



# **Drama Stage 6**

## **Course Prescriptions**

Higher School Certificate  
2015–2017

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## Foreword

The HSC course prescriptions for Drama contain information pertaining to the Higher School Certificate in 2015–2017. Any amendments to requirements will be notified in the *Board Bulletin* Official Notices.

The HSC course prescriptions for Drama should be read in conjunction with:

- the *Drama Stage 6 Syllabus* and other support documents
- Official Notices in the *Board Bulletin*.

There are prescribed topics, texts and rubrics required for study in the Drama Stage 6 HSC course. The Board of Studies reserves the right to make changes to the prescribed topics, texts and rubrics listed in this document. As the prescribed topics, texts and rubrics are reviewed, the amendments will be published on the Board of Studies website and in the Official Notices published in the *Board Bulletin*.

Curriculum advice may be obtained on:

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Correspondence should be addressed to:

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GPO Box 5300  
Sydney NSW 2001

## **Introduction**

The study of texts prescribed in any course for the Higher School Certificate examination may not begin before the completion of the Preliminary course. ‘Study’ here means teacher-directed study and does not apply to attending performances in the Preliminary course of any plays prescribed as HSC texts in Australian Drama and Theatre, Studies in Drama and Theatre, or the Design list for the Individual Project. Students should not be involved in productions of any of these texts during the Preliminary year. (Please note that this supersedes the direction in BOS 141/92.)

When choosing topics and texts for study teachers should consider material that is appropriate to the needs, interests and abilities of their students and consistent with their school ethos and values. If students are to perform extracts from scripts to an audience other than the drama class, the teacher should either ensure that the material is appropriate for the audience (as it may be unfamiliar with the texts and their themes) or distribute explanatory notes to the audience members.

Topics and texts should be taught experientially. These practical experiences should inform the students’ understanding and may be used to show a personal response rather than a purely literary one in their HSC essays.

## **Content**

The information contained in the following pages relates to:

1. Topic list – Group Performance
2. Text list – Individual Project: Design/Critical Analysis (Director’s Folio)
3. Topic list for Australian Drama and Theatre and Studies in Drama and Theatre.

Topic lists for Group Performance, Individual Project: Design/Critical Analysis (Director’s Folio), Australian Drama and Theatre, and Studies in Drama and Theatre may be changed in total or in part every three years. Minor changes may be made within that period.

## **Topic List – Group Performance**

ONE topic to be selected by each group from the following:

1. Keep me posted
2. Au revoir ... Arrivederci ... Adios!
3. A whirlwind of possibilities
4. Ticket no. 214
5. #trending
6. Vanishing point
7. First appearances ...
8. ∞

## Text List for Individual Projects

Students undertaking

### Individual Project: Critical Analysis (Director's Folio)

**OR**

### Individual Project: Design (Costume, Lighting, Promotion and Program, Set)

Must select ONE of the following as the basis of their work:

Betzien, Angela, *War Crimes*, Currency Press, Sydney. ISBN 978-0-86819-918-4

Bovell, Andrew, *When the Rain Stops Falling*, Currency Press, Sydney. ISBN 978-0-86819-928-3

Brecht, Bertholt, 1979, *Threepenny Opera*, Methuen.

Euripides, *The Bacchae*, Currency Press, Sydney. ISBN 978-1-85459-411-2

Stoppard, Tom, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

Hampton, Christopher, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, Faber and Faber, London. ISBN 978-0-57113-724-4

Nowra, Louis, *Summer of the Aliens*, Currency Press, Sydney. ISBN 978-0-86819-325-0

O'Neill, Eugene, 'The Hairy Ape' in *The Hairy Ape and All God's Chillun Got Wings*, Nick Hern Books. ISBN 978-1-85459-151-7

Sater, Steven, *Spring Awakening*, Theatre Communications Group, Script Edition, New York. ISBN 978-1-55936-315-0

Shakespeare, William, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, New Cambridge Shakespeare. ISBN 978-0-52161-871-7

Gow, Michael, *Toy Symphony*, Currency Press. ISBN 978-0-86819-828-6

*This text list may be changed in total or in part every three years.*

## **Topics for Study**

TWO topics must be studied. ONE topic must be selected from Australian Drama and Theatre (Topics 1–2) and ONE topic from Studies in Drama and Theatre (Topics 3–9).

Australian Drama and Theatre will be examined in a mandatory question that will be applicable to both topics.

Topics and texts should be taught experientially. These practical experiences should inform the students' understanding and should be used in their HSC essays to show a personal response rather than a purely literary one.

Australian productions of works chosen from Studies in Drama and Theatre may be relevant to the study of the topic.

Topics, texts or rubrics may be changed in total or in part every three to five years.

Explanations of dramatic terminology used in the descriptions of the topics for Australian Drama and Theatre and Studies in Drama and Theatre can be found in the *Drama Stage 6 Syllabus*. These explanations are intended to assist teachers and students in exploring topics. They are not intended to be prescriptive interpretations of the terms.

### **Australian Drama and Theatre (Core Study)**

The following rubric applies to both topics.

This topic explores, theoretically and experientially, the traditional and contemporary practices of Australian drama and theatre and the various ways in which artistic, cultural, social, political and personal issues and concerns are reflected in different contexts. Students investigate how different Australian practitioners use dramatic forms, performance styles, techniques and conventions to convey ideas and influence the ways in which audiences understand and respond to ideas and images presented in the theatre.

Students must study either Topic 1 or Topic 2. In the examination there will be a mandatory question applicable to both topics.

#### **Students must study at least TWO plays.**

Two plays must be selected from Dramatic Traditions in Australia

#### **OR**

Two plays from Contemporary Australian Theatre Practice.



### **Topic 1: Dramatic Traditions in Australia**

Students must explore the topic using at least TWO of the following:

Buzo, Alex 1999, 'Norm and Ahmed', in *Plays of the 60's Volume 2*, Currency Press, Sydney.

Davis, Jack 1991, *No Sugar*, Currency Press, Sydney.

Hewett, Dorothy 1997, 'The Chapel Perilous', in *Australian Women's Drama*, P Tait & E Schafer (editors), Currency Press, Sydney.

Williamson, David Reprinted 1993, *The Removalists*, Currency Press, Sydney.

### **Topic 2: Contemporary Australian Theatre Practice**

Students must explore the topic using at least TWO of the following:

Harrison, Jane 2003, *Stolen*, Currency Press, Sydney.

Katz, Lally 2011, *Neighbourhood Watch*, Currency Press, Sydney.

Keene, Daniel 2010, *Life Without Me*, Currency Press, Sydney.

Todd, Mirra, 2012, *Fearless*, (A Milk Crate Theatre production) Currency Press, Sydney.

<p>The study of Australian Drama and Theatre includes the above rubric in conjunction with the outcomes and content of the <i>Drama Stage 6 Syllabus</i>, pages 22–23 and 29.</p>
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## Studies in Drama and Theatre

Students must study **ONE** topic chosen from the following:

### Topic 3: Tragedy

This topic explores, theoretically and experientially, plays which give expression to a tragic vision of human experience. By comparing an ancient Greek tragedy to a modern tragic play, students will consider the essence of tragedy and the controlling nature of the protagonist's plight. In particular, the role of fate, suffering, hubris and moral responsibility in the experience of individual tragic heroines and heroes should be considered in light of the political, social and cultural aspects of that experience. Students will explore the dramatic forms, performance styles, techniques and conventions in the plays and consider the implications of staging these plays for a contemporary Australian audience.

**TWO** plays must be chosen, **ONE** from each list.

List 1

#### **EITHER**

Sophocles 2003, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, Victoria.<sup>1</sup>

#### **OR**

Sophocles 2003, *Antigone*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, Victoria.

#### **AND**

List 2

#### **EITHER**

Miller, Arthur 1998, *Death of a Salesman*, Penguin Classics, London.

#### **OR**

Kushner, Tony 1993, *Angels in America (Part 1)*, Theatre Communications Group, New York.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note: *Oedipus Tyrannus* is also known as *Oedipus Rex* or *Oedipus the King*.

#### **Topic 4: Approaches to Acting**

This topic explores approaches to actor training in the 20th century and its realisation in theatre production or other forms of drama performance. The study involves the theoretical and experiential exploration of the philosophical and practical approaches to two practitioners' works and the manifestation of their techniques, process and specific exercises, for performance. Students must consider the aesthetics and expression of the actor's presence and its relationship to audience engagement. Specific examples from the practitioners' theatre works, contemporary theatre practice and the student's own experiential learning should be used to explore the topic.

**TWO** of the following practitioners and texts must be studied:

Augusto Boal: Boal, Augusto 2002, *Games for Actors and Non Actors*, 2nd edn, Routledge, London.

Lecoq, Jacques, *The Moving Body*, Methuen Drama, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, UK. ISBN 978-140811-146-8

Vsevolod Meyerhold: Pitches, Jonathan 2003, *Vsevolod Meyerhold*, Routledge Performance Practitioners, Routledge, London. ISBN 978-041525-884-5

Jerzy Grotowski: Slowiak, James and Cuesta, Jairo 2007, *Jerzy Grotowski*, Routledge Performance Practitioners, Routledge, London. ISBN 978-041525-880-7

**The following texts may be used in conjunction with, or as a supplement to, the texts above.**

Babbage, Frances 2003, *Augusto Boal*, Routledge Performance Practitioners, Routledge, London. ISBN 9780415273268

Jacques Lecoq: Murray, Simon 2003, *Jacques Lecoq*, Routledge Performance Practitioners, Routledge, London. ISBN 978-041525-882-1

Braun, Edward 1995, *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, Methuen, London.

Grotowski, Jerzy, Reprint 2002, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, Routledge, London. ISBN 978-087830-155-3

### **Topic 5: Verbatim Theatre**

This topic explores, theoretically and experientially, plays written using the words of people interviewed about an issue or event and the social context, which gave rise to these plays. Students consider notions of authenticity and authority derived from direct testimony and community involvement. In particular, by engaging with the performance styles, techniques and conventions of the plays, students will explore the tension between maintaining truth while creating dramatic shape, theatricality and audience engagement. Students will include the development of a piece of original Verbatim Theatre in their study of this unit.

**TWO** of the following texts must be studied:

Soans, Robin 2006, *Talking to Terrorists*, Oberon Modern Plays. ISBN 978-184002-562-0

Decent, Campion 2006, *Embers*, Playlab Press, Brisbane. ISBN 978-090815-693-1

Holloway, Tom 2007, *Beyond the Neck*, Playlab Press, Brisbane. ISBN 978-090815-692-4

Valentine, Alana 2007, *Parramatta Girls*, Currency Press, Sydney. ISBN 978-086819-811-8

### **Topic 6: Black Comedy**

This topic explores, theoretically and experientially, modern comic plays from different countries that deal with what is often uncomfortable or suppressed. Students must investigate the nature of comedy and use of humour to confront an audience with human experiences of pain, loss, the controversial or the taboo. In particular, by engaging with the forms, styles, techniques and conventions of the plays, students assess how audiences are affected and whether laughter provides a cathartic experience in this style of theatre.

**TWO** of the following texts must be studied:

#### **Comedy**

McDonagh, Martin 2006, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, Methuen, London.

Pinter, Harold 1991, *The Homecoming*, Faber and Faber, London.

Wilding, Ian 2007, *October*, Currency Press, Sydney. ISBN 978-0-86819-802-6

La Bute, Neil 2002, *The Shape of Things*, Faber and Faber, London.

## Topic 7: Multi-Discipline Theatre

This topic explores theoretically and experientially, the philosophies, processes and practices of a practitioner of multi-discipline theatre and how they challenge traditional representation and dramatic narrative in a highly visual form. Students study the uses of new and traditional theatre technologies in a creative process focused on collaboration, imagination, improvisation and physical expression. Students explore how multi-discipline theatre can address cultural, personal and global issues using acting, movement, film, music and sound, choreography and other resources. Study should include the student's exploration of the process and performance of an original piece of multi-discipline theatre, drawing on processes of the chosen practitioner.

**ONE** of the following practitioners must be studied:

### **EITHER**

Robert Lepage and ExMachina

#### **Texts set for study:**

Dundjerovic, Sasa Aleksandar 2009, *Robert Lepage*, Routledge, New York.

Caux, Patrick, and Bernard Gilbert 2009, Trans. Neil Kroetsch, *ExMachina: Creating for the Stage*, Talon Books, Vancouver.

### **OR**

Simon McBurney and Theatre de Complicite

#### **Texts set for study:**

Complicite, *A Disappearing Number*, Oberon Modern Plays, London. 2008

Complicite 2010, *Complicite Rehearsal Notes, a visual essay of the unique working methods of the company*. Complicite, London. ISBN 978-095658-540-0 (pbk.) 095658-540-X (pbk.) <[www.complicite.org](http://www.complicite.org)>

The following text *may* be used in conjunction with or as a supplement to the Complicite texts:

McBurney, S. 2012, *Who You Hear it from – Essays by ...* Complicite, London.

### **Topic 8: Significant Plays of the 20th Century**

This topic explores, theoretically and experientially, how significant theatrical works shifted and influenced the theatrical paradigm of the 20th century. The study explores plays that were revolutionary in response to the place and time of the original production, presented challenging content and reinvented or created new theatrical styles, structures and forms. By engaging with the performance and narrative styles, issues, techniques, conventions and staging of the plays, students will explore the impact and ways these plays broke new ground and sought to affect an audience in dynamic and powerful ways.

**TWO** the following plays must be studied:

Chekov, Anton, *The Cherry Orchard*, Nick Hern Books, Currency Press, Sydney. ISBN 978-185459-412-9

Brecht, Bertholt 1995, 'Mother Courage', in *Collected Plays 5*, Methuen, London.

Ionesco, Eugene, *The Bald Prima Donna (also known as The Bald Soprano)*, Samuel French, London. ISBN 978-057302-013-1

Churchill, Caryl 1982, *Top Girls*, Samuel French, London.

Kaufman, Moisés, and Members of the Tectonic Theatre Project 2001, *The Laramie Project*, Vintage Books, Random House, New York.

### **Topic 9: Japanese Traditional and Contemporary Theatre**

This topic explores, theoretically and experientially, the unique expression of the Japanese theatrical aesthetic, in both traditional and contemporary forms, in response to the historical, cultural and social context of the times. By engaging with the contemporary work of Tadashi Suzuki, and one traditional form – Noh or Kabuki or Bunraku – students investigate the form’s purpose and characteristics. Students explore how the performance styles, techniques and conventions including staging, presentation of character, acting styles and training, music and movement convey ideas and make meaning for an audience.

**ONE** of the following traditional Japanese forms must be studied:

Brandon, James 1992, *Sukeroku, Kabuki, Five Classic Plays*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.

**OR**

Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound 2004, *The Noh Theatre of Japan: With Complete Texts of 15 Classic Plays*, Play 1, Dover.

**OR**

Allain, Paul 2003, *The Art of Stillness, The Theatre Practice of Tadashi Suzuki*, Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-140396-170-9

**OR**

Jones, Stanleigh H 2013, (trans), *The Mountains from Mount Imo and Mount Se: Precepts for Women in Bunraku Puppet Theatre*, University of Hawaii Press.

**AND**

Tadashi Suzuki: Suzuki, Tadashi 1986, *The Way of Acting*, J Thomas Rimer (trans), Theatre Communications Group, New York.

**Effective: 2015–2017 Higher School Certificate**

**Contact: (02) 9367 8161**

## **Examinations**

Teachers and students are reminded that they are required to certify that any submitted work is the student's own and that any words, ideas, designs or workmanship of others have been acknowledged appropriately. Class teachers and principals must certify that the work has been done under the teacher's supervision, was the student's own work, and was completed by the due date.

### **Individual Project**

Students' Individual Project options may not be changed after mid-July. Before this date, any changes to students' Individual Project options must be changed on *Schools Online* or by fax to (02) 9367 8302, marked for the attention of the Drama Coordinator, Examination Support. Option changes will not be accepted after this date.

Students may not present an Individual Project: Performance in lieu of another unfinished project, or resubmit work undertaken in the Preliminary course for the HSC.

### **Group Performances and Individual Performances**

For reasons of confidentiality, students are not allowed to see other students' examinations. Groups of students who have presented their Group Performance and individuals who have presented their Individual Project in Performance are not permitted to become part of the audience for subsequent groups and/or individuals. Group Performance will be examined by visiting examiners from the Board of Studies towards the end of Term 3 of the HSC year. The teacher may be present as part of the audience, but will not be a member of the Examination Panel or perform any technical operations during the Group Performances.

All students involved in a Group Performance will be studying for the Higher School Certificate Drama examination. Where a school has fewer than three students attempting the examination or a member of the group is incapacitated by illness or misadventure, other students of the school (not attempting the Higher School Certificate examination) may be used to achieve the required numbers. These students should not be involved in the development of the Group Performance.

The use of students, other than HSC Drama students, must be approved by the Manager, Examination Operations.

### **Examination of the Group Performance**

The following checklist has been included to assist preparation for the examination for Group Performance. Paperwork, completed and available for examiners, should include the following:

- **Group performance certification forms** must be completed BEFORE examinations for each group, signed by students, the teacher and the principal. Certification forms should be retained at the school. The purpose of this form is to certify that the work is the student's own and has not been directed by any outside adviser or tutor.
- **Group photo sheets** must have student photos pasted onto sheets before the examination. Student numbers and role descriptions should also be included as well as the SCHOOL NUMBER. Along with the original, there must be two extra copies of these sheets for each group available to examiners.
- **A program of running order** is essential so that examiners are aware of the order of group performances. Student numbers rather than student names should be included on



programs. Times for scheduled breaks should also be included. Some flexibility to the program may be required but will be negotiated by examiners where necessary. Total time allocated for examination of the Group Performance is 35 minutes, including the performance and interaction.

- **Students who believe they are affected by illness/misadventure** should advise examiners upon arrival, before the Group or Individual Performance commences. The student should then obtain an illness/misadventure form from the principal. This form should be completed and submitted within a week of the performance.

The following conditions apply to the Group Performance:

- **A supervised audience** of no more than 30 students from the school should be present. The audience should be aware of appropriate audience conventions and should be chosen by negotiation between the teacher and the examined students before the examination. Students who are HSC candidates in any subject are not permitted to form part of the audience. Members of the public may not be present as audience members. For reasons of confidentiality, groups of students who have presented their Group Performance are not permitted to become part of the audience.
- **The examination area** should be an indoor school venue such as a small to medium-size room. The area should be conducive to performance, ie free of noise or interruption. Sectioning off the performance area will help to reduce interruptions.
- **A brief interaction** will take place between the examiners and the students at the conclusion of each Group Performance. This will be a standardised interaction for the purpose of confirming the examiners' impressions of the Group Performance. Interactions may take place in the performance space or in a room nearby. It is imperative that there be no interruptions to this process. Following interactions with students, examiners need time to confer. Confidentiality during this time must be respected.
- **Examiners' requirements** when marking include the need for desks and sufficient light for writing during performances. Desks should be placed together in an area where examiners can see and hear effectively. Audience members should not be placed directly near examiners. There will be two examiners present who will at times be joined by a senior examiner.
- **Logbooks** for EACH student must be given to examiners in program order for Group Performances and for Individual Performances.
- **Recording devices** of any kind must not be used during examinations.
- **Student identification** occurs before each Group Performance. Students are asked to line up in the order of photographs on the group photo sheets. Examiners record descriptions of students before the performance begins. Students wearing the same costumes should attach something, eg a colour band, to assist identification by examiners during the performance.
- **Inappropriate items** in performances such as weapons, naked flames, implements that may endanger performers, audience members or examiners may not be used. Nudity is also inappropriate. Examiners will stop performances should any inappropriate items appear.
- **Production effects** such as costumes, sets, lighting, video, film, sound and technical support should be minimal and limited to those essential to the work's meaning. As

available facilities and technical equipment vary in schools, external examiners will not award extra marks to any presentation dependent on technical and/or special effects.

- **Operation of technical equipment** such as lighting can only be carried out by other students in the school who are not HSC students. Teachers, or members of the public, are not permitted to operate technical equipment. A stage crew of students who are not HSC students may be used to set and remove props.
- **Time limits** must be adhered to. Students should be given several opportunities to perform their work before the examination to ensure work runs within time stipulations (Group Performance 8–12 minutes). Examiners will stop performances that go over time. Performances, which are under time, will not meet the criteria and will be disadvantaged.

### **Examination of the Individual Project: Performance**

Please note that the Checklist for Group Performance above applies to the Individual Project, Performance with the addition of the following. Paperwork, completed and available for examiners, should include the following:

- **Before the examination, students and the teacher should sign student/teacher Individual Declarations.** These forms certify that the work is the student's own and that the teacher has monitored the development of the project. Appropriate documentation should be completed if there is a question that the work is not the student's own. Examiners should be informed if forms have not been signed for this reason.
- **A program of running order** is essential so that examiners are aware of the order of Individual Performances. Student numbers rather than student names should be included on programs. Times for scheduled breaks should also be included. Some flexibility within the program may be required but will be negotiated by examiners where necessary. The total time allocated for the examination of the Individual Performance is 20 minutes.
- **The Rationale for Individual Project: Performance** should be on the last page of the Logbook to be referred to by examiners. For submitted Individual Projects, the Rationale will be sent in separately from the Logbook.
- **Logbooks** for EACH student must be given to examiners in program order for Individual Performances.
- **Time limits** must be adhered to. Students should be given several opportunities to perform before the examination to ensure work runs within time stipulations (Individual Performance 6–8 minutes). Examiners will stop performances that go over time. Performances, which are under time, will not meet the criteria and may be disadvantaged.