

Shakespeare

General Objectives

This Shakespeare Syllabus seeks to offer Learners the opportunity to:

- Develop imagination and creativity
- Increase self-confidence
- Develop vocal techniques
- Develop physical stage techniques
- Introduce the work of William Shakespeare through a themed series of progressive steps
- Develop an understanding of themes, subtext and underlying motives
- Instill an enthusiasm and interest in the language and writing of Shakespeare and also Elizabethan theatre

Guidelines for Shakespeare Learners

- All selections must be performed from memory.
- Learners should bring legible copies of their pieces to the examination for the Examiner, and must adhere to all copyright laws.
- Full costume or make up is not permitted, although a suggestion of costume (eg: shawls, practice skirt or hat) and hand props are allowed. (eg: scrolls, sticks, etc.).
- Learners are permitted to play either gender.
- During the course of this Syllabus Learners should be encouraged to study a wide range of Shakespeare's plays as well as details of his life and the history of the Elizabethan theatre. This should include knowledge of religious and political influences on his themes, the meaning of his dramatic language and how Elizabethan theatre shaped his writing.
- It is suggested that the texts used for study are from the Arden Shakespeare Series. This series provides detailed notes including, a glossary and language guide and also biographical and historical notes.
- Comprehensive theoretical and historical background notes to support this Syllabus are available on request from the NEA Office.
- Learners are not permitted to present work which they have already submitted at another grade.
- Learners found to be repeating work will be disqualified and fees will be forfeited.
- In line with current standard Health and Safety advice, all Learners should ensure they are warmed up both vocally and physically before the examination.

Foundation Level

Grade 1 (10 Minutes)

Learners should:

1. Perform a scene from A Midsummer Night's Dream:
(Time limit 3 minutes)
2. Discuss with the Examiner:
 - Where this speech occurs in the play
 - The plot of A Midsummer Night's Dream

Grade 2 (10 Minutes)

Learners should:

1. Perform a speech from any of Shakespeare's plays where the character is sharing their thoughts with the audience.
(Time limit 3 minutes)
2. Discuss with the Examiner:
 - The events leading up to the speech
 - The play from which the speech is taken
 - The different parts of the Elizabethan playhouse where the audience would sit or stand

Grade 3 - Foundation Medal (10 Minutes)

Learners should:

1. Perform a prologue from any of Shakespeare's plays with a minimum of 15 lines.
(Time limit 3 minutes)
2. Discuss with the Examiner:
 - The role of the prologue
 - Why some plays need prologues
 - Elizabethan Playhouses (the Learner can bring a plan or drawing to aid discussion)
 - The play from which the speech is taken

Marks
Awarded

90

10

90

10

90

10

Level 2 - Intermediate

Grade 4 (15 Minutes)

Learners should:

1. Perform a character speech from any of Shakespeare's plays.
(Time limit 4 minutes)
2. Discuss with the Examiner:
 - How the chosen character fits into the play and whether the character supports, drives the action along or is there another reason for their presence
 - The character's use of language
 - The characters and the play from which the speech is taken

Grade 5 (15 Minutes)

Learners should:

1. Perform a speech where the character informs the audience of events that have taken place off stage.
(Time limit 4 minutes)
2. Discuss with the Examiner:
 - Shakespeare's reasons for not showing these scenes but relying on another character's narrative
 - The technique needed to bring the described events vividly to life
 - The play from which the speech is taken

Marks
Awarded

80

20

80

20

Level 3 - Advanced

Grade 6 - Bronze Medal (20 Minutes)

Learners should:

1. Perform a well-known speech from any of Shakespeare's plays.
(Time limit 5 minutes)
2. Perform a contrasting speech of their own choice from another of Shakespeare's plays.
(Time limit 5 minutes)
3. Discuss with the Examiner:
 - The events leading up to the speeches chosen
 - The effect the speaker hopes to have on his/her listeners
 - How he/she achieves this
 - The plays from which the speeches are taken

Grade 7 - Silver Medal (25 Minutes)

Learners should:

1. Perform a speech by a hero, heroine or major character of their own choice.
(Time limit 6 minutes)
2. Perform a contrasting speech of their own choice from another of Shakespeare's plays.
(Time limit 6 minutes)
3. Discuss with the Examiner:
 - The reasons for the choice of speeches
 - Any aspect of the characters chosen and their situations
 - The plays from which the speeches are taken
 - Aspects of performing Shakespeare in an Elizabethan theatre
 - How Shakespeare uses metre

Marks
Awarded

40

40

20

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Level 3 - Advanced (Continued)

Grade 8 - Gold Medal (30 Minutes)

Learners should:

1. Perform a true soliloquy from any Shakespearean tragedy of their own choice.
(Time limit 6 minutes)
2. Perform a contrasting speech of their own choice from another of Shakespeare's plays.
(Time limit 6 minutes)
3. Discuss with the Examiner:
 - Shakespeare's use of the soliloquy
 - The reasons for the choice of speeches
 - Any aspect of the characters chosen and the techniques involved to perform them
 - The plays from which the speeches are taken
 - Aspects of the rhythm and metre used by Shakespeare
 - Aspects of Shakespeare's life and the times in which he was writing

Marks
Awarded

40

40

20