

LEAVING CERTIFICATE · ORDINARY LEVEL · SAMPLE PAPER 1 · 2027

Drama, Film and Theatre Studies

Total marks

300

Duration

2h 30m

Sections

A · B · C

About this document

A practice marking scheme produced by SimpleStudy to help students and teachers prepare for the Leaving Certificate examination in Drama, Film and Theatre Studies.

Not an official State Examinations Commission document.

Marking Scheme

This marking scheme accompanies SimpleStudy's Sample Paper 1 (Ordinary Level) in Drama, Film and Theatre Studies. It is intended to support candidates and teachers preparing for the Leaving Certificate examination in this subject. It is not an official State Examinations Commission document.

General Marking Guidelines

- Accept all reasonable responses not explicitly listed in this scheme; the indicative content is not exhaustive.
- Award marks for relevant content even if poorly expressed; do not penalise spelling or grammar unless meaning is unclear.
- Where a candidate contradicts themselves, award the lower mark.
- Where a part requires a named performance, film, focus of study or example, no marks are awarded for that element without one.
- For labelled diagrams and 'identify' parts (stage positions, camera shots), credit accurate labelling and correct identification.
- For parts based on a stimulus image (Figure A and Figure B on Paper X, and the camera-shot images in Question 1(f)), credit any valid reading the candidate substantiates from the image; the indicative readings below are guidance, not the only acceptable answers.

Paper Structure

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
Section A	Compulsory Questions. Answer all parts of Question 1 and Question 2.	100
Section B	Exploring Drama, Theatre and Film. Answer Question 3 (Prescribed Drama/Theatre) and Question 4 (Prescribed Film). Each carries 80 marks.	160
Section C	Reflecting and Responding. Answer Question 5(a) or 5(b).	40

Grading Descriptors (extended-response parts)

- **High (H):** Clear, accurate and relevant; the point is developed and supported by a specific reference to a performance, film, scene or example.
- **Mid (M):** Generally accurate and relevant; some development; reference present but more general than specific.
- **Low (L):** Partially accurate or relevant; little development; vague or no specific reference.

Note on mark splits: the paper prints only the totals for Question 1 (60) and Question 2 (40). The internal splits shown for Question 1(a)–(i) and Question 2(a)–(b) are indicative, set to reconcile to those printed totals; examiners should apply the bands holistically.

Section A

100 marks

There are two questions in this section. Answer all parts of Question 1 and Question 2.

Question 1 (60 marks) — Answer ALL parts

Indicative internal split (reconciling to the printed total of 60): (a) 10, (b) 6, (c) 8, (d) 4, (e) 6, (f) 8, (g) 6, (h) 6, (i) 6.

(a) Label any FIVE stage locations on the proscenium-arch diagram (CS, DS, US, SR, SL, USL, DSR). (10 marks)

2 marks per correctly placed label $\times 5 = 10$. Orientation is from the actor's point of view facing the audience. Award for any five correctly positioned; ignore extra labels.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(a) 10 marks 5 \times 2 marks	<p>Correct positions (actor facing the audience):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downstage (DS) — the area nearest the audience (front of stage). • Upstage (US) — the area farthest from the audience (back, towards backstage). • Centre Stage (CS) — the middle of the acting area. • Stage Right (SR) — the actor's right (audience's left). • Stage Left (SL) — the actor's left (audience's right). • Upstage Left (USL) — back area on the actor's left (audience's right). • Downstage Right (DSR) — front area on the actor's right (audience's left). <p>Award 2 marks for each of any five correctly positioned labels.</p>	10

(b) Explain why ONE editing technique might be used in a film: **parallel editing** OR **jump cut** (candidate ticks one). (6 marks)

Award up to 6 for a clear explanation of the ticked technique — roughly 2 for identifying what it is + 4 for why it is used / its effect. Mark only the ticked option.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
Parallel editing 6 marks	Indicative: cutting back and forth between two (or more) actions happening in different places (often at the same time). Used to build tension/suspense, draw a comparison or connection between the strands, or show cause and effect — e.g. cross-cutting between a victim and an approaching threat to heighten suspense.	6
Jump cut 6 marks	Indicative: an abrupt cut within a continuous shot that jumps forward in time, breaking smooth continuity. Used to compress time, create a jarring or energetic effect, suggest disorientation or unease, or draw attention to the editing itself.	6

(c) **Figure A on Paper X** (*Dancing at Lughnasa* by Brian Friel). Name and explain TWO elements of the mise-en-scène. (8 marks)

Two elements — 4 marks each: 1 for naming a valid mise-en-scène element + 3 for explaining it with reference to the image. 'Mise-en-scène' = everything placed within the frame/stage picture (set, props, costume, lighting, actor placement, etc.).

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(c) 8 marks Two elements, 4 each	<p>Name an element (1) + explain with reference to the image (3). Indicative (a rural Irish kitchen interior):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set / setting — the 1930s rural cottage kitchen (hearth, dresser, table, stone floor) establishes period, place and the modest domestic world of the Mundy sisters. • Costume — the plain, period dresses and aprons signal the era, the characters' social class and their domestic roles. • Props — everyday domestic objects (crochery, fabric, kitchen items) reinforce the realistic household and the women's daily work. • Actor placement / positioning — the grouping of the figures across the space conveys relationships and the dynamic of the scene. • Lighting — the warm, naturalistic interior light against the darker exterior suggests time of day and an enclosed, intimate home. <p>Accept any two valid elements the candidate names and substantiates from the image.</p>	8

(d) State TWO reasons why stage directions are used in theatre. (4 marks)

2 marks per valid reason × 2 = 4.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(d) 4 marks Two reasons, 2 each	<p>Indicative reasons (any two):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tell actors where to move and how to position themselves (blocking) on stage. • To indicate how a line should be delivered (tone, emotion) or an action performed. • To describe the setting, set, props, lighting or sound the playwright intends. • To convey a character's appearance, mood or behaviour to actors, directors and readers. • To guide entrances and exits and the overall staging of the play. 	4

(e) **Figure B on Paper X** (*Little Miss Sunshine*). Explain TWO ways colour is used effectively in the scene. (6 marks)

Two ways — 3 marks each: 1 for identifying a use of colour + 2 for explaining its effect, with reference to the image. Credit any defensible reading of the actual image (the yellow VW campervan, the family by the roadside).

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(e) 6 marks Two ways, 3 each	<p>Identify a use of colour (1) + explain its effect (2). Indicative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bright yellow campervan — a warm, cheerful, slightly worn yellow suggests optimism, family togetherness and the film’s quirky, hopeful tone despite hardship. • Warm, sunlit palette — the natural, golden daylight gives a nostalgic, road-trip feel and a sense of warmth around the family. • Costume colour — the characters’ light, casual clothing blends with the warm palette, reinforcing an ordinary, relatable family. • Contrast with the muted surroundings — the saturated van stands out against the plainer background, drawing the eye to the family and their journey. <p>Accept any two valid colour uses with an explained effect, substantiated from the image.</p>	6

(f) Identify the camera shot in each of the FOUR images. (8 marks)

2 marks per correctly identified shot × 4 = 8. Accept correct synonyms. The indicative answers match the four images (close-up; two-shot/mid; wide/long establishing; medium close-up).

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(f) 8 marks 4 × 2 marks	<p>Indicative identifications (accept reasonable equivalents):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image 1 — Close-up (CU): a single face fills much of the frame. • Image 2 — Two-shot (or mid-shot): two heads/figures framed together. • Image 3 — Wide / long (establishing) shot: several full figures shown with the surrounding setting (buildings). • Image 4 — Medium close-up (MCU): one figure from roughly the chest/shoulders up. <p>Award 2 marks for each correctly identified shot. Accept close synonyms (e.g. ‘big close-up’, ‘establishing shot’, ‘mid-two-shot’).</p>	8

(g) Outline TWO ways costume can tell the audience something about a character. (6 marks)

Two ways — 3 marks each: 1 for naming a way + 2 for development/example.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(g) 6 marks Two ways, 3 each	Indicative (any two): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status / wealth — rich, fine or shabby clothing signals a character's social class or economic situation. • Period / setting — costume fixes the historical era or place in which the character belongs. • Personality / mood — colour, style and condition (bright, dark, neat, dishevelled) suggest temperament or emotional state. • Role / occupation — uniforms or particular dress identify a character's job or function. • Age / change — costume can convey a character's age or show change/development over the course of the story. 	6

(h) Explain the role of each practitioner: **cinematographer** and **casting director**. (6 marks)

3 marks per role: award for an accurate description of what the practitioner does.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
Cinematographer 3 marks	Indicative: also called the director of photography (DOP); responsible for the look of the film — camera, lensing, framing, movement and lighting — working with the director to achieve the visual style and mood of each shot.	3
Casting director 3 marks	Indicative: finds, auditions and recommends actors for the roles in a production, matching performers to characters and helping the director assemble the cast (often negotiating availability).	3

(i) Outline TWO ways the audience can contribute to a theatrical performance. (6 marks)

Two ways — 3 marks each: 1 for naming a way + 2 for development.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(i) 6 marks Two ways, 3 each	Indicative (any two): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction / response — laughter, applause, gasps or silence feed back to the actors and can shape the energy and timing of the performance. • Atmosphere — a responsive, attentive audience creates a shared live atmosphere that heightens the experience for everyone. • Participation — in some forms (pantomime, immersive or interactive theatre) the audience joins in directly (responding to direct address, taking part). • Concentration / etiquette — listening attentively and respecting theatre etiquette supports the performers and other audience members. • Live exchange — the actor–audience relationship is two-way; audience presence and attention are part of what makes live theatre distinct from film. 	6

Question 2 (40 marks) — Unprescribed focus of study — Answer ALL parts

Candidates may **not** refer to any play or film prescribed for examination in 2027 in this subject or any other Leaving Certificate subject. ‘Characteristic’ = one or more features, conventions or techniques. Indicative internal split: 20 + 20.

(a) Unprescribed Drama/Theatre: (i) identify your focus of study and describe one technique associated with it; (ii) explain why this technique is used, with an example from one performance studied. (20 marks)

Name focus of study – 4; (i) describe one technique – 4; (ii) explain why it is used, with an example – 12 (banded). No marks for the unprescribed-focus elements if the focus named is in fact a 2027-prescribed text.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(a) 20 marks (i) + (ii)	<p>Name focus of study (4): any valid unprescribed genre/period/style/form in theatre, e.g. Greek tragedy, commedia dell’arte, Theatre of the Absurd, Naturalism, Brechtian epic theatre, melodrama, physical theatre, pantomime.</p> <p>(i) Describe one technique (4): a feature/convention/technique genuinely associated with the named focus (e.g. for Brechtian theatre — direct address / placards; for physical theatre — ensemble movement).</p> <p>(ii) Explain why it is used, with an example (12), banded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H (9–12): clear explanation of why the technique is used and its effect, anchored in a specific named performance the candidate studied. • M (5–8): some development; reference more general than specific. • L (0–4): assertion with little development or reference. 	20

(b) Unprescribed Film: (i) name your focus of study and identify one repeated use of sound OR props; (ii) explain how it was effective, with an example from one film studied (candidate ticks props or sound). (20 marks)

Name focus of study – 4; (i) identify one repeated use of the ticked element (sound or props) – 4; (ii) explain how it was effective, with an example – 12 (banded). Same band boundaries as 2(a).

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(b) 20 marks (i) + (ii)	<p>Name focus of study (4): any valid unprescribed film genre/period/style/movement, e.g. film noir, German Expressionism, the Western, the musical, Italian neorealism, the French New Wave, documentary, science fiction, the slasher.</p> <p>(i) Identify one repeated use of sound OR props (4): the candidate ticks one; e.g. for the Western — the recurring use of a harmonica/score (sound) or the six-shooter and hat (props).</p> <p>(ii) Explain how it was effective, with an example (12), banded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H (9–12): clear explanation of the effect, supported by a specific named film and example. • M (5–8): some development; general reference. • L (0–4): assertion, minimal reference. 	20

Section B

160 marks

Answer Question 3 (Prescribed Drama/Theatre) and Question 4 (Prescribed Film). Each question carries 80 marks and is assessed holistically against the four criteria below.

Assessment Criteria (Questions 3 and 4)

Criterion	Descriptor	Max	Band Marks
Knowledge & Understanding	Relevant knowledge of the focus of study and the designated performance/film; understanding of the form, genre or style and appropriate subject terminology.	30	H: 25–30 M: 16–24 L: 0–15
Discussion & Explanation	Clear explanation/discussion of the characteristics or aspects asked for and their effect; relevant points developed; the candidate's own opinion where required.	28	H: 24–28 M: 15–23 L: 0–14
Supporting Reference	Specific reference to the designated performance/film and, where required, to at least one other performance/film within the focus of study.	14	H: 12–14 M: 7–11 L: 0–6
Communication	Clarity of expression; logical structure; coherent response.	8	H: 7–8 M: 4–6 L: 0–3

Total = 80. Apply holistically: place the response in a band for each criterion, then award a mark within the band.

Question 3 — Prescribed Drama/Theatre (80 marks) — Answer 3(a) OR 3(b)

Answer one option only. If a candidate answers more than one, mark the best-attempted and ignore the rest. In 3(b) the candidate ticks (i), (ii) or (iii). Use the criterion grid above.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
3(a) 80 marks (i) + (ii) + (iii)	Answer parts (i), (ii) and (iii). Award against the grid across the whole response. (i) Identify your prescribed focus of study; name and explain one characteristic of it, using an example from the designated performance of the set play. (ii) Explain one other characteristic of the focus of study, using examples from at least one other play within the focus. (iii) Explain the possible impact on an audience of either characteristic identified in (i) or (ii).	80
3(b)(i) 80 marks Non End-On Theatre Staging	Set design for <i>Mosquitoes</i> (Lucy Kirkwood; style: Non End-On Theatre Staging). Reward a labelled sketch identifying two aspects of the candidate's own set design, and a clear explanation of how those two aspects differ from Katrina Lindsay's set for the designated performance (reminder image: Figure C on Paper X). Award against the grid for the sketch, the comparison and the reasoning. <i>Examiner note: the paper assigns <i>Mosquitoes</i> (Lucy Kirkwood, dir. Rufus Norris) to this drama option. The prescribed Verbatim Theatre set play in Circular 0061/2025 (which replaces 0002/2025) is Home (National Theatre, 2013; written & directed by Nadia Fall). Mark the candidate against the production named in the paper, but be aware of this discrepancy.</i>	80

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
3(b)(ii) 80 marks Tragicomedy	Playing Donal Davoren in <i>The Shadow of a Gunman</i> (Sean O’Casey); role played by Marty Rea in the designated performance. Reward: identification of two elements of Marty Rea’s performance; explanation of how these are typical of the focus of study (Tragicomedy); and an outline of how they may or may not influence the candidate’s own performance as Donal.	80
3(b)(iii) 80 marks Non-naturalistic production elements	Three non-naturalistic production elements in the designated performance of <i>Tóraíocht</i> (Philip Doherty, dir. Mikel Murfi, Fíbín). Reward identification of three such elements (e.g. mask work, oversized/puppet props, ensemble playing multiple roles, aerial/physical sequences, stylised staging) and the candidate’s own opinion on how they do or do not add to the appeal of the performance. <i>Examiner note: the paper prints the writer as ‘Philip O’Doherty’; the writer of <i>Tóraíocht</i> is Philip Doherty (Fíbín, dir. Mikel Murfi). Do not penalise candidates for the paper’s spelling.</i>	80

Question 4 — Prescribed Film (80 marks) — Answer 4(a) OR 4(b)

Answer one option only. In 4(b) the candidate ticks (i), (ii) or (iii). Use the criterion grid above.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
4(a) 80 marks	Identify your prescribed focus of study in film; discuss the role of both costume and set in the prescribed film and in at least one other film in the focus of study, with specific examples. Award against the grid for: naming a valid prescribed focus of study in film; discussing both costume and set; and supporting with specific examples from the prescribed film and at least one other film within the focus of study.	80
4(b)(i) 80 marks Style: Spielberg	How Steven Spielberg creates tension in his films (<i>Jaws</i>). Require at least two examples from <i>Jaws</i> and one from another film in the focus of study. Indicative: withholding/delaying the shark; Williams’s two-note motif and use of sound; point-of-view and water-level framing; editing and shock cuts; build-up and release of suspense.	80
4(b)(ii) 80 marks Genre: European Art Cinema	The use of location in European Art Cinema (<i>An Cailín Ciúin</i>, dir. Colm Bairéad). Require at least two examples from <i>An Cailín Ciúin</i> and one from another film in the focus of study. Indicative: the rural farm/landscape conveying isolation, quiet and atmosphere; real locations and natural light shaping mood and realism; setting reflecting the child’s inner experience.	80
4(b)(iii) 80 marks Genre: Romance	How the emotional connection between characters is communicated in <i>Past Lives</i> (dir. Celine Song) and one other Romance film. Require at least two examples from <i>Past Lives</i> and one from the other film. Indicative: understated dialogue and pauses; staging and physical distance/closeness; glances and body language; use of space, lighting and music to convey longing.	80

Section C

40 marks

Reflecting and Responding. Answer Question 5(a) or 5(b). Assessed holistically against the four criteria, scaled to 40 marks.

Assessment Criteria (Question 5)

Criterion	Descriptor	Max	Band Marks
Knowledge & Understanding	Relevant knowledge of the named performance/screening (5a) or of the collaborative process and the ACTs engaged with (5b).	15	H: 13–15 M: 8–12 L: 0–7
Reflection & Explanation	Quality of personal reflection and reasoning; clear connection between the chosen emotion/process and the aspect of the production or the candidate's own experience.	14	H: 12–14 M: 8–11 L: 0–7
Supporting Reference	Specific reference to the named performance/screening (5a) or to the two ACTs examples (5b).	7	H: 6–7 M: 4–5 L: 0–3
Communication	Clarity, structure and coherence of the response.	4	H: 4 M: 2–3 L: 0–1

Total = 40.

Question 5 (40 marks) — Answer 5(a) OR 5(b)

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
5(a) 40 marks	Name a live theatrical performance OR cinema screening attended during the course; identify the main emotion experienced (e.g. fear, anger, shock, amusement, joy) and explain how ONE aspect of the production prompted it, with reference to the named work. A specific performance or screening must be named; if none is named, cap at the Low band. Reward a clearly identified emotion and a developed explanation linking one production aspect (e.g. lighting, sound, acting, set, editing) to that emotional response, with specific reference.	40
5(b) 40 marks	Why is developing a collaborative environment important when creating theatre or film? Support with TWO examples from engagement in the Applied Creative Tasks (ACTs). Two ACTs examples are required. Reward reasoned explanation of the value of collaboration (e.g. combining different skills/ideas, shared problem-solving, trust, efficient division of roles) grounded in the candidate's own ACTs experience, with specific reference.	40

Paper total: Section A (100) + Section B (160) + Section C (40) = **300 marks.**

This marking scheme is indicative. Examiners should use professional judgement and credit all reasonable responses not listed here. Indicative answer content for image-based and prescribed-text parts should be checked by the examiner against the candidate's actual reading and against the current SEC specification (Circular 0061/2025). Prepared by SimpleStudy for study purposes; not an official State Examinations Commission document.