

GCE
AS and A Level

Dance

AS exams 2009 onwards
A2 exams 2010 onwards

Unit 1:
Specimen mark scheme

Version 1.1





General Certificate of Education

Dance DANC1

Specimen Mark Scheme

Unit 1 – Understanding Dance

The specimen assessment materials are provided to give centres a reasonable idea of the general shape and character of the planned question papers and mark schemes in advance of the first operational exams.

Vertical black lines indicate a significant change or addition to the previous specimen mark scheme.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

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Dr Michael Cresswell, Director General

Introduction

The Assessment Objectives

Unit 1 assesses Assessment Objectives 3, 4i and 5i.

AO3 communicate clearly through writing the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to dance study.

AO4i show detailed knowledge and understanding, in written form, of choreographic and performance process either in own work and/or professional repertoire.

AO5i show detailed knowledge and understanding, in written form, of the significance of dance, either in own work and/or professional repertoire.

These assessment objectives are not assessed discretely in this unit, so that one or more may be present in a question.

Guidance on the use of the Mark Scheme

Questions in Section B are marked out of 20 according to the generic banding schemes. The bullet points below each question indicate relevant points which responses might be expected to contain. Answers which take a different approach may be equally valid and must be rewarded.

Examiners should be positive in their marking, rewarding points that candidates make rather than penalising them for omissions.

All candidates' work must be marked against the criteria, not against the last script marked.

Note that Band 1 criteria refer to very good, not exceptional, work. Marks in this band are available for a very good answer written in examination conditions from an AS level student.

As well as using all of the five mark bands as appropriate, examiners should use the full range of marks available within any one mark band.

Section A

Questions in this section total 20 marks.
Both questions are compulsory.
Each question is worth 10 marks.

- 1 a) Explain what you understand by the term *flexibility* in relation to the dancer.**

For example:

the range of movement that is possible in a joint

the elasticity of the muscles that affects the range of movement

the range of movement that is determined by the ligaments that provide stability in the joint and by the shape and structure of the bone

(2 marks)

- b) Describe a specific exercise that you have used successfully to improve your flexibility.**

For example:

Hamstring stretch – static stretching

Standing in neutral, parallel and stepping forwards on the right leg into a wide lunge, with the front heel planted firmly on the floor and taking the weight forward over the bent front knee so that the hands are placed either side of the front foot. The heel of the left foot, which is extended behind, is raised off the floor and the alignment of the whole position is parallel. As the position is held for 10 seconds the dancer focuses on slowly and gently lowering the back heel closer to the floor thus increasing the stretch in the hamstrings of the extended leg. The stretch should then be repeated on the other side. This is an example of static stretching – stretching a group of muscles to their farthest point and then holding them.

Hip flexors – passive stretching

Sitting on the floor with the soles of the feet placed together and the knees falling out to the side, the dancer sits upright with a straight back, abdominals engaged and hands resting on the ankles and the elbows are on the knees. The muscles of the legs are relaxed as the dancer uses the elbows to gently push the knees closer to the floor. There is no resistance from the legs. The stretching should continue for 7 – 10 seconds and then the knees released and rested for 7 – 10 seconds before the stretched is repeated. This is an example of passive stretching and will increase the range of movement possible in the hips.

Calf stretch – isometric stretching

Stand facing a wall. Place both hands on the wall in front with the elbows slightly bent and, bending the left leg a little, extend the right leg behind. This is not a wide lunge position; the right foot is only about a 'foot' distance behind. Both heels are on the floor and the muscles are relaxed as if in a passive stretch. The dancer now pushes the hands into the wall and tenses the calf muscles of the extended right leg holding the stretch for 7 – 15 seconds. This is an example of isometric stretching which involves resistance of muscles through isometric contractions (tensing) of the stretched muscles. Resistance can be applied manually by the dancer's own limbs,

by having a partner apply resistance or by some apparatus such as a wall – as in the example – or the floor.

Hamstring stretch – PNF

Working with a partner one dancer lies on her/his back on the floor and extends one leg up. The dancer gently holds the extended leg with both hands behind the knee or calf/ankle and with the muscles relaxed gently pulls the leg towards the nose. This passive stretch is held for 10 – 15 seconds. The dancer laying down then tenses the leg muscles and the partner tries to push the leg back down to the floor offering resistance to the muscles. This isometric stretch is held for 7 – 15 seconds and then immediately the leg is completely relaxed for 2 – 3 seconds before a second passive stretch is held for 10 – 15 seconds. The muscle is then relaxed for 20 seconds before another PNF technique can be performed. PNF stretching is really a combination of passive and isometric stretching methods.

Hamstring stretch – active stretching

Standing in first position, bring the right foot up to the left knee in a *retiré* position and extend the leg behind as high as possible into an *arabesque*. Hold this position for 10 seconds and lower the leg. Repeat this on the other leg. This is an example of an active stretch where the position is being held using no assistance other than the strength of the agonist muscles. The tension of the agonist muscles helps relax the muscles being stretched (the antagonists) by reciprocal inhibition - in this case the hamstrings.

Marks should be awarded for any example that clearly describes a safe stretching exercise and shows knowledge of the theory of stretching with reference to frequency and duration. The question does not require candidates to 'label' the type of stretch.

(3 marks)

- c) **Briefly comment on any physical or environmental factors that may affect this improvement.**

For example: comments on any of the following:

Type of joint – some joints are not designed to be flexible and it is important to understand what range of movement is natural so that during stretching exercise a dancer can work within the natural range of movement that the joint is designed to have. For example the pivot joint of the neck and the sliding joint of the wrist offer a far less range of movement than the ball and socket joints of the hip and shoulder.

Elasticity of the muscle tissue - the elasticity of the muscle tissue will be affected by the health of the muscle – for example muscle tissue that is scarred due to previous injury is not very elastic.

Length and condition of the ligaments - the ligaments and tendons that hold the bones together and connect the bones to the muscle vary in length and elasticity from person to person and this cannot be influenced much by stretching exercises.

Internal body temperature (of the joint and the surrounding tissue) - joints and muscles offer better flexibility at body temperatures 1 to 2 degrees higher than normal so it is important to be well warmed up before doing stretching exercises.

Age – pre-adolescents are generally more flexible than adults. Older muscles will take longer to become more stretched as there are changes that occur in the connective tissue, associated with the body becoming less well hydrated, that limits the production of lubricants between the connective tissue which encourage elasticity.

Gender – females are generally more flexible than males.

Time of day – most people are more flexible in the afternoon than in the morning.

Temperature – a warmer place to work in is more conducive to increased flexibility.

Injuries – injured joints and muscles offer less flexibility than healthy ones.

NB:- Comments may cover a number of points and be quite simple or a candidate may present the knowledge in a longer paragraph going into greater depth about one or two factors.

For example, comments on the type and structure of an individual joint with reference to ligaments:

No matter what stretching exercise a dancer does the range of movement available in a joint will ultimately be determined by the structure of the joint. There are a number of different types of joints that have different ranges of movement possible and this has an impact on the flexibility available to a dancer. For example, the ball and socket joints of the hip and shoulder are the most freely flowing of the synovial joints. The movements are allowed on all axes and planes. The knee joint is a hinge joint and can flex and extend and rotate a little when not weight-bearing. The fact that it is a synovial joint is significant while considering flexibility, as the range of movement possible will increase when the core temperature is raised as this allows the synovial fluid to become less viscous and this allows a greater range of movement. The length of the ligaments that hold the bones in place vary from dancer to dancer. Some will be naturally 'loose' and others will be less so. Dancers can use stretching exercises to lengthen the connective tissue of the muscle fibre in order to increase the range of movement possible. (The ligaments are not really designed to be stretched beyond their natural state as this may lessen the effectiveness of holding the joint in place). As the core temperature increases during an exercise the elasticity of the muscles increases, thus improving flexibility.

*NB: – to gain full marks, answers must refer to a minimum of two factors.
A maximum of 3 marks may be awarded per factor; however, in order to gain 3 marks for only one factor the comments need to be exceptionally insightful and eloquent.*

(5 marks)

2 a) Explain what is meant by the word *dynamics* when used in dance composition.

For example:

An expenditure of energy in relation to the movement

An interaction of force with time

(1 mark)

b) Describe how dynamics can be used effectively in dance composition.

For example:

To assist in the communication of the meaning

To attribute certain qualities to the movement

To provide variation within the composition

(3 marks)

c) Explain how you could create:

- **a character**

by choosing and describing appropriate dance actions and dynamic content.

Description of examples with appropriate action, dynamic content and explanation.

e.g. an angry young person protesting.

A run to the front of the stage ending in a jump with right arm raised, finger pointing above the head and left arm out to the side, palm out. The run and jump will be sudden, fast and jerky and the arm actions sharp, strong and forceful.

The run and jumps and bold, open actions with sharp and strong dynamics emphasise the youth and anger of the protest.

NB: – both action and dynamic should be addressed in order to gain full marks. A maximum of 2 marks may be awarded if only one of these is addressed.

(3 marks)

d) Explain how you could create:

- **a mood/atmosphere**

by choosing and describing appropriate dance actions and dynamic content.

e.g. A peaceful, calm, serene mood.

A circular port de bras which leads to a rise and balance and then into a sideways lunge with left arm unfolding to sideways medium. The actions are performed in a sustained, light and smooth manner to emphasise the serenity and calm mood.

NB: – both action and dynamic should be addressed in order to gain full marks. A maximum of 2 marks may be awarded if only one of these is addressed.

(3 marks)

Total marks for section A: 20 marks

Section B - Banding**Band 1 17 – 20 marks**

- A detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the features and form of dance
- Clear, detailed and undivided focus on the question
- Analytical and interpretative skills are used proficiently
- Selects insightful examples to support analysis and illustrate points
- Fluent use of an appropriate specialist vocabulary and accurate citation of professional works
- Proficient and accurate use of language – very few, if any, errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar

Band 2 13 – 16 marks

- A comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the features and form of dance
- Maintains focus on the question to a large extent
- Analytical and interpretative skills are used competently
- Selects appropriate examples to support analysis and illustrate points
- Appropriate use of a range of specialist vocabulary, including mainly accurate citations of professional works
- A consistent and accurate use of language – few errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar

Band 3 9 - 12 marks

- A competent knowledge and understanding of the features and form of dance
- Maintains focus on the question. Some parts of the answer may not be relevant
- Shows some ability to analyse and interpret
- Selects some appropriate examples to support analysis and illustrate points
- Appropriate use of specialist vocabulary, including some accurate citation of professional works
- A competent use of language – there may be some errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar

Band 4 5 – 8 marks

- Shows some understanding of the features and form of dance
- There is evidence of some focus on the question
- The ability to analyse and interpret is limited. More description is evident
- Provides some examples to illustrate points
- There is evidence of some specialist vocabulary and citation of professional works
- Basic written communication skills – some errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar

Band 5 0 - 4 marks

- Shows little or very basic understanding of the features and form of dance
- Little or no focus on the question
- Shows little or no evidence of analysis and/or interpretation. Some description is evident
- Includes no or very little support from examples to illustrate points
- Little attempt to use specialist vocabulary or citation of professional works
- Limited written communication skills – noticeable errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar making answers difficult to follow

Section B

Candidates answer **both** questions in this section.

3) **Describe what you consider to be the main performance skills needed by a dancer to communicate the dance idea. Discuss how you have explored and developed these skills in relation to your own performances.** (20 marks)

- Knowledge of and description of the performance skills of focus, musicality, timing, phrasing
- Explanation of how the performance skills are used to communicate/interpret the dance idea through projection, characterisation, focus
- Analysis of examples of performances that exemplify high quality and poor performances and explanation of why
- Discussion of the relationship between performance skills and the physical/psychological limitations of the mind and body: focus, concentration, commitment
- Analysis of dancer's own performance skills
- Description of how performance skills have been improved during the choreographic and rehearsal process, eg feed back, use of video, exercises.

4) **With reference to at least three professional works, discuss the use of physical setting in communicating the themes of a dance.** (20 marks)

- Identification of professional works, citing title, choreographer and date
- Knowledge of and description of the physical settings of at least three works with reference to: the type and style of performance environment (formal, informal, site-specific), set, costume, lighting, properties, film
- Description of the themes of the works identified
- Discussion of the use of physical setting and the impact it has on communicating the themes of each work.
- Understanding of the relationship between the physical setting and other constituent features of each work identified
- Analysis of examples that show the relationship between the physical setting and other constituent features and how that relates to communicating the themes / intention.

Note:

*Each correct citation must have **at least two** elements from **title; choreographer; date.***