Individual performance choices and analysis

IB DP Literature and Performance SL: the written assignment

Individual performance choices and analysis

- explain the format and marks of the written assignment;
- name the dramatic features of an extract, as in Macbeth's dagger **soliloquy**;
- analyse a performance choice in three steps: feature, choice, effect;

Individual performance choices and analysis (2)

- support an effect with evidence and evaluate your own choices;
- plan a 2,000-word essay.

Dramatic features

- A play is written to be performed, so its words already hold instructions for voices, bodies and space.
- Before you make a choice, name the feature of the text that the choice will stage.
- The table applies five features to the dagger scene; your own extract will use some of them more than others.

Making and analysing choices

- For each choice, write in three steps:
- 1. **The feature**: what the text does ("Macbeth asks questions he cannot answer: 'Is this a dagger ...?'"). 2. **The choice**: what you did in performance ("I played the speech with no dagger on stage, my hand reaching into empty air"). 3. **The effect**: what it shows about the text, and how you know ("The audience had to believe in the dagger through my eyes and hand, as Macbeth believes in it: the 'dagger of the mind' became the audience's experience too.
- A classmate said the empty hand was more frightening than a prop").

Planning the essay

- Write about *your own* choices, even when you performed in a group: what you, as one performer, did with your voice, body and space.
- **Common mistakes:** describing the performance without analysing it; analysing the text without the performance; long plot summary; claiming an effect without evidence (an audience response, a rehearsal change).

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Sources for this lesson

- International Baccalaureate, *Literature and Performance guide* (first assessment 2024), written assignment criteria.
- W. Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (about 1606), Act 2, Scene 1, Arden Shakespeare third series, ed. S. Clark and P. Mason (2015).
- *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (the First Folio, 1623).

Common errors

- Describing the performance without analysing it.
- Analysing the text without the performance.
- Long plot summary instead of close work on one extract.

Common errors (2)

- Claiming an effect without evidence, such as an audience response or a change made in rehearsal.
- Writing about the group's choices instead of your own.
- Leaving out the evaluation: what did not work, and what you would change.

Key terms

- **Written assignment**: an essay of up to 2,000 words on a dramatic extract you explored through performance.
- **Dramatic work**: a text written to be performed, such as a play.
- **Dramatic feature**: a feature of a play, such as dialogue, **soliloquy**, stage directions or **dramatic irony**.

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Key terms (2)

- **Soliloquy**: a speech in which a character, alone on stage, speaks their thoughts aloud.
- **Dramatic irony**: when the audience knows something a character does not.

Check yourself

- 1.
- What are the word limit, marks and weight of the written assignment? 2.
- Why does Shakespeare's text contain so few stage directions in the dagger scene? 3.
- Give three ways a production could stage the dagger. 4.