstrates how this would inform their staging of two particular moments of the play. These can be moments of atmosphere, emotion or tension or moments that communicate the meaning(s) of the play.
- Each student demonstrates an understanding, through the staging of these two moments, of how performance and production elements function together.

- Each student documents this in their theatre journal.

This task is concerned with the textual exploration a director might carry out before they go into the rehearsal room to work with actors, defining what they want to bring out of the text and how it might look when finally staged. The process of how this might be achieved through rehearsals is not the focus of this task.

It is unlikely that a director would be responsible for the full scenic or technical design of the final theatre production; however their vision for the staging of the play text would certainly involve a clear understanding of how individual production elements might be employed to fulfill their directorial intentions and how these would potentially impact on the audience.

Using the theatre journal in the task:

The students should use their theatre journal to document their initial responses to reading the play text and research conducted, as well as influences on their intended process and final production. The journal should also be used to record the thoughts and ideas that contribute to the development of their directorial vision. From the journal they will select, adapt and present for submission an annotated selection of their research and exploration as the basis for the director's notebook, focusing on clearly communicating their processes and justification for their artistic decisions and choices. Students should also use the journal to document their experiences of live theatre productions seen during the course. Particular attention should be given to how directors of live theatre integrate performance and production elements to create effective moments of atmosphere, emotion, tension or the communication of a message.

Task details

Selecting the play text

Students choose a published play text that they have not previously studied, which they are interested in practically exploring as a director and which would allow them to successfully fulfill the assessment requirements and criteria of the task. Students should have little or no previous experience of researching or practically engaging with the published play text they select for study.

It is expected that students will consult and refer to a number of play texts prior to their final selection.

It is important for teachers to allow students to select their own play text. The key to success in this task is for students to select a text that excites their imagination and that they would be passionate about transforming into action.

The play text must remain unaltered. Students are not permitted to edit, make additions or alterations to the original printed work. They may, however, in communicating their vision for the staging of the selected play text, add as much additional action or introduce additional elements of design if this will help them to realise their vision for the staging. In every case this should be appropriate to the play text and students must clearly identify and justify these additions.

The play text does not necessarily have to be set within the original practice or style for which it was originally intended. Students may wish to set the play in a contrasting practice or style in order to bring out a particular idea or theme appropriate to the work.

Students are permitted to work with play texts written in any language. Any descriptions of plot or direct quotations, however, must be translated into the language in which they are being assessed.

Discussing live theatre performance

Students are required to discuss and make links to live theatre performances they have experienced as a spectator during the theatre course. Students should identify performances that have influenced, inspired or informed them and should pay particular attention to how directors employed production and performance elements to create effective moments of atmosphere, emotion or tension or moments that communicated meaning in the live theatre performance experienced.

The live theatre performances identified must not be productions of the same play text selected for study in this assessment task. Students are not permitted to write about productions in which they have had involvement, for example school plays in which they helped backstage or local productions in which they performed.

Use of sources

As well as the more obvious sources (books, websites, videos, DVDs, articles) valid research may also include the student's own practical explorations of the play. Students are also required to refer to theatre experiences they have had as a spectator. All sources consulted must be acknowledged following the protocol of the referencing style chosen by the school and be presented in a bibliography and as footnotes, endnotes or within the body of the text of the director's notebook.

The role of the teacher

Teachers must ensure that their students are appropriately prepared for the demands of this task through the careful planning and delivery of the core syllabus activities outlined above.

While the student is working on the assessment task the teacher should:

- discuss each student's choice of play text; it is important that the play text selected is the student's own choice
- guide the students' explorations and discuss their ideas, without prescribing them; this process may involve questioning and encouraging the students to expand on their vision and its feasibility, but should not involve making decisions on their behalf
- ensure that the students have access to live theatre performances in which performance and production elements are employed effectively
- ensure that the students are acknowledging all sources used and referencing them appropriately
- give feedback on one draft of the director's notebook.

Structuring the director's notebook

The director's notebook, which can be up to 20 pages in length, should be a combination of creative ideas, presented in both words and visuals, along with detailed ideas and explanations. The director's notebook should be written in the first person and present the student's personal interpretations, responses, ideas, discoveries and intentions for the proposed staging of their selected play text. Students should be as precise and specific as possible when discussing performance and production elements. The use of subject specific terminology may help to give a sense to this precision.

Students may use any relevant illustrations, annotated text, charts, mind maps, visuals, diagrams, designs and so on. These must be clearly annotated and appropriately referenced to acknowledge the source, following the protocol of the referencing style chosen by the school. When students include any of their own photographs or images, these must also be identified and acknowledged in the same way. There is no lower limit on the number of pages that students can submit for this task and teachers are encouraged to remind students that their work will be assessed on how it best fulfills the assessment criteria for the task and not judged on how many pages are submitted.

The director's notebook should contain a table of contents (which is excluded from the page count) and all pages should be numbered. The main body of the director's notebook should be structured using the following subheadings:

1. The play text, its context and the ideas presented in the play
2. My artistic responses, creative ideas and explorations and my own experiences of live theatre as a spectator
3. My directorial intentions and the intended impact on an audience
4. How I would stage two moments of the play

Students are required to submit a separate list of all sources cited.

Academic Honesty:

All sources must be acknowledged following the protocol of the referencing style chosen by the school. If a student uses work, ideas or images belonging to another person in the director's notebook the student must acknowledge the source using a standard style of referencing in a consistent manner.

A student's failure to acknowledge a source will be investigated by the IB as a potential breach of regulations that may result in a penalty imposed by the IB final award committee.

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Criteria

A. Theatre in context: The play text, its context and the ideas presented

Evidence: the director's notebook

- To what extent does the student demonstrate effective research into the cultural and/or theoretical context of the play text using a range of sources?
- To what extent does the student identify and link the ideas presented by the playwright in the play? (As the author(s) of the text, the playwright might be one person, more than one person or in some cases a theatre company.)

Mark:	Descriptor:
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1-2	This work is inconsistent: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the student lists the cultural and/or theoretical context(s) of the play text using few appropriate sources, not always effectively• the student identifies the ideas presented in the play text by the playwright but these are obvious or contrived and lack depth.
3-4	This work is underdeveloped: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the student outlines the cultural and/or theoretical context(s) of the play text using limited sources effectively• the student identifies some of the ideas presented by the playwright in the play text but does not identify appropriate links between these.
5-6	This work is good: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the student describes the cultural and/or theoretical context(s) of the play text using a range of sources, but not always effectively• the student identifies the ideas presented in the play text and describes how these ideas are linked by the playwright.
7-8	This work is excellent: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the student explains the cultural and/or theoretical context(s) of the play text using a range of sources effectively

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student clearly identifies the ideas presented in the play text and explains how they are linked by the playwright.
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B. Theatre processes: Artistic responses and live theatre experiences

Evidence: the director's notebook

- To what extent does the candidate record their artistic responses, creative ideas and explorations of the play text?
- To what extent does the student make links to relevant experiences of live theatre they have experienced as a spectator during the course, explaining how directors employed performance and production elements to create effective and impactful moments of theatre?

Mark:	Descriptor:
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1-2	<p>This work is inconsistent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student lists any artistic responses, creative ideas or explorations of the play but these may be superficial or underdeveloped the student makes little attempt to make links to their own experiences of live theatre and lists how directors employed production and performance elements to make impactful moments of live theatre.
3-4	<p>This work is underdeveloped:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student outlines their artistic responses, creative ideas and explorations of the play but these may be lacking clarity the student attempts to make links to their own experiences of live theatre and outlines how directors employed production and performance elements to make impactful moments of live theatre.
5-6	This work is good:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student describes their artistic responses, creative ideas and explorations of the play with clarity and some imagination the student makes some appropriate links to their own experiences of live theatre and describes how production and performance elements were combined to make impactful moments of theatre.
7-8	<p>This work is excellent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student presents a clear, detailed and imaginative explanation of their artistic responses, creative ideas and explorations of the play the student makes clear and appropriate links to their own experiences of live theatre and explains how directors employed production and performance elements to make impactful moments of live theatre.

C. Presenting theatre: The director's vision and intended impact

Evidence: the director's notebook

- To what extent does the student clearly present their intentions for the staging of the play text?
- To what extent does the student explain how their presentation of the play text on stage would achieve their intended impact on an audience?

Mark:	Descriptor:
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1-2	<p>This work is inconsistent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student lists their directorial intentions but these may not be appropriate, effective or feasible the student shows little consideration for how their staging of the play might create an intended impact on an audience.
3-4	<p>This work is underdeveloped:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student outlines their directorial intentions which are largely appropriate, effective and feasible, but these may be underdeveloped the student outlines how their staging of the play might create an intended impact on the audience.
5-6	This work is good:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student describes their appropriate, effective and feasible directorial intentions which are supported by a range of ideas the student describes how their staging of the play would create an intended impact on the audience.
7-8	<p>This work is excellent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student clearly explains their appropriate, effective and feasible directorial intentions which are supported by a range of imaginative ideas the student clearly explains how their staging of the play would create an intended impact on the audience.

D. Presenting theatre: The staging of two moments of the play

Evidence: the director's notebook

- To what extent does the student effectively outline how they would stage two moments of the play using appropriate subject terminology, ensuring the play text is not edited, cut or altered?
- To what extent does the student explain how production and performance elements would function together in their staging to fulfill their intentions?

Mark:	Descriptor:
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1-2	<p>This work is inconsistent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student lists how they would stage two moments of the play. This work is incomplete or contains edits, cuts or alterations to the original text the student lists how production and performance elements would function together with little consideration of their stated intentions.
3-4	This work is underdeveloped:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● the student outlines how they would stage two moments of the play● the student outlines how production and performance elements would function together to fulfill their stated intentions.
5-6	<p>This work is good:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● the student describes how they would stage two moments of the play● the student describes how production and performance elements would function together to appropriately fulfill their stated intentions.
7-8	<p>This work is excellent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● the student explains how they would stage two moments of the play● the student explains how production and performance elements would function together to appropriately and effectively fulfill their stated intentions.