



LAMDA Examinations

Teacher Support Material Examinations in Shakespeare

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Notice to Reader

This document has been put together to support teachers and Learners who are preparing for LAMDA Examinations in Shakespeare. It is to be used in conjunction with the LAMDA Examinations in Shakespeare syllabus specification, valid from 1 September 2017.

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LAMDA Examinations in Shakespeare

Examination Structure

This qualification is available at three levels, in line with the Regulated Qualifications Framework:

- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3

LAMDA examinations in Shakespeare are offered in the following formats: Solo (one Learner) where the Learner performs alone; Duologue (two Learners, available at Level 2 and Level 3 only) where Learners perform all scenes together.

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). Stage sets should not be overly 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 and Eye Contact

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

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 Pieces: General Notes

- It is recommended that the texts used for study are from the Arden Shakespeare Series or the Cambridge School Shakespeare Series. Downloading single speeches/scenes from the internet for use in these examinations is not recommended, as the structure of the speech/scene may be printed differently. These set speeches for Level 1 have been taken from *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works* Revised Edition (2015) India: Bloomsbury.
- The use of accent/dialect is not compulsory; however, Shakespeare's style and intent 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 speeches, 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 own choice speeches is permitted, providing the coherence and fluency of the piece is maintained. Please note that it is not permitted for your own dialogue to be added to the chosen extract.
- If the Learner is performing their piece(s) in a different period from the period which it was written in, they should announce this to the Examiner during their introduction, prior to the examination commencing.
- The Learner should bring legible copies of all selections into the examination for the Examiner. This is for prompting purposes, if it is required.
- It is advised when selecting pieces for all Levels of examination, that the Learner's age, ability, and understanding of the content is carefully considered.

Selecting Pieces: Level 1

For Level 1 examinations, the Learner will speak **one** of the set speeches as it is presented in the LAMDA Shakespeare Examinations Syllabus. Edits are not permitted.

Selecting Pieces: Level 2

For Level 2 examinations, the Learner(s) is required to select **one** scene from a play detailed in List A, and **one** scene from a play detailed in List B.

These selections **must not** include any of the pieces set for Level 1 Shakespeare Examinations and printed in the syllabus.

You should try to ensure that the scenes presented differ in theme, setting, character and/or mood to enable the Learner(s) to display some contrast. It is also advised that one scene performed be written in verse and the other in prose.

Selecting Pieces: Level 3

For Level 3 examinations, the Learner(s) is required to select **one** scene from a play detailed in **either** List A **or** List B, **one** scene from a play detailed in List C, and **one** sonnet written by Shakespeare.

These selections **must not** include any of the pieces set for Level 1 Shakespeare Examinations and printed in the syllabus.

The content of the own choice selections should enable the Learner to engage with complex emotions and universal themes.

The language of the selections for Level 3 examinations should be technically challenging and provide opportunities for the Learner to display vocal range and dexterity.

You should try to ensure that the scenes presented differ in theme, setting, character and/or mood to enable the Learner(s) to display some contrast. It is also advised that one scene performed be written in verse and the other in prose.

Selecting Pieces: Useful Sources

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

- progression between Levels
- suitability for different age groups
- variety of styles
- variety of topics
- appropriate length
- appropriate use of language

Knowledge Requirements (Level 1 to Level 3): General Notes

Detailed information on the knowledge required for each Level is available in *Knowledge Matters: Shakespeare* a LAMDA publication. This will be available to purchase through our online shop: www.lamda.org.uk/store/shop/publications from Easter 2018.

Please note that there are no “set answers” which LAMDA Examiners are looking for Learners to provide. Instead, we encourage teachers and Learners to prepare for the knowledge section of our examinations with thorough research from a variety of different resources.

Knowledge Requirements: Level 1

The Learner will be required to answer questions on the following:

- The story of the play from which the speech has been taken
- Who their character is talking to and what the speech is about

In order for a Learner to be able to fully answer questions based around the story of the play from which their speech has been taken, it is not required that they read the entire play, but instead that they have an understanding about what happens within the story (beginning, middle and end).

There are many of Shakespeare's plays that have been adapted into films or more accessible play versions that may be more user-friendly to some Learners who are learning about Shakespeare for the first time. Some of these are listed in the Useful Resources section at the end of this document.

Knowledge Requirements: Level 2

The Learner(s) will be required to choose **one** of the speeches performed and answer questions on the following:

- The form of the language and the linguistic devices used within the scene (including assonance, alliteration, antithesis, metaphor, simile and imagery)
- The character's reason for speaking
- The character's role within the context of the play as a whole.

The Examiner will then choose two lines of text from either Scene 1 or Scene 2 and ask the Learner(s) to explain their meaning. For duologue Examinations, the Examiner will ask each Learner to discuss a different two lines of text.

It is also permitted for Learners to select the same speech, or alternatively, each chooses a separate speech to discuss from those performed.

For this Level, it is required that the Learner(s) have read the plays from which their scenes have been taken in order for them to be able to understand their characters reason for speaking, and the context of their characters within the context of each play as a whole.

It may be useful for Learners to choose scenes that contain good amounts of linguistic devices (including assonance, alliteration, antithesis, metaphor, simile and imagery) so they are able to talk about these during the knowledge section and use examples from their chosen scene.

Knowledge Requirements: Level 3

The Learner(s) will answer questions on the following:

- The content and structure of the sonnet
- The subtext of one of the scenes (one scene from the two performed will be selected by the Examiner at the time of the examination)
- The role of one of the characters within the context of the play as a whole (one character from the two performed will be selected by the Examiner at the time of the examination)
- William Shakespeare's style of writing
- The design of the Elizabethan Theatre and aspects of performing Shakespeare within it.

In order for Learners to be able to fully answer the knowledge questions for Level 3 examinations, it is strongly advised that they read each play in full. This is especially important since the Examiner will choose which scene to talk about subtext, and which scene to talk about the role of the character within the context of the play as a whole.

By studying the form of Shakespeare's writing, a performer can learn a lot about why the character is speaking and what they are feeling, for example, a change in rhythm, use of rhyme and rhetorical devices.

Useful Sources:

Downloadable Content:

Department for Education Publication: Shakespeare for all Ages and Stages

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130402164105/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00470-2008>

National Literacy Trust Publication: Mark the Bard!

http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0003/0672/Mark_The_Bard_FINAL.pdf

Books:

- *Essential Shakespeare Handbook* by L. Dunton-Downer and A. Riding (Dorling Kindersley Ltd)
- *Shakespeare's Advice to the Players* by Peter Hall (Oberon Books)
- *Shakespeare* by Bill Bryson (Harper Collins)
- *Shakespeare on Toast* by Ben Crystal (Icon Books Ltd)
- *Shakespearean Verse Speaking: Text and Theatre Practice* by Abigail Rokison (Cambridge University Press)
- *Shakespeare* by P. Edmondson (Profile Books)
- *Speaking the Speech: An Actor's Guide to Shakespeare* by G Block (Nick Hern Books)
- *Pronouncing Shakespeare* by D. Crystal (Cambridge University Press)
- *Shakespeare & Co. Marlowe, Dekker, Jonson, Middleton, Fletcher, and Other Players in His Story* by S Wells (Penguin Books Ltd)
- *Coffee With Shakespeare* by S. Wells with P. Edmondson (Duncan Baird Publishers Ltd)
- *Reading Shakespeare's Sonnets* by D. Paterson (Faber and Faber)