

PROGRAMME EXAMPLES FOR ACTING

GRADE 7

ACTING



At Grade 7 the maximum programme time is 14 minutes for three extracts from different plays and 3 minutes for an original scene based on one of the extracts, exploring a theme from the published piece and showing the character conveying a different emotion. Two plays must be written in different periods or from different cultures and one extract can come from an unpublished play. Another performer may be involved in one of the pieces. A good command of vocal and physical skills is expected at this level, along with accuracy and personal interpretation.

TOP TIPS

- ▶ Encourage candidates to read more than one piece by the chosen writers, and explore writing from a range of cultures including their own.
- ▶ Ask candidates to do their own research around topics and themes to enable personal ownership.
- ▶ Remember that an audience is unlikely to know what happened before the extract starts - encourage the candidates to create imagined environments and think about the character's journey.
- ▶ Ensure that candidates continue to work on vocal muscularity, breathing and physical relaxation.
- ▶ Select pieces with a wide range of emotions, characters, and styles to provide ample opportunities for contrasts in vocal and physical skills, characterisation, staging, and audience engagement.

All pieces are available in published versions. A variety are also available online or in the [Trinity Anthology](#).

EXAMPLE PROGRAMME 1

This programme shows the examiner a range of periods, cultures and styles, as well as comedy, drama and mystery.

WHAT

Play extract

Two Gentlemen of Verona by William Shakespeare Act II scene 3, Launce

First line: 'When a Man's servant shall play the cur with him...'

WHY

A comic, larger than life character. There is scope to work either with a props, puppetry or mimed actions to involve the dog in the comedy, and add a physical layer to the humour.

Play extract

Jitney by August Wilson, Youngblood

First line: 'You want to know what I was hiding from you?....You don't see I've changed'

A young black American, recently returned from Vietnam, trying to make a new life for himself and working as a cab driver. His girlfriend Rena is annoyed to hear that Youngblood has put down a deposit on a house for them without asking her. An opportunity to work on accent, and to investigate the emotional depths of a character vacillating between optimism and despair. The candidate will need to create a rapport with the imagined Rena, and could make use of the space creatively as he describes the house.

Play extract

The Invisible Man by H G Wells. Extract from the novel performed as a monologue

First line: 'It's horrible enough, but I shall tell you the whole story'

An intriguing story, supernatural and mysterious. To bring the suspense and horror to life the candidate will need to work on pacing, vocal variety, and physicality. Although narrated, and therefore requiring some direct address to the audience, there is scope to work on the duality of the character experiencing the unfolding horror in real-time, at the same time as sustaining a rapport with the audience.

Character Development

An original scene showing one of the characters from Tasks 1 - 3 shown exploring a theme from the published piece and conveying a different emotion.

Two Gentlemen of Verona

Theme: loyalty

Emotion: distress/sadness

The play extract is coarse and funny, so in an original scene we could see Launce in modern day taking his seriously ill dog to the vet to be euthanised. Clearly this would be a distressing situation, so it would be important to show Launce's emotional reaction whilst retaining his wit and straightforward approach to life.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMME 2

This programme shows the examiner a range of style, period and language - a balanced programme in which candidates can explore vulnerability and assertiveness.

WHAT**Play extract**

Romeo and Juliet by Shakespeare Act II scene 2, Juliet

First line: 'Thou knowest the mask of night...'

WHY

Juliet's declaration of love in the famous balcony scene. As well as working on the character, and the youthful excitement of first love, there is the challenge of language, rhythm and creating the late-night environment.

<p>Play extract <i>City Sugar</i> by Stephen Poliakoff, Nicola or Susan Nicola: 'The last - the last pop concert I went to' or Susan: 'I didn't think I could get back'</p>	<p>20th century urban colloquial, suiting any accent, in which fact and fiction blur in the recounting of a major event in their lives. Although written in 1978, the themes of the play are still relevant to young people, with the beguiling power of celebrity and how it can be misused. To bring the characters to life plausibly the candidates will need to give them multiple layers to portray the confidence and maturity, yet innocence and vulnerability.</p>
<p>Play extract <i>A Doll's House</i> by Henrik Ibsen Act III, Nora First line: 'Isn't there one thing that strikes you as strange...'</p>	<p>A restrained attack on her husband Torvald, Nora articulates the frustration of being a woman controlled by men. This allows the candidate to show range, by finding the physical embodiment of this mature character, and creating the period environment. A timeless theme that will allow the candidate to find a personal connection with Nora.</p>
<p>Character Development An original scene showing one of the characters from Tasks 1 - 3 shown exploring a theme from the published piece and conveying a different emotion. <i>A Doll's House</i> Theme: women's place in society Emotion: confidence</p>	<p>In the play extract Nora is a restrained rage. Considering how Nora would react if she were a lecturer at a university, inspiring the first generation of female students to go out into the world and change the status quo would give her a chance to show her confidence and passion.</p>

EXAMPLE PROGRAMME 3

This programme shows the examiner a range of character ages and types, comedy and tragedy, and a contrast between the physical skills needed for Gregor and the intellectual approach of Eddie.

WHAT

Play extract
She Stoops to Conquer by Oliver Goldsmith
 Act 1, Tony Lumpkin
 First line: 'Gentlemen, as they mayn't be good...'
 (omitting other characters)

WHY

Stylised Restoration comedy - a sharp-witted rustic character. To bring this monologue to life for an audience the candidate will need to commit themselves to the larger than life style of the writing, rather than try and find a naturalistic characterisation. Tony Lumpkin is full of bravado - this is an opportunity to work on physicality and comic technique, sustaining energy and creating the imagined environment of a noisy public house.

Play extract

The Comedians by Trevor Griffiths, Eddie

First line: 'It's not the jokes - it's what lies behind them'

Colloquial late 20th century - a teacher of comedy talking about stand-up. An older character, therefore showing range and contrast, with an interesting theme of what makes comedy work, therefore giving the candidate a chance to look at the genre from two sides. Scope to create the environment of a night-school classroom, and consider both vocal and physical characterisation.

Play extract

Metamorphosis by Steven Berkoff, Gregor

First line: "I can hear you! You think I can't..."

A piece of physical theatre, a study of transformation and alienation. This is a highly charged moment in the play, in which Gregor is at his most despairing, as he is physically constrained by becoming a beetle, aware that he is revolting to his family, and yet still able to hear what they say, and longing to be able to talk back. It will be important to work on the integration of vocal and physical stamina to bring this to life.

Character Development

An original scene showing one of the characters from Tasks 1 - 3 shown exploring a theme from the published piece and conveying a different emotion.

Metamorphosis

Theme: transformation

Emotion: hope/joy

Imagine that instead of waking up as a beetle that Gregor has become a minor celebrity and is being recognised regularly on the street. Being invited to a TV studio to talk about how he has changed into such a popular person and how much he enjoys the attention would be a chance to explore his alter ego.

PREPARE TO PERFORM

**PRACTICAL ACTING SKILLS
FOR ASPIRING PERFORMERS**

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