

LEAVING CERTIFICATE · HIGHER LEVEL · SAMPLE PAPER 2 · 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 2 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 'true/false' and short-definition parts, award marks for the correct response and, where required, for an accurate accompanying explanation.
- For parts based on a stimulus image (Figure A and Figure D in the examination paper; Figures B and C on Paper X), 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):** Accurate, well-developed, specific and relevant; sustained discussion supported by precise reference to performances, films, scenes or extracts.
- **Mid (M):** Mostly accurate, some development, relevant; reference present but more general than specific.
- **Low (L):** Partially accurate, limited development, broadly relevant; little 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)–(g) 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) 12, (b) 8, (c) 8, (d) 12, (e) 10, (f) 6, (g) 4.

(a) As lighting designer for a Halloween-themed production, identify TWO lighting techniques to heighten the 'scare-factor' and explain why you would use each (stimulus: **Figure A**, *Horror* by Jakop Ahlbom, Peacock Theatre). (12 marks)

Two techniques — 6 marks each: 2 for naming a valid lighting technique + 4 for a reasoned explanation of why it heightens the scare-factor. Accept any defensible technique; the list below is indicative and may draw on the image (deep shadow, cold side-light, a single isolating source).

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(a) 12 marks Two techniques, 6 each	<p>Name a valid technique (2) + explain its scare effect (4).</p> <p>Indicative techniques and reasoning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-key / high-contrast lighting — deep pools of shadow conceal parts of the stage so the audience cannot see what may be lurking, building dread and the fear of the unseen. • Underlighting / up-light — a source from below distorts the actor's features into an unnatural, monstrous mask, unsettling the audience. • Cold colour wash (blue/green gel) — a sickly, moonlit palette drains warmth and signals a sinister, otherworldly atmosphere, as in the bluish gloom of the image. • Sudden blackout / strobe or flicker — abrupt changes deny the eye time to adjust and can mask the appearance or disappearance of a figure for a jump-scare. • Tight isolating special / sidelight — a single hard source picks out one figure against darkness, heightening vulnerability and tension. <p>Award full marks where the explanation clearly links the chosen technique to a specific, plausible 'scare' effect on the audience.</p>	12

(b) Examine the set in **Figure B on Paper X** (*Maybe Happy Ending*, Aronson & Park, dir. Michael Arden, Broadway 2024). In your opinion, what does the scene communicate to the audience? Refer specifically to props and setting. (8 marks)

Award holistically: up to 4 marks for a defensible reading of what the scene communicates, plus up to 4 for specific reference — 2 to the use of props and 2 to the setting. Credit any valid reading the candidate substantiates from the image.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(b) 8 marks	<p>What the scene communicates (up to 4): reasoned interpretation, e.g. a sense of departure, transition or parting; loneliness or hope at a threshold; two figures connected yet separated. Accept any well-argued reading.</p> <p>Props (up to 2): specific reference to objects in the image — e.g. the suitcases and carried cases suggesting a journey or leaving; the potted plant / jar implying something fragile being protected or taken along.</p> <p>Setting (up to 2): specific reference to the staging — e.g. the large dark circular window/porthole framing a distant skyline at night, the cool palette and the symmetrical placement of the two figures on either side, creating distance and a contemplative mood.</p>	8

(c) Define each term and explain why each might be considered for a theatrical performance: **relaxed performance** and **captions**. (8 marks)

Two terms — 4 marks each: 2 for an accurate definition + 2 for explaining why it might be used in a theatrical performance.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
Relaxed performance 4 marks	Definition (2): a performance adapted to be more welcoming to audience members who would benefit from a less formal, lower-sensory environment — typically with adjusted (less intense) lighting and sound, a relaxed attitude to movement and noise in the auditorium, and the freedom to leave and re-enter. Why used (2): improves access for neurodivergent audiences, people with sensory or learning differences, and others (e.g. families, people with dementia), widening the audience and supporting inclusion.	4
Captions 4 marks	Definition (2): on-screen or surtitle text displaying the spoken dialogue (and often relevant sound effects/speaker identification) in time with the performance. Why used (2): makes the performance accessible to Deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences and supports comprehension generally (e.g. dense dialogue, accents, second-language audiences).	4

(d) The storyboard in **Figure C on Paper X** is from an action sequence in *The Towering Inferno* (dir. John Guillermin, 1974; storyboards by Joseph Musso). Answer (i), (ii) and (iii). (12 marks)

(i) Define a storyboard — 2 marks. (ii) Interpret frames 2, 3 and 4 — 2 marks each = 6. (iii) Two reasons a storyboard aids the practitioner — 2 marks each = 4.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(d)(i) 2 marks	What is a storyboard (2): a sequence of drawings/sketches that plan a film or scene shot by shot, showing framing, composition, camera angle and the action of each shot before filming.	2
(d)(ii) 6 marks Frames 2, 3 & 4 — 2 each	Credit any reasonable reading of each frame consistent with the storyboard (a high-rise fire rescue sequence). Indicative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frame 2: characters inside the burning/damaged building react in alarm — establishing the people who must be rescued and the danger they are in. Frame 3: a figure reaches/gestures toward the rescue apparatus (an arrow indicates the direction of movement or attention) — the rescue attempt begins. Frame 4: the external rescue rig/breeches-buoy or cab is seen against the tower, a figure suspended or being moved on it — conveying the height, peril and the mechanics of the escape. Award 2 marks per frame for a coherent interpretation; do not require the candidate to match a single 'correct' description.	6
(d)(iii) 4 marks Two reasons, 2 each	Two reasons a storyboard aids production (2 each). Indicative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-visualises shots so the director and crew share a clear plan — saving time and money on set. Communicates camera angles, framing and action to all departments (camera, stunts, effects, art) so a complex/dangerous sequence is coordinated safely. Helps plan continuity and the order of shots, and identify what must be built, rigged or created with effects in advance. 	4

(e) Indicate whether each statement is true or false (one is completed). Five statements to complete. (10 marks)

2 marks per correctly completed statement × 5 = 10. The worked example (theatre-in-the-round = False) is not marked.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(e) 10 marks 5 × 2 marks	<p>Correct answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Continuity means filming continuously over an extended period.’ — False (continuity is the consistency of detail across shots/takes so edited footage appears seamless). • ‘Improvisation is defined as improving a dramatic performance.’ — False (improvisation is performing without a prepared script, creating spontaneously). • ‘Blocking occurs when the audience cannot fully see the stage.’ — False (blocking is the planned positioning and movement of actors on stage). • ‘A prompt script/book is another name for a call sheet.’ — False (the prompt book records blocking, cues and the text; a call sheet is the daily schedule for cast and crew). • ‘Diegetic sound can be heard by the characters as well as by the audience.’ — True (diegetic sound originates within the world of the story). <p>Award the 2 marks for the correct True/False selection in each row.</p>	10

(f) Define **workshopping** and state when it might be appropriate to use it. (6 marks)

Definition — 3 marks; appropriate use — 3 marks.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(f) 6 marks	<p>Definition (3): a collaborative, exploratory process in which performers, and often the director/writer, develop material through experiment — improvising, trying ideas, devising and refining — rather than simply rehearsing a fixed script.</p> <p>When appropriate (3): e.g. developing a new or devised piece; exploring characters, relationships or staging before scripting/blocking is fixed; problem-solving a difficult scene; generating ideas in the early/creative phase of making a production.</p>	6

(g) (i) Identify TWO types of camera movement. (ii) Explain why you might use each. (4 marks)

(i) Name two valid camera movements — 1 mark each = 2. (ii) Explain a reason for using each — 1 mark each = 2.

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(g) 4 marks (i) 2 + (ii) 2	<p>Identify two camera movements (1 each) and explain a use for each (1 each). Indicative pairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pan (horizontal pivot) — to follow action across a space or reveal the breadth of a setting. • Tilt (vertical pivot) — to reveal height/scale or shift attention up or down a subject. • Tracking / dolly — to move with a subject, keeping them in frame and creating immersion. • Crane / boom — to lift the viewpoint for a sweeping, elevated or establishing perspective. • Zoom (lens, not movement of the body of the camera) — accept if the candidate distinguishes it; to draw attention in or out quickly. <p>Accept any two distinct, correctly named movements with a plausible reason for each.</p>	4

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: with reference to at least one performance studied, explain how **movement OR position on stage** contributed to your appreciation of your unprescribed focus of study. (20 marks)

Name focus of study – 4; (the candidate ticks movement OR position on stage); discussion of how it contributed, with reference – 16 (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	<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, verbatim theatre, pantomime.</p> <p>Discussion of movement OR position on stage, with reference (16), banded: reward how the chosen element (the candidate ticks one) shaped the candidate’s appreciation of the focus of study, anchored in a named performance studied.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H (13–16): sustained discussion of how movement/position works within the focus of study, anchored in a specific named performance and moment. • M (7–12): some development; reference more general than specific. • L (0–6): assertion with little development or reference. 	20

(b) Unprescribed Film: with reference to at least one unprescribed film studied, discuss how **ONE of soundtrack, editing OR costume** contributed to your understanding of your unprescribed focus of study. (20 marks)

Name focus of study – 4; (the candidate ticks soundtrack, editing OR costume); discussion of how it contributed, with reference – 16 (banded). Same band boundaries as 2(a).

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
(b) 20 marks	<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>Discussion of soundtrack, editing OR costume, with reference (16), banded: reward how the chosen element (the candidate ticks one) deepened understanding of the focus of study, supported by specific reference to a named unprescribed film.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H (13–16): clear, developed discussion tied to effect/meaning, supported by specific clip/extract reference. • M (7–12): some development; general reference. • L (0–6): 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	Accurate, relevant knowledge of the focus of study and the designated performance/film; understanding of form, genre, style and the practitioners' craft; appropriate subject terminology.	30	H: 25–30 M: 16–24 L: 0–15
Analysis & Discussion	Critical discussion of how characteristics/aspects function and their impact; quality of argument; engagement with the candidate's own opinion as required by the question.	28	H: 24–28 M: 15–23 L: 0–14
Supporting Reference	Specific, accurate reference to the designated performance/film and at least one other relevant performance/extract within the focus of study.	14	H: 12–14 M: 7–11 L: 0–6
Communication	Clarity of expression; logical structure and flow; coherent, appropriately registered 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)	Answer both parts (i) and (ii). Award against the grid across the whole response. (i) Discuss any two of: make-up, gesture, transitional music, props in relation to the chosen prescribed focus of study, supported by reference to the designated performance . (ii) Explain how one of: make-up, gesture, transitional music, props helped understanding of the focus of study, using examples from scenes/extracts from at least one other performance within the focus — not the designated performance.	80

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
3(b)(i) 80 marks Verbatim Theatre	Identify the actor in <i>Mosquitoes</i> (Lucy Kirkwood, dir. Rufus Norris) whose performance most impacted you; review that performance with reference to at least three specific moments from the designated performance. Reward a developed review anchored in three concrete moments and in the production as a whole. <i>Examiner note: the paper names Mosquitoes (Lucy Kirkwood, dir. Rufus Norris) for the Verbatim Theatre focus. 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
3(b)(ii) 80 marks Tragicomedy	Discuss how effectively Garry Hynes uses the interaction between characters to showcase the humour in O’Casey’s <i>The Shadow of a Gunman</i> (Druid). Require reference to specific interactions between at least two characters; reward engagement with the candidate’s own opinion on effectiveness.	80
3(b)(iii) 80 marks Non-naturalistic production elements	Discuss the extent to which creative use is made of both costume and props in the designated performance of <i>Tóraíocht</i> (Philip Doherty, dir. Mikel Murfi, Fíbín). Require examples from the designated performance supporting both costume and props, and the candidate’s own judgement on the ‘extent’.	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; name two characteristics evident in the prescribed film that contributed to your understanding of the focus. Award against the grid for: naming a valid prescribed focus of study in film; identifying and discussing two genuine characteristics; supporting with reference to the prescribed film and clips/extracts from at least one other film within the focus of study.	80
4(b)(i) 80 marks Style: Spielberg	As a budding director inspired by Steven Spielberg (<i>Jaws</i>): identify at least two stylistic elements you admire and discuss why you would incorporate each into your own work. Indicative elements: suspense built by withholding the shark; Williams’s two-note motif and use of sound; shock cuts and the dolly-zoom; point-of-view and water-level framing. Reward reasoned personal rationale tied to specific moments.	80
4(b)(ii) 80 marks Genre: European Art Cinema	As a budding director inspired by the director of <i>An Cailín Ciúin</i> (Colm Bairéad): identify at least two stylistic elements you admire and discuss why you would incorporate each. Indicative: restrained, observational pacing; recurring visual motifs (water/the well, doorways, hands); use of silence and natural light; intimate framing of a child’s perspective. Reward reasoned personal rationale tied to specific moments.	80

Part	Acceptable Answer(s)	Marks
4(b)(iii) 80 marks Genre: Romance	As a budding director inspired by the director of <i>Past Lives</i> (Celine Song): identify at least two stylistic elements you admire and discuss why you would incorporate each. Indicative: understated, naturalistic dialogue; use of space/staging to express longing and distance; restrained editing and long takes; lighting and setting that signal genre. Reward reasoned personal rationale tied to specific moments.	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 film/performance and of the social issue or target-audience context being discussed.	15	H: 13–15 M: 8–12 L: 0–7
Analysis & Reflection	Quality of personal reflection and reasoning; clear connection between the chosen issue/audience and how it is explored or shapes the work.	14	H: 12–14 M: 8–11 L: 0–7
Supporting Reference	Specific reference to the named film or theatrical performance (at least two examples where required).	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	‘Productions can hold up a mirror to society.’ Identify one social issue or aspect of society explored in a film OR theatrical performance attended, and explain how it was explored, using examples from the named work. A specific film or performance must be named; if none is named, cap at the Low band. Reward a clearly identified social issue and developed explanation of how the work explores it, with specific reference.	40
5(b) 40 marks	Name a film attended at a live screening as part of film studies; identify, in your opinion, its target audience; discuss the influence of target audience on the film with at least two examples (stimulus: Figure D, IFCO classification ratings). The film must be named and a target audience identified; require at least two examples from the film. Reward reasoning that links target-audience/classification to specific creative or content choices (e.g. tone, content, certification, marketing).	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.