

to the meaning within. That is that water above all else controls place and thus human experience and psyche and creates a non-linear experience of time and memory. Each draw the reader into the story and accentuate each moment's significance. Therefore, through the novel's unique structure, it comments on society's construction at the hands of water and landscape and articulates that the world is at its core shaped by their factors.

This conclusion is brief and whilst the candidate ends with a summary of the meaning made from the text, they could utilise their own voice further.

### Activity: Finding your own voice

Using your journal – an important part of your study armoury – practise writing in the first-person. Have the confidence to write personally, detailing your reactions to texts. If you are confident about your interpretations and have relevant supporting evidence, then your arguments will be stronger, more authentic and interesting.

Many of the Literature syllabus points make reference to how you respond to texts and many exam questions ask that you discuss your personal response in some way. This means that you are being encouraged to think about how you are making meaning when reading and to justify why or how you have made this meaning. It also means that your markers are interested in reading about your engagement with texts. To help you synthesise the ways you are responding to texts, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do the ideas in the text support your feelings and values?
- Do the ideas in the text confront and challenge your attitude to a specific subject?
- Do you empathise with a particular character? Why?
- Are you shocked by the content of a particular text? Why?
- Are your ideas altered in any way by your reading?
- Are any aspects of the text relevant to your personal context?
- Are aspects of the text unfamiliar or alien? If so, why might this be the case?
- Do you reject any aspects of the text, such as a character's decisions or attitudes, or an idea that is privileged in the text? If so, why might this be the case?
- What thoughts and emotions do certain aspects of the text elicit in you? Why?

Below are some examples of how you might express your responses to texts using personal pronouns and 'owning' your reading. Writing in this way will help you develop your personal style of writing that can be very effective in strengthening certain analytical responses.

- As a result of my working-class background, I am disappointed by \_\_\_\_'s decision to \_\_\_\_ in the novel, as it...
- By reading the text allegorically, I interpret the three characters as a microcosmic representation of...
- As a young man living in contemporary Australian society, I can identify with \_\_\_\_'s experience of feeling pressured to act in a stereotypically masculine way with his friends, as a result of...
- My personal experiences within a family impacted by inadequacies in the health system when it comes to mental health have contributed to my deep empathy towards \_\_\_\_ and this resonates with me when reading...
- Through my understanding of \_\_\_\_'s political beliefs, I interpret this poem as a condemnation of...

## Considering Question 11

With reference to at least one drama text, discuss the way that the audience has been drawn into the action on stage through the stimulation of their senses.

### Interpreting the question

In addressing this question, candidates are expected to show consideration of the staging elements of drama and discuss how drama is a sensory experience for the audience. The phrase 'drawn into the action' could be interpreted as inviting a discussion of audience engagement, investment, emotional response and interest in the action taking place on stage. This phrase could also refer to being 'drawn in' to social, cultural and ideological concerns which are played out on stage, such as feeling a sense of outrage at the mistreatment of First Nations people during the haunting blackout of Jack Davis' *No Sugar*.

The phrase 'stimulation of the senses' requires candidates to discuss how a variety of senses are appealed to in the genre of drama. A discussion of dialogue and how it evokes the auditory and visual senses requires further detail; candidates might discuss volume, tone, pace, silence and other auditory elements which draw the audience into the dialogue of the characters. Other aural elements such as music and sound effects should also be discussed, as they work to garner an emotional response from the audience. In terms of visual elements, candidates could discuss a myriad of performance elements such as lighting, costume, movement, stage position, proxemics levels and so on. Multisensory elements such as staging, breaking the fourth wall and metatheatrical devices can also be considered, as they engage and challenge the audience. Close reference to stage directions would help to facilitate a strong discussion of this question.

Stronger responses could discuss the interplay between these sensory elements and how they work together to engage the audience with the action on stage. In Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, audiences are drawn into the action on stage when the rising auditory cacophony of the Varsouviana Polka interplays with the visual movement of Blanche swaying and covering her face which reflects Blanche's spiral into anguish and remorse, drawing audiences into her past.

Specific consideration of 'the audience' is also helpful for this question. Candidates should state who the audience is rather than referring to 'the audience' in general terms. Audiences from different contexts may be drawn into the action in different ways and may have opposing responses to the sensory experience of the play. For example, an audience watching Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in 1879 may be drawn into the sounds and sights of Nora closing the door and leaving at the end of the play with a sense of astonishment and anger, while contemporary audiences would be entranced by this as an act of empowerment. It may be interesting to discuss the social, historical, cultural or personal context of the audience in order to help define the term 'audience' in response to this question.

It is important to write about the version of the text that is stated in the Literature prescribed text list for the majority of the response, rather than focus on specific productions or adaptations which are not on the text list.

Advice from teachers

- Ensure you discuss your drama texts as stage plays and that your evidence covers a broad scope of dramatic conventions.
- Dialogue is not enough; you must find evidence of the performance aspects of your drama texts.
- Study the stage directions closely when reading your drama texts.

Activity: Director’s notes

Closely read the opening scene of your drama text. Imagine you will be holding a production of this play. Create a visual representation or illustration of how the stage would appear based on the stage directions given. Consider the stage position of characters, lighting choices, costumes, colours, proxemics and so on.

Now re-read the stage directions and make notes of the music, sound effects and soundscapes that are described.

Armed with this understanding of your dramatic text, create a glossary of terms associated with the genre of drama and write down a definition for each term in the table below, adding your own terms in the space provided:

Term	Definition
Blocking	
Dramatic irony	
Gesture	
Monologue	
Soliloquy	
Proscenium arch	
Scenery	

Question 11: Sample response one

This response incorporates a broad range of dramatic conventions and relevant metalanguage, reflecting that the candidate has a clear and confident understanding of drama as a genre, which is very important for genre-specific questions such as this. There is detailed and well-selected evidence from the play woven seamlessly throughout this essay which exemplifies a broad range of dramatic elements and displays thorough and considered preparation. The candidate clearly defines and discusses different sources of visual and auditory stimulation which serve to illuminate the importance of audience immersion in theatre. A clearer discussion of which audience the candidate is referring to, as well as the effect of the sensory stimulation on that audience, would enhance this response.

That which separates drama from its literary siblings is its adept use of theatricality to induce an experience. The writing of a play incorporates intricacies in visual and auditory construction which often work to support dialogue in the themes of the play. David Henry Hwang, a Chinese American playwright, carefully integrates this powerful theatricality into his 1988 play *M. Butterfly*, which follows the love affair between Western diplomat Rene Gallimard and Chinese actress Liling Song – who is revealed to be a male spy guising as a woman to gather intelligence for Communist China. Hwang’s control of costuming, proxemics, lighting and soundscape form a theatrical sublayer with which he continues to deconstruct colonial ideologies. By drawing audiences into close emotional proximity of the conflicts and cultural tensions he presents on stage, the empowering subversions put in place to uplift Eastern characters becomes reality to an audience stimulated by the senses.

Through close attention to costuming, lighting and proxemics, Song is able to construct the aesthetic of the submissive Oriental women. In his control of the audience’s visual sensory response, the enticing and exploitative nature of Song’s performance becomes more explicit as theatrical devices encapsulate this fantasy to which Gallimard is so fervently drawn. At first, Song appears a “[beautiful woman in a traditional Chinese garb]” positioned “[upstage]” where she “[dances a traditional piece from the Peking Opera]”. She is “[surrounded by the percussive clatter of Chinese music]” until the “[lights and sound cross fade]”

This is a clever and engaging opening to a drama-specific question, as it articulately states what sets drama apart from prose fiction and poetry.

This introduction provides an excellent platform for the response that follows. A number of dramatic conventions which suit the question are nominated – although listing is best avoided. There is a very insightful statement about the powerful theatrical elements which stimulate the senses.

This candidate has a strong vocabulary and an eloquent turn of phrase.

The evidence selected is suited to the question and integrated well. Further, a closer analysis of the sensory function of each piece of evidence would be helpful, along with more consideration of how these draw the audience into the action on stage.



and "[Chinese Opera music dissolves into a Western accompaniment]" and although "[her movements are the same, the Western music gives them a balletic quality]". This meticulous crafting of Song's character through stage directions allows Hwang to visually enhance the audience's perception of this fantasy which she constructs, as we readily experience her adapting to the music and adjusting her movement as to operate within the parameters of Gallimard's "perfect woman". In Act Two this subversive character which Song performs, as she "[curls up at his feet]" and "[strokes his head in her lap]" through her proxemics, kinesics and infantilising dialogue such as when she states "it all frightens me, I'm a modest Chinese girl," Song's constructed fantasy becomes more identifiable by audiences, demonstrating how the constant tensions and explorations on the stage are supported by visual and auditory elements to draw audiences closer to the subversion taking place.

Further employment of costuming, lighting and audio-visual elements in the final scene of M. Butterfly draws audiences into the cultural conflicts that Hwang presents on stage. The scene functions to completely invert the colonial binaries constructed throughout the play, wherein an amalgamation of audio-visuals highlights the reversal of these narratives and draws audiences into an overwhelming dramatic experience. On stage, Gallimard is assisted by supernumerary actors as "[Dancers help him put make-up on his face]", "[put on the butterfly wig]" and "[don the kimono]". This creates a distinctive image as Gallimard, misguided by homogenous views of the East, wants both the white make-up of the Peking Opera and the kimono inherent to Japanese culture. As he kneels below Song, who is dressed in "[Armani slacks]" he states: "my name is Rene Gallimard, also known as Madame Butterfly" and "[plunges the knife into his body]". This dialogue and the theatrical symbolism of suicide reinforces the reversal of the colonial narrative in which Song, who "[stands a man, looking at the dead Gallimard]" assumes the role of affluent Western man with power over the submissive Oriental woman. As the Western

More specific reference to the effect of these elements on the senses and on the audience's reaction would benefit this argument.

A connecting phrase is needed to tie together the two pieces of evidence used in this paragraph.

A clear articulation of who the audience is and how they are drawn into the action on stage would elevate this link back to the question.

opera "[blares over the house speakers]" the scene adopts and emotive and powerful audio-visual space that casts readers into an intense and empowering climax.

The use of costuming and proxemics throughout the various scenes in the play empower women over Gallimard, allowing audiences to identify particular forms of femininity that Gallimard perceives to threaten his masculinity. In Act I Scene 5, a "spotlight comes up on a pimp girl in sexy lingerie, her back to us", where she is positioned "[upstage]" and attracts the presence of the audience and Gallimard. There she states: "I stand here, in the light...without shame...I want you to see." Her dominant stance frightens Gallimard who says he "shouldn't be seeing this", he "can't move" and "this is wrong", drawing audiences into her sense of empowerment. Hwang's bold lighting and upstage proxemics reinforce the power dynamic between this empowered female and the immobilised Western male. The sexy pimp girl represents a fracture in Gallimard's Western sexuality, which relies on dominance and is threatened by such assertive forms of femininity. The sensory experience, built with visual elements of drama, allows audiences to readily appreciate the action occurring on stage for its ability not only to disempower the power-obsessive Western male, but to entirely uplift female audiences.

The nomination of the female audience and consideration of their reaction to the sensory experience shows an improvement on the previous paragraph's final sentence.

## Question 11: Sample response two

This response addresses how the sensory elements of drama emotionally and aesthetically engage an audience and encourage a particular response. The interplay between auditory, visual and kinaesthetic stimulation is discussed, showing adept awareness of the theatrical experience as a whole. There is effective application of relevant syllabus terminology throughout this response as well as concise and articulate expression, which makes it a successful essay. Unlike the previous response, this example discusses a specific audience and shows consideration of how they are affected by the sensory experience of the play, given their values and context.

*Equus* (1973) by Peter Shaffer is a piece of Post-Modern theatre unique in its confronting aesthetic achieved by drawing upon a variety of influences, ranging from Greek tragedy, psychological realism, Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and Brechtian alienation. The text focuses on the psychosis and pathology of Alan Strang, and the weary, disillusioned and tragic figure of Dr Martin Dysart. More than most, Shaffer works to utilise dramatic conventions including multifaceted set design and stagecraft to stimulate the senses and evoke a strong emotional response from the mostly conservative British audience of its day. The text's effective use of staging considerations such as the rotating "square" as well as auditory and verbal considerations including the choir and the "Equus noise" work in conjunction to create a confronting and intense aesthetic that encourages audiences to interrogate the value of materialistic society and its fixation on slavish devotion to normalcy.

Shaffer is meticulous in his description of the set design and his choices work to draw attention to the action occurring on stage via means of visual stimulation. This is demonstrated in his utilisation of the revolving "square" in which most of the play is performed. Whilst for the most part stationary, as it is placed on "ball bearings" it is easily rotated by the actors "in the circle around" it. The square is put into motions as the play builds towards the climax of the first act, as Dysart enters the confines of Alan's mind via the pen tapping "game". The rotation stimulates the audience as it has a disorientating quality- in some ways this is representative of Dysart

There is a clear thesis which states who the audience for this play is, as well as the effect of sensory elements on that audience. This approach works well to address the question at hand.

The key phrase used by the candidate here is 'in conjunction' which reflects an understanding that visual and auditory elements work together to draw the audience into the play.

navigating through the mind of his patient, but it also reveals the confusion felt by Alan himself, as during psychosis, he is unable to grasp onto the rational, real world represented by the stationary circle of actors around the stage including those playing significant characters in his life such as Frank, Dora and Jill. During this scene, lighting has also been used to evoke an emotional response of empathy from the audience. As Alan undergoes hypnosis, the stage turns "cold" as it is bathed in blue light. This serves to symbolise the conscious mind and the simultaneous dimming of the regular stage lights evokes a sense of intimacy with the audience. The transition to the subconscious state is also punctuated by the use of "loud" and "metallic" recorded tapping to play as Martin seizes to physically tap his pen. This increase in volume implies that the audience too has entered Alan's mind, reinforcing this sense of intimacy. It is in this way that Shaffer uses visual stimuli of lighting and stagecraft, as well as auditory stimuli, to interact with the audience's senses and effectively communicate the entrance into Alan's unconscious by evoking an emotional response of intimacy which encourages the reader to focus on Alan's actions.

With the audience fully engaged, Shaffer reveals his "unrelenting" nature as playwright to provide a sensory overload via stagecraft that represents the passion and exuberance of Alan's worship. As the horse-riding scene begins with Alan and Nugget on the square, the horse encompassing it begins to push it gently. What begins as a steady movement evolves into a kinetic spectacle as the speed of rotation increases "faster". This rapid and violent movement creates a tense atmosphere and Shaffer's manipulation of dramatic conventions serves as a symbol of the occult manipulation of religious devotion and power being performed by Alan. As if this were not enough, the rest of the stage is dimmed until only a "fierce spotlight" remain pointing at the "horse and the rider". In this way the audience's focus is entirely devoted to the action occurring- an arresting performance which symbolises the immense power of the individual when free from the "chains" or

This discussion of how visual and auditory elements alienate and disorientate the audience is a good example of the audience being drawn into the action on stage as it deals with their sense of involvement in the performance.

The candidate's syntax becomes quite protracted here.

Discussing the volume of the sounds and not just the sounds themselves shows the candidate's strong understanding of sensory considerations.

There is a clear and effective link back to question here which acknowledges that the emotional and aesthetic engagement of an audience is just as important as the ideological considerations.

The discussion of 'sensory overload' is a fitting ground for analysis with respect to the question posed.

restraint of society. This is the fundamental basis of Dysart's dilemma, as he must strip Alan of his very soul, so as for him to appear normal by conservative society's tendency, but in doing so would destroy his awe inspiring but painful passion. Being presented an intense and jarring scene, the audience is unable to look away this debate.

Shaffer has made careful use of verbal consideration including lexical choice to amplify the sensations of this final scene and to immerse the audience in the action occurring. The choir projecting to the loudening "Equus noise" in synchrony with the accelerating square works to create a complimentary auditory cacophony. This, as well as the lexical choice of Alan's shouts of "Wee!" and "Waa!...Wonderful" devolving into nonsensical wails, suggests a powerful transformation occurring during this "ceremonial" ritualistic event. The lexical choice of Alan's dialogue "my hooves...my mane...my flanks..." imply a certain metamorphosis and communicate physical and psychological connection between man and horse. These choices serve to demonstrate the sheer power of Alan's worship, thereby drawing focus to the rituals occurring. These verbal and auditory consideration are tantamount to stimulating the audience and drawing focus to the action, just as the visual spectacle itself.

Shaffer's reputation as one of the greatest modern playwrights is evidenced in his meticulous construction of Equus. He has effectively manipulated the audience's visual and auditory perception to draw their attention to the action occurring on stage whilst simultaneously amplifying its intensity.

This final sentence could be drawn out further by discussing the values and response of a particular audience.

The precise metalanguage such as 'synchrony' and 'cacophony' utilised in this response allows for dense and detailed discussion of the text within the time constraints of an exam.

This conclusion is effective in refocusing the candidate's response on the sensory aspects of the play without unnecessary repetition.

Activity: Sensing the stage

Fill in the following tables using evidence from a stage drama you have studied in class in order to track the use of visual and auditory elements and their effect on an audience.

Visual elements	Evidence	Effect on the audience
Body language	Lady Bracknell [Sees Jack and bows to him with icy coldness.]	The visually hostile and seemingly forced body language of Lady Bracknell helps develop antipathy between the character and draws the audience into the tension between her and Jack.
Colour		
Props		
Proxemics		
Gait		
Costume		
Levels		
Stage position		
Lighting		



Auditory elements	Evidence	Effect on the audience
<b>Music</b>	[Algernon, from the other room, strikes up the wedding march. Jack looks perfectly furious and goes to the door.]	The ironic music humorously contrasts Lady Bracknell's firm refusal of Jack's interest in Gwendolyn and reinforces Algernon's lack of sensitivity.
<b>Sound effects</b>		
<b>Soundscape</b>		
<b>Volume or silence</b>		
<b>Dialogue</b>		

Alternatively, complete the table below to consider the multisensory experience that draws an audience into a studied drama text. An example has been completed for you as a guide.

Evidence	Visual conventions	Aural conventions	How does the multisensory experience draw an audience into the play?

### Example:

Evidence <i>A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen</i>	Visual conventions	Aural conventions	How does the multisensory experience draw an audience into the play?
<p><b>Nora</b> [takes out of the box a tambourine and a long-variegated shawl. She hastily drapes the shawl round her. Then she springs to the front of the stage and calls out]. Now play for me! I am going to dance!</p> <p>[HELMER plays and NORA dances. RANK stands by the piano behind HELMER, and looks on.]</p> <p><b>Helmer</b> [as he plays]. Slower, slower!</p> <p><b>Nora</b>. I can't do it any other way.</p> <p><b>Helmer</b>. Not so violently, Nora!</p> <p><b>Nora</b>. This is the way.</p> <p><b>Helmer</b> [stops playing]. No, no – that is not a bit right.</p> <p><b>Nora</b> [laughing and swinging the tambourine]. Didn't I tell you so?</p> <p><b>Rank</b>. Let me play for her.</p> <p><b>Helmer</b> [getting up]. Yes, do. I can correct her better than.</p> <p>[RANK sits down at the piano and plays. NORA dances more and more wildly. HELMER has taken up a position beside the stove, and during her dance gives her frequent instructions. She does not seem to hear him; her hair comes down and falls over her shoulders; she pays no attention to it, but goes on dancing. Enter MRS LINDE.]</p>	<p>Costume</p> <p>Props</p> <p>Movement</p> <p>Stage position</p> <p>Levels</p> <p>Gait</p> <p>Proxemics</p>	<p>Music</p> <p>Tone</p> <p>Pause</p>	<p>The interplay between the visual of Nora's increasingly wild dance and the sound of Helmer's unheeded instructions (somewhat muted by the music of the piano) draw the audience into the broadening gulf between the two characters and signal Nora's move toward independence.</p>