

WJEC GCSE Drama

Approved by Qualifications Wales

Delivery Guide

Teaching from 2025

For award from 2027



This Qualifications Wales regulated qualification
is not available to centres in England.

Made for Wales.
Ready for the world.

Contents

Aims of the Delivery Guide.....	3
Qualification Structure.....	3
Unit 1	3
Unit 2	6
Unit 3	8
Summary of assessment.....	9
Assessment Objectives	10
Unit 1	10
Unit 2	10
Unit 3	10
Specification and Assessment Pack.....	11
Understanding the specification amplification.....	11
Specification Stems	11
Command words.....	12
Mark Schemes	14
Important Dates	17
Appendix A: Theatre Practitioners and Genres.....	18
Appendix B: Glossary of Terminology.....	22

Aims of the Delivery Guide

The aim of the Delivery Guide is to give an overview of the qualification and to help teachers understand how we assess the GCSE. It will offer an introduction to the specification, an assessment overview, and will support teachers in better understanding how to prepare their learners for the assessment of the different units. More information on each unit can be found in the separate unit guides.

Qualification Structure

WJEC GCSE Drama consists of 3 units:

	Unit title	Type of Assessment	Weighting
Unit 1	Devising Theatre	Practical Non-examination assessment	40%
Unit 2	Performance from a Text	Practical Non-examination assessment	30%
Unit 3	Interpreting Theatre	On-screen examination	30%

All units are compulsory.

Unit 1

Devising Theatre

Practical non-examination assessment and Reflective Log

Marked by centre and moderated by WJEC

40% of qualification

96 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- develop an awareness and understanding of a range of theatrical practitioners/companies/styles and genres
- develop learners' awareness and skills regarding the creation and development of their own work
- develop learners' application of performance **or** design skills within a live performance
- provide an opportunity for learners to develop their ability to reflect, analyse and evaluate their creative decisions
- develop learners' resilience, determination and confidence.

This unit will focus on:

- **exploring** – learners will have the opportunity to explore a range of theatrical practitioners/companies/styles and genres. This will include a range of techniques, forms, styles, contexts and means of presenting drama. Exploration could also be through the means of live and/or digital theatre, as possible sources of influence for performance or design ideas. Learners should have the opportunity to explore diversity, including different perspectives, identity, culture, and contributions that span Wales and the world.
- **responding and reflecting** – learners will be able to reflect on their own work and respond to the feedback from others as an on-going process throughout the development period, allowing them to improve in the performances they give or in the designs they create
- **creating** – learners will contribute to the creation of a devised performance in response to a choice of stimuli set by WJEC.

Learners may choose to complete this unit as actors **or** designers, regardless of their chosen pathway in Unit 2.

Learners choosing design must choose **one** of the following options:

- lighting design
- sound design
- set and props design
- costume, hair and make-up design.

For this assessment learners are required to:

- create and develop a piece of theatre in response to a stimulus, using either the techniques of an influential theatre practitioner, company or the characteristics of a theatrical style or genre and demonstrate and apply their performance **or** design skills in a live performance
- produce a reflective log.

Learners can choose to be assessed on either acting **or** design.

Learners can work in groups of between **two** and **five** actors. Each group may have up to **four** designers, each offering a different design skill.

The length of this piece of theatre will depend on the number of actors in the group and should be as follows:

- Group of two actors: 5-10 minutes
- Group of three actors: 7-12 minutes
- Group of four actors: 9-14 minutes
- Group of five actors: 11-16 minutes.

Each actor must interact with other actors and/or the audience **for a minimum of five minutes**. The number of designers in a group does not impact on the length of the piece. Learners may complete the assessment anytime during the course. However, centres should ensure that assessment is completed only when learners have undertaken the necessary teaching and learning and developed the required skills and knowledge.

The assessment contributes to 40% of the overall qualification. The unit will be marked out of total of 96 marks.

The stimuli will be released on WJEC's portal during the September of the first year of study.

This unit will be assessed by the centre and externally moderated by WJEC.

Unit 2

Performance from a Text

Practical non-examination assessment
 Marked by a visiting examiner
 30% of qualification
 72 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- develop learners' awareness and skills regarding the development, amendment and refinement of their own text-based performance or design
- develop learners' application of performance or design skills within a live performance.

This unit will focus on:

- **exploring** – learners will have the opportunity to explore and perform a range of theatrical texts, from various genres and periods and linked to different cultures, perspectives and contributions in Wales and the world. Exploration could also be linked to a range of theatrical styles and genres, to various practitioner/theatre companies' artistic aims and through the means of live and/or digital theatre, as a possible source of influence for performance or design ideas
- **creating** – linked to the process of creating and the realisation of the final text-based performance and could be experienced as actors **or** designers.

Learners will have free choice of text for Unit 2, however, the choice of text must be different to the set text selected in Unit 3.

Learners may choose to complete this unit as actors **or** designers, regardless of their chosen pathway in Unit 1.

Learners choosing design must choose **one** of the following options:

- lighting design
- sound design
- set and props design
- costume, hair and make-up design.

For this assessment learners are required to:

- create and develop an extract(s) from a published performance text for performance
- demonstrate and apply performance **or** design skills that will be realised in the final performance.

Learners will have free choice of text for Unit 2, however, the choice of text **must** be different to the set text selected in Unit 3.

Learners can choose to be assessed on either acting **or** design.

Learners work in groups of between two and four actors. Each group may have up to two designers, each offering a different design skill.

The length of this piece of theatre will depend on the number of actors in the group and should be as follows:

- Group of two actors: 5-10 minutes
- Group of three actors: 7-12 minutes
- Group of four actors: 9-14 minutes

Each actor must interact with other actors and/or the audience **for a minimum of five minutes**. The number of designers in a group does not impact on the length of the piece.

Viva

The viva is non-assessed and will occur after the performance. All learners opting for design must give a 3-5 minute presentation of their design to the examiner. It is an opportunity for learners to explain and present their design to the examiner.

This unit will be completed in the final year of study.

The assessment contributes to 30% of the overall qualification. The unit will be marked out of total of 72 marks.

This unit will be assessed by a visiting examiner.

Unit 3

Interpreting Theatre

Digital only examination, marked by WJEC

30% of qualification

72 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of how drama is designed, developed and performed through the context of prepared and unprepared works
- develop learners' creative skills as an actor, designer and director through the context of prepared and unprepared works
- reflect on and analyse the work of others through the context of unprepared work.

This unit will focus on:

- exploring – learners will have the opportunity to explore various theatrical viewpoints and experiences. This should include a range of techniques, forms, styles and contexts. This exploration will be linked to their chosen set text as well as a range of theatrical productions of contrasting styles/genres, contrasting periods getContexts, works created in or inspired by Wales and works written by a diverse range of writers, including those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. Learners should have the opportunity for theatrical exploration as an actor, designer and director gathering ideas from a variety of sources to enhance their understanding of drama.
- responding and reflecting – linked to live and/or recorded/live streamed performances as possible theatrical influences for the set texts and unprepared works. As learners make progress in Unit 3 they increasingly evaluate and create more sophisticated responses, independently to live and/or pre-recorded theatre. Their evaluation of work of others reflects a developing understanding of theatrical experience enabling them to form effective critique.

The texts chosen for Units 2 and 3 must be different.

Summary of assessment

Unit 1: Devising Theatre <i>Practical non-examination assessment</i> 40% of qualification	96 marks
--	-----------------

Summary of assessment

Response to a stimuli set by WJEC, assessed by the centre and moderated by WJEC. The stimuli will be available on the WJEC Portal during the September of the first year of study. The stimuli will be changed annually.

Learners can choose either acting **or** design. Learners will create, refine and perform a piece of theatre. Learners will also produce a Reflective Log of the process in a non-prescribed format.

Learners can work in groups of between **two** and **five** actors. Up to **four** additional learners, each working on a different design skill, may work with each performing group.

Unit 2: Performance from a Text <i>Practical non-examination assessment</i> 30% of qualification	72 marks
---	-----------------

Summary of assessment

Marked by visiting examiner. Learners can choose either acting **or** design.

Each actor must interact with other actors and/or the audience for a minimum of five minutes. Designers will give a non-assessed viva outlining their ideas.

Learners can work in groups of between **two** and **four** actors. Up to **two** additional learners, each working on a different design skill, may work with each performing group.

Unit 3: Interpreting Theatre <i>On-screen examination: 2 hours</i> 30% of qualification	72 marks
--	-----------------

Summary of assessment

Questions requiring objective responses, short and extended answers, in response to set text and unseen texts.

This is a linear qualification.

The qualification is not tiered.

There is no hierarchy in the order in which the units are presented. The order does not imply the teaching order of the units.

Assessment Objectives

AO1

Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of how drama is developed, designed and performed

AO2

Develop and apply performance and/or design skills

AO3

Reflect on, analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others

AO4

Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning in theatrical designs and/or performances

Unit 1

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
-	22.5%	5%	12.5%	40%

Unit 2

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
-	22.5%	-	7.5%	30%

Unit 3

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
20%	-	10%	-	30%

Specification and Assessment Pack

When we develop new qualifications, we produce the following documents:

- Specification – this covers all the information and skills that learners are expected to know by the end of their course.
- Assessment Pack – this contains the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) i.e.: sample exam papers and sample NEA tasks, relevant controls for the NEA and, mark schemes. This guide builds upon the information in the specification and assessment pack to help further your understanding of said documents.

Understanding the specification amplification

Learners should be made aware of:

- the specification stems
- what the specification stems mean.

Specification Stems

When you look through the specification you will notice in the amplification column, we use a variety of wording before the list of content learners need to know; we call this a stem:

Specification Stem	Amplification
Learners are required to	develop and apply their performance or design skills within a live performance.
Learners should be able to	reflect on, analyse and evaluate their own work

Each stem is used for a slightly different reason

Specification Stem	When it is used
Learners should know	When learners are required to use direct recall.
Learners are required to	When learners show the requirements of individual units.
Learners should understand	When learners are required to demonstrate greater depth than straight identification or recall, for example they can apply knowledge to familiar or unfamiliar contexts and can synthesise and evaluate information for a given purpose.
Learners should be able to	When learners need to apply their knowledge and understanding to a practical situation or demonstrate application of practical skills and techniques.

Command words

Learners should be made aware of:

- what command words are
- what each command word means
- what each command word assesses.

Command words are the words and phrases used in assessments that tell learners how they should answer the question or complete the task. Command words direct the learner through the question or task and indicate the nature of the response required.

(a)	Describe the character of MABLI in the extract.
Command word	

The following tables are not exhaustive, but will give you a good idea of the command words we typically use:

Command words for direct recall	
Command Word	Requirements of response
Describe	Identify distinctive features and give descriptive, factual detail. <i>This is one of the most widely used command words. If an explanation is required then use two command words: 'describe and explain'.</i>
Drag and drop	Move to another part of a screen using a mouse or similar device.
Give	Produce an answer from recall.
Identify/ Tick/ Click / Circle	Point out and name from a number of possibilities.
Label	To designate with a name.
Name	Identify or make a list.
Outline	Set out the main characteristics.
State	Express in clear terms.

Command words for application/ demonstration of skills:

Command Word	Requirements of response
Demonstrate	Exemplify, describe with reference to examples.
Design	Decide upon the look and functioning of something by making or drawing plans.
Discuss	Present key points.
Explain	Give reasons or causes. Show an understanding of how or why something has occurred.
Propose	Suggest a course of action based on supported reasons.
Select/Choose	Make an appropriate choice from a range of options.
Suggest	Put forward an idea, reason or course of action.

Command words for synthesis and evaluation

Command Word	Requirements of response
Analyse	Separate information into components identify their characteristics.
Compare	Identify similarities .
Consider	Review and respond to given info.
Discuss	Examine an issue in detail in a structured way, taking into account different ideas.
Evaluate	Judge from available evidence.
Justify	Support case with evidence.
Reflect	To consider thoughts, experiences, situation or issue.
Suggest	State a possible reason or course of action.

Mark Schemes

Mark schemes and/or assessment criteria test the intended learning outcomes for a component. They describe the knowledge and skills (and possibly attitude) that a candidate is expected to demonstrate in their responses and they are then used in marking the work.

Objective based mark scheme:

For very short answer questions requiring one correct response.

Question	Answer	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total Mark
1.	A Midsummer Night's Dream William Shakespeare				
	(c) (i) Name these two stages	2			2
AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed					
Award one mark for each correctly named stage up to a maximum of 2 marks.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diagram A- Thrust stage Diagram B- Proscenium Arch stage 					

Points based mark scheme

For short answer questions with a range of possible responses

Question	Answer	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total Mark
2.	The Glass Menagerie , Tennessee Williams				
	(a) (iii) Briefly describe the tone and tempo that could be used when speaking your chosen line.	2			2
AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award one mark for a suitable tone and one mark for a suitable tempo. The response should link with the given line in the previous question. Answers must refer to both tone and tempo to be awarded the maximum 2 marks. If only one is discussed, answers will be marked out of a maximum of 1 mark. 					
Indicative content					
These are examples only and all valid alternatives should be considered and marked appropriately.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An angry tone and a fast tempo to emphasise his anger at Amanda A sneering tone and fast tempo to show his dislike of Amanda and how she treats him A spiteful tone and slow tempo to put Amanda in her place An incredulous tone and a fast tempo to show he can't believe Amanda would confiscate his books. 					

Levels based mark schemes

For questions requiring extended responses

Question	Answer	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total Mark
3.	<p><i>Blue Remembered Hills</i>, Dennis Potter</p> <p>(d) As an actor you have been asked to perform the role of JOHN in a production of <i>Blue Remembered Hills</i>. Choose one extract from the play and explain how you could communicate the character to the audience.</p> <p>Do not use the extract used for questions 3(a)-3(c)</p> <p>In your answer refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • character motivation • voice • movement • interaction. 	15			15
Band	AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed				
5	<p>13-15 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptive explanation of character motivation within the chosen extract • Perceptive knowledge and understanding of how voice can be used to communicate the character in the chosen extract • Perceptive knowledge and understanding of how movement can be used to communicate character within the chosen extract • Perceptive knowledge and understanding of how interaction can be used to communicate character within the chosen extract • Highly detailed references to the extract to support the vocal/movement/interaction skills suggested • Highly relevant knowledge, understanding and use of drama terminology. 				
4	<p>10-12 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed explanation of character motivation within the chosen extract • Detailed knowledge and understanding of how voice can be used to communicate the character in the chosen extract • Detailed knowledge and understanding of how movement can be used to communicate character within the chosen extract • Detailed knowledge and understanding of how interaction can be used to communicate character within the chosen extract • Detailed references to the extract to support the vocal/movement/interaction skills suggested • Relevant knowledge, understanding and use of drama terminology. 				

		7-9 marks
3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory explanation of character motivation within the chosen extract • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how voice can be used to communicate the character in the chosen extract • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how movement can be used to communicate character within the chosen extract. • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how interaction can be used to communicate character within the chosen extract • General references to the extract to support the vocal/movement/interaction skills suggested • Generally relevant knowledge, understanding and use of drama terminology.
2		<p style="text-align: center;">4-6 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic explanation of character motivation within the chosen extract • Basic knowledge and understanding of how voice can be used to communicate the character in the chosen extract • Basic knowledge and understanding of how movement can be used to communicate character within the chosen extract • Basic knowledge and understanding of how interaction can be used to communicate character within the chosen extract • Some references to the extract to support the vocal/movement/interaction skills suggested • Some relevant knowledge, understanding and use of drama terminology.
1		<p style="text-align: center;">1-3 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited explanation of character motivation within the chosen extract • Limited knowledge and understanding of how voice can be used to communicate the character in the chosen extract • Limited knowledge and understanding of how movement can be used to communicate character within the chosen extract • Limited knowledge and understanding of how interaction can be used to communicate character within the chosen extract • Limited references to the extract to support the vocal/movement/interaction skills suggested • Limited knowledge, understanding and use of relevant drama terminology.
0 marks		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response not credit worthy / not attempted

Indicative content
<p><i>The following are examples only and all valid alternatives should be considered and marked appropriately according to the chosen scene.</i></p>
<p>If candidates use the same extract as in Question 1(a) – 1(c) they cannot score higher than band 2.</p>
<p>John's character Fair-minded, not afraid to challenge bullies</p>
<p>Character motivation The character's motivation should be understood within the context of the chosen extract.</p>
<p>Voice Candidates may consider: accent, tone, tempo, volume, pause, silence, subtext.</p>
<p>Movement: Candidates may consider: quality of movement, gestures, facial expressions, movement involving props, set, costume. Candidates could refer to the use of the acting space and refer to the proxemics with other characters.</p>
<p>Interaction With the other characters, audience, set/props.</p>
<p>All the above should be linked closely to characters/moments within the chosen extract</p>

Important Dates

First Teaching of WJEC GCSE subject	2025
First assessment for Unit 2 (external assessment)	Summer 2027
First assessment for Unit 3 (external assessment)	Summer 2027
First release of Unit 1 NEA assignment brief	September 2025
First submission of Unit 1 NEA	May 2027
First submission of Unit 2 NEA	May 2027
First Certification	2027

Appendix A: Theatre Practitioners and Genres

The following list contains suggestions of theatre practitioners and genres which can be used to develop work. Learners may choose a different practitioner or genre if they wish. If in doubt about the appropriacy of the chosen practitioner or genre, please contact WJEC.

- Stanislavski
- Brecht
- Berkoff
- Emma Rice
- Katie Mitchell
- Eddie Ladd
- Theatre in Education
- Physical Theatre
- Musical Theatre.

The following list outlines some of the main techniques of each practitioner or characteristics of each genre. The list is not exhaustive and neither is it expected that learners must demonstrate all characteristics in their work. It is recommended that learners aim to use between four and six techniques or characteristics in their work.

Stanislavski:

- the fourth wall
- feeling of truth
- the magic 'if'
- emotional memory
- muscular memory
- circles of attention
- intonation and pauses
- restraint and control
- naturalistic movement
- three dimensional characters.
- Brecht:
- direct address
- narrator
- multi-roling
- gestus
- placards
- music and songs
- distancing
- episodic structure
- political perspectives.

Berkoff:

- stylised movement (slow motion/robotic)
- exaggerated facial expressions
- direct address
- exaggerated vocal work
- tableaux
- mask
- ensemble playing
- minimalism
- exaggerated and stylised mime.

Emma Rice:

- community theatre
- mixed performance styles
- music/songs
- comedy
- circus tricks
- physical theatre
- ensemble work.

Katie Mitchell:

- Stanislavskian method of creating a character
- use of technology to enhance the performance
- stage imagery important
- importance of narrative.

Eddie Ladd:

- dance/physical theatre
- text in Welsh and English
- political emphasis
- use of technology to lead work
- site specific on occasion.
- Theatre in Education:
- target audience
- topic
- multi-roling
- educational information
- direct address
- narrator
- message
- audience participation.

Physical Theatre:

- movement
- gesture and body language
- ensemble
- commedia dell'arte
- mime
- status
- proximity
- the use of masks
- physicalising emotional states.

Musical Theatre:

- song
- dialogue
- dance
- monologue
- humour
- pathos
- anger or hate
- chorus.

Appendix B: Glossary of Terminology

The following is a glossary of terminology which is designed to assist centres in preparing learners for the non-examination assessment within Units 1 and 2, and the examined assessment within Unit 3.

They are not aligned to specific assessment criteria within individual units but are designed to aid learners in articulating their ideas using subject-specific terminology as well as offering a range of concepts, terms and ideas for content that learners might wish to consider and/or include in the exploration and preparation of their practical and theoretical work. This list isn't exhaustive and centres/learners may explore other appropriate performance/design techniques and/or conventions.

Vocal skills

Pitch
Pace/tempo
Tone
Pause
Accent
Volume
Clarity
Musicality
Intonation
Rhythm

Physical skills

Gesture
Stillness
Fluency
Expression
Posture
Facial expressions
Movement
Proxemics

Interaction

Eye contact
Listening and responding
Pace
Fluency
Motivation
Positioning
Status

Development/Rehearsal

Conscience corridor (also known as 'conscience alley' or 'thought tunnel')
Emotional memory
Freeze-frame/tableau(x)
Hot seating
Improvisation
Role reversal
Role transfer
Role on the wall
Sculpting
Subtext improvisation
Thoughts in the head or thought tracking

Lighting design

Intensity
Blackout
Snap
Fade (in/out)
Fade
Crossfade
Spotlight
Flood light
Follow spot
Lights up
Lights down
Preset
House lights
Lighting cue
Projections
Lanterns
Cold wash
Warm wash
Gobos
Specials
Strobe
Cue sheets
Smoke machine
Gauze (scrim)

Sound design

Music
Sound effects
Sound cue
Live sounds
Recorded sounds
Volume
Reverb/echo
Sound sources
Surround sound
Amplification
Microphones
Ambience
Filter
Sample
Fade (in/out)
Soundscape
Diegetic/non-diegetic
Distortion
Feedback
Cue sheets
White noise
Underscore
Leitmotif

Set design/staging

Entrances/exits
Proscenium Arch
Apron
Theatre in the round
Thrust stage
Traverse stage
End-on stage
Promenade
Site-specific
Fly in/out
Revolve
Raked stage
Trapdoor
Gauze
Ground plan
Sight lines
Stage left
Stage right
Up stage
Down stage
Centre stage
Backdrop/cyclorama
Site specific
Wings/flats
Set dressing
Props
Furniture
Projection
Texture/fabrics
Model set
Levels
Furniture

Costume design (including hair and make-up)

Accessories
Materials/fabrics
Garments
Hairstyles
Wigs
Contouring
Pattern
Period
Style

Performance Styles

Naturalistic
Epic Theatre/Brechtian
Non-naturalistic
Physical Theatre
Artaudian/Theatre of Cruelty
Berkoffian
Theatre in Education
Theatre of the Oppressed/Boal/Total Theatre
Musical Theatre

Design styles

Naturalistic
Epic Theatre / Brechtian
Non-naturalistic
Expressionistic
Minimalistic
Realism