

LAMDA Examinations

Teacher Support Material Graded Examinations in Performance with effect from 01 August 2019

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Notice to Reader

This document has been put together to support teachers and Learners who are preparing for LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance. It is to be used in conjunction with the LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance syllabus specification, valid from 1 August 2019.

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LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance: Acting

Examination Structure

This Qualification is available at four Levels, in line with the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF):

Entry Level (Entry 3)

Level 1: Grades 1, 2 and 3

Level 2: Grades 4 and 5

Level 3: Grades 6 (Bronze Medal), Grade 7 (Silver Medal) and Grade 8 (Gold Medal)

LAMDA examinations in Acting are offered in the following formats: Solo (one Learner) where the Learner performs alone; Duologue (two Learners) where the Learners perform all scenes together; Combined (two Learners, available at Level 1 and Level 2 only) where the Learners perform one solo scene each and one duologue scene together.

Please note that for Duologue and Combined examinations, Learners cannot change partners in the middle of the examination.

Costume

There is no specific dress code for LAMDA Acting examinations. Full costume is not permitted, but long practice skirts which help to indicate/suggest period may be worn together with small costume items such as scarves, hats, shawls, gloves or canes. Clothing and footwear should be suitable for the work presented and comfortable where possible, allowing freedom of movement. The Learner(s) should not go barefoot unless the part demands it. Nudity is not permitted.

Props/Staging

Hand props are permitted but must be kept to a minimum so as to not overburden the Learner(s).

Use of the Performance Space

The Learner(s) should try to avoid playing in profile for too long, especially in duologue examinations, as this masks facial expression.

The Learner(s) should try not to place themselves too near the Examiner's table for the duration of the scene as this limits their overall use of the performance space.

Focus

The Learner(s) should ensure that they perform their scene(s) with appropriate focus.

When performing a direct address to audience, the Learner(s) should focus on the imagined wider audience of which the Examiner is a part, and not directly on the Examiner.

When performing a duologue scene, both Learners should be focussed within the world of their characters and, for each individual, on their duologue partner where appropriate, as the other character in the scene.

When a solo Learner performs a monologue with an unseen character present, their focus should be within the world of their character and on the unseen character where appropriate.

When a solo Learner performs a soliloquy or a monologue without an unseen character present, the Learner's focus should be within the world of their character. Where the Learner should focus specifically within the world of their character will depend on what the Learner feels is appropriate for the scene.

Selecting Scenes: General Notes

Any published translation of non-English language text is acceptable.

The use of accent/dialect is not compulsory; however, the style and intent of the playwright should be reflected in the interpretation of a role.

The Learner(s) must only play one character in their scene. Where the lines of other characters are omitted, you must ensure coherence so that the emotional fluency of the scene is maintained.

Scenes which are a direct address to audience should not be focussed solely on the Examiner. The Examiner should be included in a wider imagined audience.

When selecting duologue scenes, you should ensure that both Learners have an equal balance of dialogue, giving them both the opportunity to develop the characters they portray.

The editing of published scenes is permitted, providing the coherence and fluency of the scene is maintained. Please note that you are not permitted to add your own dialogue to a scene, unless you are adapting it from a published novel.

The Learner(s) should bring legible copies of all selections into the examination for the Examiner. This is for prompting purposes, if it is required.

Selecting Scenes: Entry Level

For Entry Level Acting examinations the Learner(s) must perform **one** own choice scene.

The scene must be selected from a published play or screenplay or a published collection of solo/duologue scenes or be adapted from the dialogue of a published novel. It must not be set in the *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 4*.

The language of the scene should be accessible to the Learner, with vocabulary and sentence structure that conveys meaning clearly.

Selecting Scenes: Level 1 (Grades 1, 2 and 3)

For Level 1 Acting examinations the Learner(s) must perform **two** scenes: one that has been selected from the appropriate section of the *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 4* and one scene of their own choice.

The own choice scene must be selected from a published play or screenplay or a published collection of solo/duologue scenes or be adapted from the dialogue of a published novel. It must not be set in the *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 4*.

The language of the own choice scene should contain a variety of expressive vocabulary and offer some opportunity for character development.

You should try to ensure that the own choice scene differs from the set scene in theme, setting, character and/or mood, enabling the Learner(s) to display some contrast.

Selecting Scenes: Level 2 (Grades 4 and 5)

For Level 2 Acting examinations the Learner(s) must perform **two** scenes: one that has been selected from the appropriate section of the *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 4* and one scene of their own choice.

The own choice scene must be selected from a published play or screenplay or a published collection of solo/duologue scenes or be adapted from the dialogue of a published novel. It must not be set in the *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 4*.

The language of the own choice scene should contain some subtlety in vocabulary so that there are opportunities for character development.

You should try to ensure that the own choice scene differs from the set scene in theme, setting, character and/or mood, enabling the Learner(s) to display some contrast.

Selecting Scenes: Level 3 (Grades 6, 7 and 8)

For **Grade 6** the Learner(s) must perform **two** scenes. The first scene must be selected from a play written during one of the following periods: Ancient Greek and Roman, Elizabethan and Jacobean, Restoration and Post-Restoration, or 1800 to 2000. The second scene must be selected from a published play, television or film screenplay published post-2000.

For **Grade 7 and Grade 8** the Learner(s) must perform **three** scenes. The first scene must be selected from a play written during one of the following periods: Ancient Greek and Roman (500BC – 4BC), Elizabethan and Jacobean (1558-1625), or Restoration and Post-Restoration (1626 – 1799). The second scene must be selected from a play written during the period 1800 to 2000. The third scene must be selected from a published play, television or film screenplay published post-2000.

Scenes from television shows and serials are not permitted. The scene must also not be set in the current *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 4*.

Scenes taken from the post-2000 period must be published on or after 1 January 2001.

If a non-English language text is selected for the Ancient Greek and Roman period, Elizabethan and Jacobean period or Restoration and Post-Restoration period, translations of the original play into English must be used –adaptations or new-versions are not allowed. For example, Jean Anouilh’s adaptation of *Antigone* would not be an appropriate choice for the Ancient Greek and Roman period as it is not a translation of the original, but a play *inspired* by the original text and set in a different time period.

At this Level, the Learner(s) are required to study the plays from which their scenes have been taken in preparation for the Knowledge element of the exam. As a result, stand-alone monologue and duologue scenes and sketches are not appropriate for example *Talking Heads* by Alan Bennett would not be appropriate to use. They also do not allow the Learner(s) the opportunity to understand their character's role within the context of the play as a whole, which is important at this Level. Scenes from one act plays and plays consisting of a series of linked monologues/duologues are permitted, providing there is enough material in the play to enable the Learner(s) to fulfil the Knowledge requirements of the exam, for example *Confusions* by Alan Bennett.

Selected scenes should differ in style, theme, setting, character, mood and/or period to enable the Learner(s) to display range and ability.

Selected scenes should enable the Learner(s) to engage with complex emotions and universal themes.

The content and language of the scenes should be technically challenging in terms of vocal range and characterisation.

It is important to remember that a Learner's speech, movement, gesture and body language should reflect the time in which the scene is set.

Selecting Scenes: Useful Sources

It is a good idea, when selecting own choice scenes, to put together a portfolio of pieces that you can use over time with different Learners and at different grades. To put together a portfolio of own choice scenes, consider the following:

- progression between grades
- suitability for different age groups
- variety and balance of characters, for example boys, girls, animals
- variety of situations
- appropriate length
- appropriate use of language
- variety of period
- equal balance and contrast between characters in duologue scenes.

If you are adapting an own choice scene from a published novel (suitable for Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 exams only), here are some handy hints to remember:

- look at the overall shape of the scene; a scene has to have a strong beginning and a firm ending with a clear journey in-between
- dialogue can be lifted from text but thoughts can also be turned into dialogue providing the style of writing is sustained
- characters should be clear
- when adapting duologue scenes, ensure that both Learners have an equal balance of dialogue, giving them both the opportunity to develop the characters they portray
- think about the stage directions which will be included in the scene
- it is important to always consider the background context leading up to the scene.

LAMDA offer the following publications which are useful for sourcing own choice scenes:

LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 2 (suitable for Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2)
First Folio Speeches for Men (suitable for Level 3)
Solo Speeches for Women (1800-1914) (suitable for Level 3)
Monologues for Young Actors (suitable for Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2)

These publications are available to purchase through LAMDA's online shop:
www.lamda.ac.uk/store/shop/publications

Other useful sources for own choice scenes are:

Samuel French theatre bookshop in London: <http://www.samue french-london.co.uk>
Dramatic Lines Publishers: <http://www.dramaticlines.co.uk>
Oberon Books: <http://www.oberonbooks.com>

Level 2 - Grade 5 Knowledge: Reasons for the Choice of Staging

For the Knowledge section of Grade 5 Acting examinations the Learner(s) must discuss the reasons for the chosen staging in each scene. In order to answer this question, the Learner(s) should be able to identify what staging they have used for each scene, and the rationale for choosing to stage the scenes in this particular way. For example, if their choice of staging related to the mood of the scene, to the character's feelings and their situation, or to the character's movement (or lack thereof)? Answers should also take into account whether there is another character present in the scene (this could be an unseen character or a Learner's Duologue partner) and the Learner's awareness of their imagined audience. To confirm, it is acceptable for a Learner to use a scene that requires only simple staging, as long as they can discuss not just what staging has been used but the rationale behind their choices.

Staging should not be confused with the character's movement. Staging is the positioning of the performance within the space provided. For example, the scene could be performed upstage, downstage or centre stage, or the staging could vary throughout the performance. It is not a requirement to have a stage set, such as tables, chairs or other items, in order to discuss staging.

Level 3 - Grade 7 Knowledge: Writer's Style and Period of Writing

For the Knowledge section of Grade 7 Acting examinations, the Learner(s) must discuss the writing style, and period in which the author of one of the performed scenes was writing (one author will be selected by the Examiner at the time of the examination)

The writer's style of writing is how the writer's thoughts are expressed in literary composition, the specific characteristics of the scene selected and the play that it has been taken from, plus the characteristics of any other work by the same writer (if appropriate). This would include choice of words, syntax and genre.

The writer's period of writing is the period in which the writer was writing, looking specifically at the style of writing and key literary movements of the period as a whole, and how the writer being discussed fits into this. For example, was their style of writing experimental or innovative for the period and/or was it in keeping with other playwrights of the time?

Level 3 - Grade 8 Knowledge: Selecting a Practitioner

For the Knowledge section of Grade 8 Acting examinations, the Learner(s) must discuss the key principles and influences in the process of acting for **one** of the following practitioners:

Constantin Stanislavski (1863-1938)

Stanislavski was a Russian actor and theatre director.

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956)

Brecht was a German playwright.

Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999)

Jerzy Grotowski was a Polish theatre director.

Katie Mitchell (1964 -)

Katie Mitchell is an English theatre director.

Kneehigh (Founded 1980)

Kneehigh are a theatre company based in Cornwall, England.

Antonin Artaud (1896-1948)

Antonin Artaud was a French dramatist, poet, essayist, actor and theatre director

Joan Littlewood (1914-2002)

Joan Littlewood was an English theatre director.

LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance: Devising Drama

Examination Structure

These Qualifications are available at four Levels, in line with the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF):

Entry Level (Entry 3)

Level 1: Grades 1, 2 and 3

Level 2: Grades 4 and 5

Level 3: Grades 6, Grade 7 and Grade 8

LAMDA examinations in Devising Drama are offered in the following formats: Solo (one Learner) where the Learner performs alone; Duologue (two Learners) where the Learners perform all scenes together.

Please note that for Duologue examinations, Learners cannot change partners in the middle of the examination.

Costume

There is no specific dress code for LAMDA Devising Drama examinations. Full costume is not permitted, but long practice skirts which help to indicate/suggest period may be worn together with small costume items such as scarves, hats, shawls, gloves or canes. Clothing and footwear should be suitable for the work presented and comfortable where possible, allowing freedom of movement. The Learner(s) should not go barefoot unless the part demands it. Nudity is not permitted.

Props/Staging

Hand props are permitted but must be kept to a minimum so as to not overburden the Learner(s). Stage sets should not be over complicated as only a small amount of time is available in the examination for setting up scenes.

Use of the Performance Space

The Learner(s) should try to avoid playing in profile for too long, especially in duologue examinations, as this masks facial expression.

The Learner(s) should try not to place themselves too near the Examiner's table for the duration of the scene as this limits their overall use of the performance space.

Focus

The Learner(s) should ensure that they perform their scene(s) with appropriate focus.

When performing a direct address to audience, the Learner(s) should focus on the imagined wider audience of which the Examiner is a part, and not directly on the Examiner.

When performing a duologue scene, both Learners should be focussed within the world of their characters and, for each individual, on their duologue partner where appropriate, as the other character in the scene.

When a solo Learner performs a monologue with an unseen character present, their focus should be within the world of their character and on the unseen character where appropriate.

When a solo Learner performs a soliloquy or a monologue without an unseen character present, the Learner's focus should be within the world of their character. Where the Learner should focus specifically within the world of their character will depend on what the Learner feels is appropriate for the scene.

Structuring a Devised Scene: General Notes

It is very important that all devised scenes have a clear structure. There should be a strong beginning, middle and end. There should be a clear line of development throughout the scene towards a climax and individual characters within it should be well defined.

If the scene uses a title or an object as a stimulus, the link should not be tenuous. The stimulus must play an important part in the development of the scene.

In duologue scenes it is important that both devised characters have roles that are equally balanced.

Improvisation (Level 3)

At Level 3, the Learner(s) are required to present an improvised scene based on a word stimulus provided by the Examiner at the time of the examination. The Learner(s) will be given one minute to prepare the scene prior to its performance. Word stimuli will consist of objects at Grade 6, articles of clothing at Grade 7 and abstract titles at Grade 8.

Using Music/Sound Effects

Music and/or sound effects are optional to use. The Learner(s) must provide their own sound equipment for use in the examination room. This must be operated by the Learner; a technician is not permitted in the examining room.

LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance: Miming

Examination Structure

This Qualification is available at four Levels, in line with the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF):

Entry Level (Entry 3)

Level 1: Grades 1, 2 and 3

Level 2: Grades 4 and Level 3: Grades 6, Grade 7 and Grade 8

LAMDA examinations in Miming are offered in the following formats: Solo (one Learner) where the Learner performs alone; Duologue (two Learners) where the Learners perform mimes individually and mime scenes together.

Please note that for Duologue examinations, Learners cannot change partners in the middle of the examination.

Costume

There is no specific dress code for LAMDA Miming examinations. It is recommended that the Learner(s) wear appropriate footwear and clothing that allows ease of movement. Nudity is not permitted.

Props/Staging

Props are not permitted for use in Miming examinations. However, tables and chairs are permitted for the purposes of staging a mime or mime scene.

Use of the Performance Space

The Learner(s) should try to avoid playing in profile for too long, especially in duologue examinations when they are performing a mime scene, as this masks facial expression.

The Learner(s) should try not to place themselves too near the Examiner's table for the duration of the mime/mime scene as this limits their overall use of the performance space.

Focus

The Learner(s) should ensure that they perform their scene(s) with appropriate focus.

When performing a direct address to audience, the Learner(s) should focus on the imagined wider audience of which the Examiner is a part, and not directly on the Examiner.

When performing a duologue scene, both Learners should be focussed within the world of their characters and, for each individual, on their duologue partner where appropriate, as the other character in the scene.

Miming Technique

Words must not be mouthed by the Learner(s) in their mimes/mime scenes as this detracts from the importance of the movement alone. A mime/mime scene should incorporate the following technical skills:

- clear and accurate movements
- controlled and coordinated movements
- expressive facial reaction.

Specific requirements on Miming technique will be detailed in the Assessment Criteria for Technique at each grade.

Structuring a Mime Scene: General Notes

The Learner(s) should ensure that their mime scenes are clearly structured. Mime scenes should demonstrate the following:

- a well-defined storyline, with a beginning, middle and end
- involvement with the character(s), place and situation
- an understanding of the place and period in which the characters live (Level 3).

Mime often has to be presented with a physicality that is 'larger than life' in order to make the simplest of actions clear to an audience using a vocabulary consisting of only gesture and movement.

The Difference Between a Mime and a Mime Scene

A **mime** is a concentrated moment showing the mood and movement of one particular activity. At its simplest it could be 'eating a banana' or 'walking across pebbles'. It can involve the creation of a character, but this character must be focused on one occupation. An animal can be depicted, showing its shape and natural moves. It is always a solo piece. Marcel Marceau called such mimes his 'exercises' but in performance, for example *The Cage* or *The Mask Maker*, they kept his audience enthralled.

A **mime scene** is a series of activities that create a piece of drama. This can range from a simple episode, for example looking at the exhibits in a museum, to a more complicated scene in which museum exhibits come to life. It can show conflict between characters. It may be abstract or tell a story, be comic or poignant. A mime scene needs to use space theatrically to portray the illusion it is creating. The scene should take the audience on a journey.

Miming to Music

Music can be a most helpful introduction to mime. It can inspire the creation of a situation, support a characterisation and sustain a complete performance. Rhythms and evocative emotional qualities can guide the Learner(s) away from self-consciousness and help them to find movement and create moods with greater confidence.

Try to use music and sound effects with mime to create a satisfying whole. Strong rhythms can be an effective accompaniment to a comic situation. Lyrical music can support and help develop an abstract mime. The performer must know their music perfectly so that every

change of emphasis supports the movement. In order for a piece to be a complete blend of timing and sensitivity, the Learner(s) need to build each movement in response to the music.

If the Learner(s) have developed a character and possible situation idea then it may be interesting to play some different pieces of music and ask the Learner(s) to choose which piece might best fit the idea. Alternatively, you may propose a piece of music and see what this evokes in the Learner'(s) minds. For example, *Walking to Regios*, a track by Isaac Hayes, provides the inspiration for a devious character. This piece of music clearly takes that character and their actions across a cityscape – it is furtive, searching and it concludes with a meeting and possible conflict.

Film music such as the soundtracks for *Chocolat* or *Amelie*, and classical music such as Holst's *Planets Suite*, can be useful.

Miming a Mammal, Bird or Reptile (Grade 5)

At Grade 5, the Learner(s) are required to perform a prepared mime depicting a mammal, bird or reptile of their own choice. The Learner(s) will be expected to research the personal characteristics of their chosen mammal, bird or reptile which will then inform the performance of their mime through appropriate stance, movement, gesture(s) and facial expression. Please note that for this mime, insects may also be included and a mammal may be interpreted as a human being, for example an old man/woman or a baby.

Miming in Slow Motion (Grade 6)

Slow motion is the continuity of movement at a slow, steady pace and this continuity can be difficult to sustain. However, once it is mastered it is indispensable to a mime artist who can use it in many ways, for example to get themselves in and out of dream sequences.

To help develop the technique of moving in slow motion, ask the Learner(s) to be aware of walking normally while feeling the air push past every part of their body. They can then imagine a thick fog curling around them. It gradually becomes even thicker, changing to liquid and they must feel the energy needed to push through water. To slow the Learner(s) down further the liquid can become pea soup or custard, which becomes harder and harder to move through until it eventually becomes concrete.

As they move, the Learner(s) need to be aware of any part of the body that wobbles and allow the liquid to be thicker around that area. Eventually the whole body will be able to sustain the slow continuity of movement.

Commedia dell'Arte (Grade 7)

Commedia dell'Arte is a form of Italian theatre containing stock characters, masks, farcical action and scenes full of beatings, acrobatics and comic stage business.

At Grade 7, the Learner(s) must perform a prepared mime scene based on one Commedia dell'Arte mime character selected from a list provided in the syllabus. They are also required to discuss Commedia dell'Arte and the reasons for their choice of character in the Knowledge section of the examination. Please note that Learners are not advised to wear a Commedia dell'Arte mask or a mask in general for the performance of the Commedia dell'Arte scene, as there is a requirement in the Assessment Criteria to communicate the personal characteristics of the character through appropriate stance, movement, gesture(s)

and facial expression. If a face mask is used for this scene, it will impede the Learner's ability to meet the Assessment Criteria for the examination in full, as the Examiner may not be able to fully assess the Learner's use of facial play.

Whilst dialogue cannot be used in prepared mimes and mime scenes for LAMDA Miming examinations, it is permitted for the Learner(s) to use grammelot, or gromalot, in their Commedia dell'Arte scene at Grade 7. Grammelot, or gromalot, is a style of language which dates back to 16th century Commedia dell'Arte. It incorporates elements of gibberish with macaronic and onomatopoeic elements.

Using a Full Face Mask (Grade 8)

Masks have been worn in performance for centuries, from the actors in Greek theatre to players in the Commedia dell'Arte and contemporary cartoon characters. They can help the body to suggest a whole range of expressions, some realistic, others highly exaggerated and they can be used to develop the physicality of characters.

The plain white mask is used to completely take away facial play and encourage the performer to focus on their body language. In a full mask, the performer needs to be physically precise and to connect with the audience through gesture.

To focus on communicating in a mask, the Learner(s) need to warm up well so that the body is flexible enough to show the tiniest detailed gesture or the greatest effort of strength. Physical control can be used to create rhythmic, precise movements which help the progression of mood and thought.

To help develop these techniques, the Learner(s) can be asked to create a statue or freeze of a particular reaction, such as shock or surprise. As you count down from five to one, the Learner(s) transfer all the emotion and expression out of their faces and into their bodies, so that every part of the body is communicating the shock, apart from the face where there is no feeling at all.

It is important for the masked performer to be aware of the fourth wall (the audience in an end-on configuration) and keep their mask towards the audience as much as possible. By watching others in mask, the Learner(s) can observe how the slightest change of angle or difference in gesture may communicate a different action or emotion and how all of the body has to be committed to communicating a clear message.

Grade 8 Knowledge: Selecting a Practitioner

For the Knowledge section of Grade 8 Miming examinations, the Learner(s) must discuss the influences on the development and presentation of mime for **one** of the following practitioners:

Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977)

Charlie Chaplin was an English silent movie star and a mime artist, a film director and composer.

Marcel Marceau (1923-2007)

Marcel Marceau was born in Strasbourg and is an acclaimed mime artist.

Etienne Decroux (1898-1991)

Decroux was born in Paris and was a film and theater actor.

Jacques Lecoq (1921-1999)

Born in Paris, Lecoq is best known for his his methods in physical theatre, movement and mime.