

2020 VCE Dance written examination report

General comments

In 2020 the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority produced an examination based on the *VCE Dance Adjusted Study Design for 2020 only*.

The examination questions were based on the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4. Students were required to demonstrate their understanding of choreographic principles and the prescribed works studied throughout both units.

The examination consisted of seven questions and all questions were compulsory. Questions 1–3 related to students' solo dances, learnt works and movement categories. Questions 4a. and 4b., 5, 6 and 7 related to dance works selected from the prescribed list of dance works published annually in the *VCAA Bulletin*. The list changes each year; therefore, it is important to carefully check the list at the start of each year before deciding on the selection of works to be studied. Responses indicated that students had studied appropriate works from the current prescribed list.

High-scoring responses were comprehensive and demonstrated consistent use of accurate and appropriate terminology, as well as detailed knowledge and understanding of the key knowledge and skills relevant to each question.

Low-scoring responses displayed a limited understanding of the key concept(s) involved and/or showed limited knowledge of appropriate dance terminology. Further revision of VCE Dance terminology leading up to the examination would enable a stronger response in this area.

Students are reminded to read each question carefully to ensure that they understand what is being asked. They should use their reading time to identify the key terms and concepts the question is focusing on. They should also ensure that they address all aspects of the question in their response. Diagrams were awarded marks only if they provided information that was in addition to written responses.

Past written examinations and other material, such as examination reports and sample examination material (available on the VCE Dance examination webpage of the VCAA website), may be useful in assisting with a student's examination preparation. Students are advised that this material serves only as a sample and that the number and type of questions for each year may vary, as described in the Examination specifications.

Specific information

Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers, or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	2	14	26	52	3.2

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 3 Outcome 3, 'Dance technique, performance and analysis of a learnt dance work'. Specifically, it related to production elements including music and/or sound, as appropriate, and their relation to the choreography and intention.

High-scoring responses identified the chosen production element and gave a brief description of it. They gave an outline of the intention of the dance work and then described how the production element enhanced that intention.

Low-scoring responses:

- incorrectly identified a production element
- gave a detailed description of a correct production element with no link to the intention
- gave a detailed description of the intention with no link to a production element
- referred to a solo rather than a group dance work.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

A choreographer may use the production element of costume to enhance the intention of a group dance work by placing dancers in identical or contrasting costumes to visually represent the intention of the piece. For example, if dancers were portraying the intention of a fight scene, dancers in opposing teams may be placed in different colours. Not only does this allow the audience to more clearly identify the opposing teams but it also solidifies the intention in the minds of the dancers therefore allowing them to better portray it.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	1	4	5	21	19	44	4.7

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 3 Outcome 2, 'Choreography, performance and analysis of a skills-based solo dance work'. Specifically, it related to the manipulation of movement vocabulary from each movement category to demonstrate physical skills.

High-scoring responses correctly identified two different movement categories, and many gave a brief definition of what the movement category was, although this was not required to achieve a high score. They described the movement vocabulary within the chosen phrase and linked each movement to the chosen movement category. Most high-scoring responses used terminology linked to their chosen movement category to describe each movement.

Low-scoring responses:

- discussed physical skills instead of identifying movement categories
- described movement vocabulary without using the movement category terminology
- identified only one movement category.

The following is an excerpt from an example of a high-scoring response.

Travelling is movements that traverse through the space in a specific direction. For example, performing a monkey slide on a low level, to then run backwards to jump suddenly upwards and then spring sideways to the floor is a movement phrase that clearly demonstrates how one traverses through the space in various directions.

Elevation are movements that result in the upwards change of level in a body part, body parts or the whole body. For example, a dancer is crouching on the floor in a ball, they then lift their head up and reaching towards the sky. Then suddenly she's scared and jumps into a medium level lunge, then she's frightened and runs quickly to jump at a high level over an imaginary wall. This example above is a movement phrase that clearly demonstrates how she is moving in a way that results in an upward change in level: elevation.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	1	2	5	6	7	15	12	14	13	23	7.0

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 4 Outcome 2, 'Dance technique, performance and dance-making analysis'. Specifically, it related to the choreography, rehearsal and performance of a solo dance work.

High-scoring responses correctly identified an element of spatial organisation, gave clear and detailed descriptions of movement vocabulary examples and linked the applicable spatial organisation terminology to their example. For example, a response that focused on direction identified the direction of each movement by using relevant terms such as 'forwards', 'backwards', 'on the diagonal' etc. These responses provided an in-depth analysis of how the spatial organisation was manipulated through a variety of movement vocabulary examples and then explained how these helped to communicate the intention.

Low-scoring responses:

- did not identify a correct element of spatial organisation
- identified an element of spatial organisation but did not link it to their description of movement vocabulary
- gave detailed descriptions of movement vocabulary without any link to spatial organisation
- gave examples of the use of spatial organisation without using movement vocabulary (for example, 'I was on a low level and then a high level.')
- provided very brief outlines of movement vocabulary with loose links to spatial organisation
- did not link the movement vocabulary or the use of spatial organisation to the intention of the dance work.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Element of spatial organisation: Focus

In my cohesive composition solo, I portrayed a mother caring for her sick child, before feeling helpless as the baby passes away and I am heartbroken at the loss.

In section A, I demonstrated the mother looking after her child and in the beginning phrase I kneeled on the floor with my arms in a cradle position in front of me. My focus was directly on my arms to signify the presence of the child. As I rocked backwards and forwards, I swung my arms either side of my body and my focus remained inwards and on my arms, showing the deep connection between the mother and child. As I lifted my body off my knees and elevated my arms to fifth position, my eye focus followed my arms and as they opened to second position before coming back to first. I ensured my focus stayed directly on my arms to portray the mother taking care of her unwell child.

In section C, the mother is heartbroken at the loss of her child and I portray this through keeping my direct focus on where the child lays. In one phrase, I kneeled at the front of the stage and as the child passed I placed her on the floor in a gesture of opening my arms in front of me. I then rolled to face the back and stood up, keeping my focus on the child at the front of the stage. As I executed a turn in coupé, my focus started and ended on the child before elevating one leg to arabesque and gesturing my arms in a reaching movement forwards. I then lunged to a low level whilst my focus remained on the child as my arms wrapped

around my body. This use of direct focus helps communicate the intention as the mother grieves and is unable to accept the loss of her child, so can't bear to look away.

Question 4

Work chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
%	1	20	12	35	14	3	4	12

Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	5	2	6	10	13	13	15	10	26	5.3

Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	14	4	6	10	14	13	13	9	18	4.4

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 3 Outcome 1, 'Dance perspectives'. Specifically, it related to the ways that elements of movement are manipulated to communicate the intention in the selected dance works.

High-scoring responses identified one phrase of movement and discussed the ways that two different elements of movement were shown in that phrase across Questions 4a. and 4b., and how the combination of movement vocabulary and elements of movement communicated the intention. They included a brief description of what the intention was to allow the link to be clearly made, either at the beginning and/or at the end or throughout their response. Most of the high-scoring responses included links between each movement and the intention. They used the correct terminology to identify the chosen element of movement and to discuss a variety of qualities from their chosen element of movement.

Low-scoring responses:

- did not correctly identify one of the elements of movement (time, space, energy)
- used incorrect terms to explain the qualities of their chosen element of movement (for example, referring to 'lots of space' or 'not much energy')
- included a detailed discussion of the intention of the dance work without any reference to movement vocabulary
- did not include reference to an element of movement, providing only movement vocabulary examples
- answered only Question 4a. and did not provide a second example for Question 4b.
- described the movement phrase only in Question 4a., and in Question 4b. only included spatial organisation and intention information without providing movement examples.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Title of solo dance work: 'White rabbit'

Element of movement: Energy

The dancer completes the inverted jumps that travel side to side. He then executes a hopover movement using strong force to showcase the immense power the rabbit possesses in his legs to complete such high jumps. He continues by completing a series of axial hops, occasionally extending one leg out in arabesque,

again using strong force in his 'hind legs'. His use of free flow aims to signify his inability to rest as he must have things clean and pristine for the Queen of Hearts before she arrives for the court session. The percussive movements also aim to depict his character as the rodent he is with the ability to hop around constantly without a break. He continues the phrase as he completes a fan kick out of the hopping movements to demonstrate the use of sustained energy and free flow further emphasises how he is unable to stop before the Queen arrives. He then completes another two inverted jumps using a percussive quality to signify a sense of stress that is exaggerated by his obsessive personality. The phrase finishes as he completes a triple attitude turn using free flow before he demonstrates a collapsing quality to fall to a crouched position, resembling the shape of a rabbit.

Element of movement: Space

The dancer completes the two inverted elevations using a sideways, yet direct pathway to show his tendency to go back and forth, ensuring the courtroom is up to the Queen's standards. He continues by completing the hopover movement in an up and down direction as he executes the series of axial hops. As he extends his back leg out wide, he creates a large personal dimension as well as an angular shape in order to represent his unease at the responsibility he has to prepare the courtroom. He then completes the fan kick, again using a sideways direction and creating an angular shape, as he uses direct eye and body focus towards the audience on order to communicate his determination to have things ready for the Queen. He then executes the two inverted jumps on a high level to further emphasise his character as a rabbit with the ability to jump around. He finishes by completing the triple turn using a circular position, finishing in a small, curved shape.

Question 5

Work chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
%	0	13	10	49	13	3	3	10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	5	5	7	3	9	9	8	6	8	5	6	3	14	13.3

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 3 Outcome 1, 'Dance perspectives'. Specifically, it related to the form of the selected dance works.

High-scoring responses discussed the form by using the named structural components of the dance. These often included an overarching form or free form with an outline of the number of components and labels for each component, such as ABC, ABA, ABA1B1A2B2 etc. They then gave detailed movement vocabulary examples that were clearly linked to the intention of the section of the dance work within which the movement vocabulary example appeared. As the question specified that examples must come from 'throughout the dance', high-scoring responses referred to two or more different sections of the dance.

Low-scoring responses:

- did not identify a form by name or label, such as ABC
- gave contradictory information about the form, such as having a name and a label that did not match
- linked the form with the intention but did not give movement vocabulary examples
- discussed the form and movement vocabulary, but did not link them to the intention
- gave one outline of the intention and then described movement vocabulary without linking them
- had one or more examples of movement vocabulary from the same section of the dance work.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Title of solo dance work: 'Take me to church' (TMTC)

The form of 'TMTc' is theme and variation, consisting of 4 sections divided into A1, B1, A2 and B2. A1 and A2 communicate the dancer's struggles with the dance industry and the personal constraint he deals with. Both of these sections include two phrases, with use of gestural contracted movements with moments of stillness. The first phrase in A1 introduces the motif that is later embellished in B1, where the dancer bows his head forwards and brushes his hands through his hair, he then reaches gesturing towards the ceiling to then collapse into a foetal position. The 2nd phrase shows Sergei trying to lift himself out of the negativity, performing two back arches, to then collapse back into the floor, then flipping over his right shoulder to his abdomen to push off the hands and elevate towards the ceiling with the legs stretched out in a parallel shape to then collapse back onto the floor for a moment of stillness sitting on his knees. This expresses the dancers struggles to deal with constraint. In A2, similar movement is shown after the energised section B1. In the first phrase the dancer rolls onto his back, dragging his hand in a claw-like motion across the body, to repeat the back arch sequence that was seen in A1, expressing how sadness and frustration as returned over time. In a line to the second phrase the dancer rolls past his right shoulder to change his focus from the right corner, to the left. This leads into the second phrase where the dancer pulls up from his abdomen and sits on his knees for a moment of stillness. B1 and B2 express the dancer's celebration of technique and athleticism, though his swan song, he does this through large elevation and turning sequences. B1 consists of 4 phrases, performing 4 linking slow walks from A1 into B2. In the first phrase the dancer performs various turning elevations travelling across the room diagonally, performing an embellished version of the hand brushing through his hair adding in a 'claw' quality. This links into the second phrase where the dancer performs 2 turning sequences consisting of double turns and turns travelling upstage, to then perform a gestural back arch in a lunge position expressing a sense of superiority. This links into the third and fourth phrase that accentuates Sergei's classical training executing various attitude turns into arabesques, also incorporating contemporary elevations. After the constraining A2 section the dancer performs 2 linking walks into B2 which consists of 3 phrases where similar movement vocabulary seen in B1 is performed. In the first phrase the dancer performs a double turn sequence followed by a large leg elevation, he then travels downstage to perform the recurring motif of the claw hands through the hair which he aggressively throws his hands to his head after a large 360 elevation, expressing how though he is celebrating his swan song, his inner demons still remain. The 2nd and last phrases of 'TMTc' showcases his impressive elevated 360 turns and turning jetes for the audience to see for the last time, falling to his knees in relief as he can finally part from the dance industry.

Question 6

Work chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
%	1	13	11	45	10	5	7	9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average
%	4	3	5	5	9	7	14	8	10	7	10	4	5	2	7	7.0

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 3 Outcome 1, 'Dance perspectives'. Specifically, it related to the movement vocabulary of the selected dance work and how it is manipulated by the choreographer to communicate the intention.

High-scoring responses gave multiple examples of movement vocabulary that were linked to the intention. They described each example in detail and linked it to the intention, explaining how that movement example communicated the intention. Some included descriptions of the group formations that the movement was performed in or descriptions of the spatial organisation, although these were not required to gain a high score.

Low scoring responses:

- described movement vocabulary but did not link the example to the intention
- described the intention but did not link it to the movement vocabulary
- provided a vague link between the movement vocabulary and the intention without analysing the link
- provided only brief outlines of the movement vocabulary and/or the intention and/or the link between them.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Title of group dance work: 'Take me to church' (TMTC)

The choreographer uses various ways to manipulate the movement vocab to express a sense of chaos that's caused by the characters, as well as the topsy turvy nature of Wonderland. In the beginning section the choreographer uses changes in level and arrangement of the dancers to express the physical representation of the race. The dances are arranged closely together in this section, where they perform phrases in scattered clumps as Alice tries to organise the race. There is also use of contrast to manipulate the movement, the dancers create a clump near the end of this section where each dancer performs contrasting variations of running, some at low levels and some at high levels to express how the nature of Wonderland influences the characters.

In the development the use of canon and contrast is also seen as well as unison to express how disorganised the race has become. The dancers move in unison performing a waltzing phrase where the dancers are in partners, travelling anticlockwise while performing a galloping waltz to then rise onto pointe performing an elevated arabesque. The choreographer manipulates this movement through the application of unison to express how when the dancers move together, they have power which overrules Alice's power and causes chaos. In another phrase in this section the movement vocabulary is manipulated by contrast to communicate disorganisation. The dancers perform two contrasting phrases, one performing fouettés clumped towards the left side of stage, whilst the other dancers perform a simple running motion towards the left side. The contrast in direction here communicates how there is no boundaries to the race, which is causing chaos.

In the resolution the dancers perform a backwards flip, which the movement is manipulated by the use of canon. The dancers are arranged in a circle and Alice in partners, where one after the other they lunge backwards as Alice finally takes control of the group and finishes the race.

Question 7

Work chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
%	3	12	11	44	10	5	7	9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	11	1	3	3	6	8	12	12	17	10	17	6.3

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 4 Outcome 1, 'Dance perspectives'. Specifically, it related to how group structures, spatial arrangements and the elements of spatial organisation are manipulated to communicate the intention.

High-scoring responses correctly identified one of the four elements of spatial organisation: direction, level, focus and dimension. They showed an understanding of what the element is, described at least one example of the use of the element, and explained how the use of that element helped to communicate the intention of the dance work by providing direct links between them. Although movement vocabulary was not required to

receive full marks for this question, and did not receive any marks on its own, some brief descriptions were often used to support the analysis of spatial organisation.

As the question required two examples of the use of the chosen element of spatial organisation, responses that included only one example earned half of the available marks, no matter how detailed that example was.

Low-scoring responses:

- incorrectly identified spatial organisation
- correctly identified an element of spatial organisation but used descriptive words that did not match their chosen element (for example, they identified focus but then discussed directions of travel)
- described the use of spatial organisation but did not discuss how that element helped to communicate the intention
- described the movement vocabulary but did not show an understanding of the spatial organisation
- described the intention but did not link it to the use of spatial organisation.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Title of group dance work: 'Prologue' from 'West Side Story'

Element of spatial organisation: Level

The prologue from West side Story choreographed by Jerome Robbins depicts gang warfare in the 1950s. Robbin's intention was to demonstrate the effect of the intensifying gang warfare on the community as well as to delve into the delegations of power within the gangs and look at how they operate. Robbins manipulated the use of level to denote both of these aspects of the piece.

In the opening phrase of section 1 a gang known as The Jets are seen leaning against a fence. They are in an asymmetrical position and can be seen on varying levels. Robbins uses low, medium and high levels to identify the delegations of power throughout the gang. The leader of The Jets is shown at the highest level as he is standing, the two members standing next to him are at a slightly lower level as they lean against the fence. This contrast shows that the leader on the highest level has the most power within the gang and therefore has the most input into decisions made by the gang. This communicates Robin's intention to portray the delegations of power within a gang as well as how they operate.

A second example of the use of level to portray the intention is found in Section 3 as Robbins depicts a fight scene. As The Jets battle with a rival gang known as The Sharks, Robbins uses a high level to demonstrate the intensity and monopolising nature of the gang warfare. This high level can be seen through various elevations as the dancers locomote through space with a series of jetes, stag jumps and barrel rolls. This high level shows that there is a high level of intensity between the two gangs as each fight to 'be on top' both literally and metaphorically. Robbins uses both of these examples of levels to highlight the different appointment of power within each individual gang, as well as the intense nature of gang warfare as The Sharks and The Jets fight to be on top.