

AQA GCSE Drama

Component 1 Top Band Questions

Example Top Band Answers

Work backwards through your paper, answer your questions in this order:

Section C

32- Trojan Horse- 35 minutes

Section B

20- The Crucible- 20 minutes

12- The Crucible- 12 minutes

8- The Crucible- 8 minutes

4- The Crucible- 4 minutes

Section A

4 Multiple Choice

Overview of question types and timings

- ✓ **Section B:** four questions on a given extract from 'The Crucible' (44 marks)
- ✓ You can have a clean copy of The Crucible in the exam.
- ✓ You will be given an extract from the play which the questions will be focused on.

Question 1

- ✓ 4 marks- **4 minutes**
- ✓ This question focuses on DESIGN: costume, setting, props, lighting and furniture.

Question 2

- ✓ 8 marks- **8 minutes**
- ✓ This question focuses on one line of the extract and how you would act it out.

Question 3

- ✓ 12 marks- **12 minutes**
- ✓ This question focuses on a shaded part of the extract and how you would act it out.

Question 4/5

- ✓ 20 marks- **20 minutes**
- ✓ One question will be on design, the other acting. **Choose the acting one!**
- ✓ This question focuses on how you would use your acting skills for a different character in the whole extract. When explaining your ideas, you need to refer to other moments from the whole play.

**Total time on Section B: 10 mins question prep- 44 minutes to answer the questions
=54 minutes total for section B**

Blood Brothers – Willy Russell

- 6.1** You are designing a **setting** for a performance of this extract. The setting must reflect the context of *Blood Brothers*, set in a working-class community in around the 1970s. Describe your design ideas for the setting.

[4 marks]

Example response

It is important to show the difference between the sort of classroom in the school that Mickey and Linda go to ¹ compared to the school Eddie goes to. As I design my set, I would want lots of detail to show the period of the play and that it is a working-class school. ² The desks and chairs would all be made of wood and also be very shabby and worn. ³ They would not be set out in neat rows either. ⁴ The blackboard would be an old-fashioned painted blackboard on wheels ⁵ and on this there would be graffiti which said 'Mickey Luvs Linda 4 Eva' on it to show more about their characters. ⁶ There wouldn't be much colour in the design for my set at all.

Commentary

A good description of the setting for this extract, with secure knowledge and understanding of the play and its context. There are a number of precise details provided to support the design, but not all of them give enough information. The design is appropriate to the brief in the question.

Band 3

Comments

1. Understanding of the play; social context.

2. Intentions are stated; follows the brief in the question.

3. Design detail included; does not say how they would look worn/shabby.

4. Creative design idea.

5. Precise detail; follows the period in the brief.

6. Creative design idea; lacks detail on how this will be achieved.

- **Costume example answers:**

Band 4

Blood Brothers was set in the early 1980s when there was a large gap between the working class and the upper class. In this extract Mickey is all grown up, unemployed and taking pills for his depression. In this scene, I would have him wearing a plain white t-shirt with different stains all down it to suggest he hasn't been looking after himself, therefore, he is wearing worn, dirty clothes. The stains may also suggest he has been drinking because of his mental state. I would also have Mickey wearing some old, navy blue trainers which have scuffs and scratches all over. One foot the material at the front of the toe will be completely worn off and colourless. With this type of footwear it would suggest that Mickey does not care about his personal appearance. This would also reflect his financial problems, being in the working class and unemployed, he wouldn't have new branded shoes.

Band 4

During the early 1980s, there was a large divide in social classes throughout Liverpool. With Edward being from the middle class, I would get him to wear a pair of brown leather, laced up shoes paired with long white socks. He would also wear a white long-sleeved shirt and a pair of dark green pressed shorts to emphasise his wealth. He would also wear a brown knitted jumper, however, the sleeves would be rolled up as he has been playing. This would emphasise to the audience how Edward is only a seven year old boy. He would also be wearing a dark green school boy cap with his schools crest embroidered on the front, again, this would highlight the differences between Edwards upbringing in comparison to Mickey.

- **Setting example answer:**

Band 3

It is important to show the difference between the sort of classroom in the school that Mickey and Linda go to compared to the school Eddie goes to. As I design my set, I would want lots of detail to show the period of the play and that it is a working-class school. The desks and chairs would all be made of wood and also be very shabby and worn. They would not be set out in neat rows either. The blackboard would be an old-fashioned painted blackboard on wheels and on this there would be graffiti which said 'Mickey Luvs Linda 4 Eva' on it to show more about their characters. There wouldn't be much colour in the design for my set at all.

- **Props and furniture example answer:**

Band 3

This extract is set in Hannay's flat and the play takes place in the 1930s so the props and furniture would all need to look authentic. Firstly, I would have an armchair for Hannay in the flat. This would be made from leather (green) and would be very straight at the back and uncomfortable to sit in. Because Hannay is posh I would have the armchair in really good condition with no scratches or scuffs. In terms of a prop, I would have a cocktail set **5** on a drinks trolley next to the arm chair, as these were popular in the 1930s. This would be a whisky decanter and a set of glasses and also an ice bucket.

5.2 You are performing the role of Elizabeth. Describe how you would use your vocal and physical skills to perform the line below and explain the effects you want to create.

‘You – have been tortured?’

[8 marks]

Example response

The first thing that is immediately clear is that Elizabeth is shocked at seeing her husband like this, exhausted and frail. I would show this shock firstly in her voice. I would use the dash in the line for a pause, and on this pause I would slowly cast my eyes over ⁷ (the actor playing) John so that I can clearly see how weak and pitiful he is. This pause would emphasise how Elizabeth was struggling with the situation. ⁸ Obviously, in this scene, Elizabeth has seen John before, but only in this moment does she register his physical weakness and that he is breaking down. ⁹

I would continue to show how shocked I was by changing the pitch and tone of my voice as the line changes. At the start of the line, I would say the word ‘you’ as though I was making a bold statement or an accusation, and use a strong and clear tone of voice. ¹⁰ However, after the shock of seeing John in such a state, I would say the words

‘have been tortured’ in a much softer and kinder tone. I would almost whisper them to him, and try to show just how much Elizabeth cares for John and how upset she is by what he is being put through ¹¹ by the people of Salem.

I would use my physical skills to show how compassionate and caring Elizabeth is, but also how scared she is for what might happen to John. ¹² As I say the word ‘you’ I would slowly bend down and get on my knees on the floor so that I am level with John. This is so I can look directly into his eyes and show just how much I love him. ¹³ I will gently take hold of his two hands in mine ¹⁴ to show how much I love and care for him, and that – because he is my husband – my instinct is to protect him.

Finally, I would want to ensure that the audience feels sympathy for me and for John, ¹⁵ and so on the words ‘have been tortured’ I would carefully pull John towards me and clutch him to my chest. ¹⁶ This way, I can embrace him in my arms, and show that despite what he did with Abigail and the lies he told, I still love him and am proud that I am married to him. This is only a short line but the combined use of my physical and vocal skills mean that I can use these four words and a pause to show real tenderness and warmth to John. ¹⁷

7. Combination of physical and vocal skills in precise detail.

8. Knowledge and understanding; entirely appropriate to the role.

9. Suggests her ‘motivation’ behind the line here.

10. Precise details on vocal skills. A sense of the line emerges.

Comments

11. Clear and comprehensive explanation.

12. Knowledge and understanding of the role, as performed.

13. Clear, appropriate justification.

14. Precise details on physical skills.

15. Awareness of the audience; this is a performance.

16. Precise details on physical skills.

17. Excellent understanding demonstrated.

12 Mark Example Answer and Structure

5.3 You are performing the role of Elizabeth. Focus on the shaded part of the extract. Explain how you and the actor playing John might use the performance space and interact with each other to create tension for your audience. [12 marks]

SET THE SCENE- WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE? WHAT WILL YOU HAVE TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN BRINGING IT TO LIFE?

This part of the extract takes place in a jail cell which would be very cramped and uncomfortable, and not have nice living conditions; especially in the 17th century when *The Crucible* is set. Because of this, John and I would have a limited amount of space in which we could move, and we would have to be very careful in terms of how we used this space to create tension.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED UP UNTIL THIS POINT IN THE PLAY? WHAT IS GOING TO BE IMPORTANT TO SHOW?

Up until this point in the play, Elizabeth and John have had a very turbulent relationship because of his lies and the accusations against him. It would be important to show this in the extract, but also that these two people love each other despite everything that has happened – this is what helps to create the tension.

QUOTE 1: DESCRIBE THE SKILL. EXPLAIN WHAT IS COMMUNICATED ABOUT THE CHARACTER'S RELATIONSHIP.

When John asks Elizabeth how Giles Corey dies ('Then how does he die?') the actor playing John should move towards me quickly and with his arms outstretched to place them on my shoulders. John is terrified of the manner in which he will die and this line is like an accusation. He should start to lose patience with Elizabeth, even though she is trying to be kind and keep the truth from him.

QUOTE 2: DESCRIBE THE SKILL. EXPLAIN WHAT IS COMMUNICATED ABOUT THE CHARACTER'S RELATIONSHIP.

With John very close to Elizabeth there will be real tension between them as she is forced to say 'They press him, John,' with a pause before that. As I say this line I would nervously avoid eye contact and look away from John so that I did not have to directly look into his eyes as I start to reveal what will happen to him. This will create further tension for the audience because the characters are physically close, but Elizabeth is trying to avoid the truth. When Elizabeth finally reveals about the crushing of Giles – and of what will happen to John – I would have the actor playing John's mouth slowly fall open in a mixture of shock and fear as if he had never imagined that such a thing could happen to him.

QUOTE 3: DESCRIBE THE SKILL. EXPLAIN WHAT IS COMMUNICATED ABOUT THE CHARACTER'S RELATIONSHIP.

As he says the line 'More weight' I would have his arms drop from Elizabeth's shoulders and have him stagger backwards slightly. Because he is so weak and disoriented anyway, this would mean he could collapse backwards against the wall of the cell, as the realisation sinks in.

Finally, when John suggests to Elizabeth that he will confess to clear his name – something he has been determined not to do throughout the entire play – I would have him stay leaning against the wall, but make very strong and clear eye contact with Elizabeth. This is because the question is so important – it is literally life or death, and this would generate tension waiting to see how she will respond. There would then be a deliberate pause waiting for her response. I would have her shuffle slightly, and look down at the floor, so the audience cannot properly see her face and won't know exactly what she is thinking. Again, this will create tension.

QUOTE 4: DESCRIBE THE SKILL. EXPLAIN WHAT IS COMMUNICATED ABOUT THE CHARACTER'S RELATIONSHIP.

As she says the line, 'I cannot judge you, John,' I would have her turn away from him, and face the door of the cell. Although their bodies are close because it is such a small space, she is so scared of him seeing her true feelings, and that she cannot bear to look at her husband. This would create tension because the extract will end with them physically close but not connected because of John's fate.

20 Mark Example Answer and Structure

5.4 You are performing the role of Proctor. Describe how you would use your acting skills to interpret Proctor's character in this extract and explain why your ideas are appropriate both for this extract and the play as a whole. [20 marks]

INTRODUCE THE CHARACTER IN FOCUS- WHO IS HE? HOW IS HE VIEWED THROUGHOUT THE PLAY AND WHY?

John Proctor is a complex man who is a product of the society that he lives in. Because the town of Salem in the seventeenth century is so ruled by fear and religion, people believe completely in God and Satan and witchcraft. John Proctor is a tragic figure throughout the play. We know that he is thought of as a weak man because of what he has done with Abigail, and also because he has lied about this to his wife.

--BEGINNING OF THE EXTRACT--

POINT: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SHOW IN THIS EXTRACT? SITUATION/ RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHARACTERS.

EVIDENCE: QUOTE

EXAMPLE: PERFORMANCE SKILLS

EXPLAIN: TO SHOW...

In this extract specifically I would want to show this as it is towards the end of Proctor's journey through the play. He has been gradually ground down by those around him and the events of the witchcraft trials and he has no energy left. In this extract he is not angry with Elizabeth, and I would want to show a sense of his shame for what he has put her through, and perhaps fear when he learns of his fate. I would show this by my having limited eye contact with Elizabeth throughout, and letting her initiate all the physical contact. I would be sitting on the floor of the cell, with my back against the wall, and hugging my knees to my chest. This would show just how far Proctor has fallen from grace and how small he now seems. To show the fear I would have real moments of hesitation. The stage direction says that he looks at her 'incredulously' and I would use this moment to convey the shock and horror upon finding out that Giles is dead. I would stare at Elizabeth with my mouth open and my eyes wide, my arms hanging limply by my sides. This would be a key moment for me in interpreting the character because I would choose to reveal the fear that he now knows for sure that he will die to unless he confesses.

--END OF EXTRACT--

POINT: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SHOW IN THIS EXTRACT? SITUATION/ RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHARACTERS.

EVIDENCE: QUOTE

EXAMPLE: PERFORMANCE SKILLS

EXPLAIN: TO SHOW...

Near the end of the extract, John suggests to Elizabeth that he could confess to clear his name. This would be a huge moral issue for him, and throughout the play I would have communicated Proctor as a deeply moral character who believes in honesty and truth and justice (apart from the issue with Abigail). In this moment I would want to communicate my frustration and despair that Elizabeth will not satisfy me with an answer, and that I am looking to her to save my fate. On the lines 'What say you? If I give them that?' I would bang the floor of the jail cell with my fists, although in a weak way because I am tired and frail. I would beat the floor to try and get Elizabeth to react but also to show just how desperate and frantic I am to change the situation.

--CONTRAST EXAMPLE 1--

POINT: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SHOW IN THIS EXTRACT? SITUATION/ RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHARACTERS.

EVIDENCE: QUOTE

EXAMPLE: PERFORMANCE SKILLS

EXPLAIN: TO SHOW...

In the scene – where she serves him his dinner – I would show that he is a strong man and a calm man, but that he loses his temper with Elizabeth. When he says 'You forget nothin' and forgive nothin'! Learn charity, woman!' I would shout this with a raised voice. I would stand up from my seat at the table and kick my chair over backwards as I did so to show my strength and physical presence. I would walk over to Elizabeth as I said this line, and make it an accusation, shouting it at her and pointing at her too. This side of Proctor would be a total contrast to how he is with Elizabeth in the jail cell in the extract.

--CONTRAST EXAMPLE 2--

POINT: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SHOW IN THIS EXTRACT? SITUATION/ RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHARACTERS.

EVIDENCE: QUOTE

EXAMPLE: PERFORMANCE SKILLS

EXPLAIN: TO SHOW...

Proctor does love his wife, even though the dinner scene shows that they have something of a cold marriage at this stage of their lives, when he says 'I mean to please you, Elizabeth.' I would also contrast this with how I interpret Proctor as he is when he is alone with Abigail. In the first part of the play – act one – he is alone with her and behaves very differently to how he does with his wife. Abigail still flirts with him, and he responds back when he says 'What's this mischief here?' As he says this line, I would have him saying it with a sly smile, and him acknowledging what he has done with her even in the past. I would show Proctor as being firm and direct with her, but choosing not to have any physical contact with her. This is the main challenge in portraying Proctor, to show and interpret his strength and weakness at the same time. In the moment with Abigail he can show that he is trying not to respond to her flirting, but that she somehow manages to get the better of him.