Contents

Foreword ............................................................................................................................................. 4
Introduction ......................................................................................................................................... 5
Content ............................................................................................................................................... 6
Topic List – Group Performance ...................................................................................................... 7
Text List for Individual Projects ..................................................................................................... 8

Individual Project: Critical Analysis (Director’s Folio) ................................................................. 8
Individual Project: Design (Costume, Lighting, Promotion and Program, Set) ......................... 8

Topics for Study ................................................................................................................................. 9

Australian Drama and Theatre (Core Study) .................................................................................. 9

Students must study at least TWO plays ....................................................................................... 9

Topic 1: Dramatic Traditions in Australia ......................................................................................... 10
Topic 2: Contemporary Australian Theatre Practice ........................................................................ 10

Studies in Drama and Theatre ........................................................................................................ 11

Topic 3: The Voice of Women in Theatre ......................................................................................... 11
Topic 4: Approaches to Acting .......................................................................................................... 12
Topic 5: Verbatim Theatre ............................................................................................................... 13
Topic 6: Black Comedy ..................................................................................................................... 13

Topic 7: Multi-Discipline Theatre ..................................................................................................... 14

Topic 8: Significant Plays of the 20th Century ............................................................................... 15
Topic 9: Japanese Traditional and Contemporary Theatre ............................................................... 16

Examinations ................................................................................................................................... 17

Individual Project ............................................................................................................................. 17

Group Performances and Individual Performances ....................................................................... 17

Examination of the Group Performance ......................................................................................... 17

Examination of the Individual Project: Performance ..................................................................... 19
Foreword

The HSC course prescriptions for Drama contain information pertaining to the Higher School Certificate in 2019–2021. Any amendments to requirements will be notified in the NESA News 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 NESA News.

There are prescribed topics, texts and rubrics required for study in the Drama Stage 6 HSC course. The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) 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 NESA website and in the Official Notices published in the NESA News.

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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.
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.

If the specified edition of a text is out of print or widely unavailable, schools may use any suitable edition of the text selected. Where a text is quoted in an examination question, it will be from the listed edition.
Topic List – Group Performance

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

1. Allsorts
2. Amigo/ami/hombre/friend
3. Careless whispers
4. Critical Mass: the logic of collective action for common good or the minimum amount of fissile material needed to maintain a nuclear chain reaction or the amount needed to begin a new venture
5. Fire, Water, Earth, Air
6. The ties that bind
7. Set a course, get your bearings, anchors aweigh!
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:


*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 exploring how a work moves from page to stage. At all times, workshops should be grounded in the plays themselves or the practitioners’ work. This might involve the staging of scenes, adding props, set pieces, sound and lighting to create atmosphere, experimenting with direction and acting to enhance audience engagement etc. 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:


**Topic 2: Contemporary Australian Theatre Practice**

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


The study of Australian Drama and Theatre includes the above rubric in conjunction with the outcomes and content of the *Drama Stage 6 Syllabus*, pages 22–23 and 29.
Studies in Drama and Theatre

Students must study ONE topic chosen from the following:

**Topic 3: The Voice of Women in Theatre**

This topic explores, theoretically and experientially, plays written by women or as a particular collaboration with women, which give expression to a female vision of human experience. Students compare two female playwrights from different contexts and consider the ways women create, develop and assert their voice in a distinctive theatrical expression. In particular, the roles, characters, issues and situations depicted, the maintaining or breaking of stereotypes and socio/cultural judgments made about women are considered. Students engage with the plays’ dramatic forms and techniques, performance styles and conventions to explore how varied issues affecting women’s equality, status and identities are voiced.

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

*List 1*

**EITHER**

Behn, Aphra, *The Rover*, in Restoration Comedy: Three Plays (Drama Collections) by Behn/Congreve/Wycherley, Nick Hern Books (through Currency Press) 2004

**OR**


(or ‘Top Girls’ in Churchill Plays 2, Methuen, London, 1990)

**AND**

*List 2*

**EITHER**


**OR**


**OR**

Purcell, Leah and Rankin Scott, *Box the Pony*, Hachette Australia 1999. 0-7336-1069-2

**OR**


**OR**


This text appears in the English Stage 6 Prescriptions and is no longer available for study in Drama.
**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:


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


**Topic 5: Verbatim Theatre**

This topic explores, theoretically and experientially, plays written using the words of people interviewed about an issue or event known as Verbatim Theatre and the social context, which gave rise to them. 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:**


**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**

**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 highly visual forms. Students study new and traditional theatre technologies and creative processes 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 practices of the chosen practitioner.

ONE of the following practitioners must be studied:

**EITHER**

Robert Lepage and ExMachina

**Texts set for study:**


**OR**

Simon McBurney and Theatre de Complicite

**Texts set for study:**


<www.complicite.org>

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

**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 and beyond. 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** of the following plays must be studied:


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 forms’ 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:


OR


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


OR


Effective: 2019–2021 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, is the student’s own work, and has been completed by the due date.

Individual Project

Changes to Individual Project options for students can be made on Schools Online until mid-June. After mid-June, any changes to students’ Individual Project options must be made in writing and emailed to the NESA Drama Coordinator at hscpracticals@nesa.nsw.edu.au and signed by the student, teacher and school principal.

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 NESA 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.

Approval from NESA must be sought for the use of students other than HSC Drama students.

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, i.e. 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, e.g. 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 15 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.