

Speech and Drama

Glossary of terms to support AMEB Speech and Drama syllabuses

As Speech and Drama Examiners with the Australian Music Examinations Board, we have devised a glossary of terms to support your interpretation and understanding of the Manual of Syllabus for Speech and Drama.

PROSE:

Typically we interpret PROSE as a 'body of continuous writing.' Usually this comes in the form of a novel. Prose can be fiction or non-fiction and may include newspaper, magazine or internet-based articles.

Within the Drama and Performance syllabus, care should be taken to ensure the prose also represents a particular period (should this be stipulated).

During examinations, students *should* be able to answer questions on the author's background or other works.

VERSE:

Verse represents forms of poetry. In the Drama and Performance syllabus, candidates must ensure they are presenting from poetry rather than song lyrics as it is necessary to answer questions on the poet's background, other literary works and forms of the poem. In theory examinations, students are required to also understand phrasing and other poetic devices which help to 'make meaning' in performance.

Within the Voice and Communication syllabus, it clearly states that students must present poems.

As a result in these syllabuses, song lyrics must not be presented as poetry. They don't contain all the components of poems such as alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, form, rhythm, meter etc.

There is however flexibility for song lyrics to be presented as 'verse' in the group Drama and Communication syllabus.

DRAMA:

Drama is understood to be a play, written by a playwright. Candidates are encouraged to read and study a range of plays in the Drama and Performance syllabus exams as they progress through the grades.

As with Prose and Verse, the playwright's literary techniques are taken into account when discussing Drama.

Drama 'adaptations' from novels may be used only when specified within the syllabus – and flexibility for this medium can be found within the group Drama and Communication syllabus. We discourage students adapting a selection of a drama from a novel which they have written themselves. Published drama adaptations however, are acceptable. Candidates need to be aware of the differences between drama and novels and poetry as literary forms, therefore published drama is only acceptable. Published online drama adaptations are acceptable if they can be purchased as the whole play, in its entirety has been written or adapted.

Candidates should be able, in upper grades of the syllabus, to discuss playwrights of the same literary period and works by the same playwright in general terms only.

STORYTELLING:

Story telling is assessed by examiners as the candidate's 'telling' of the story. Therefore a story may be original, written by a candidate or sourced from a piece of literature. Care should be taken to 'tell' the story rather than 'recite' or 'read' it; with a sense of spontaneity and engagement being shown by the candidate.

SPEECH / PRESENTATION / TALK:

A speech or presentation is usually more formal than a 'talk.' A speech or presentation may be given with or without the use of speech cards (palm cards). Care should be taken in presentations to deliver in a more formal style.

A talk is much more informal, where candidates may choose to stand or sit, according to their subject matter. Speech can be less formal and interaction with the examiner may occur.

Candidates should note in the senior grades of the Voice and Communication syllabus, that the presentation must adhere to time limits, as with all speeches and talks, but also must be presented in a formal manner – in both language and stance. In both Certificate and Associate Diploma levels, candidates may present to an 'imagined' audience. The syllabus also states that technological aids 'may' be used. Should technological aids be employed, care should be taken to bring them to the examination in working order. Visual aids could also include non-technological support materials. \

In the Associate Diploma for Professional Communication examination; care should be taken for candidates to present themselves 'professionally', which incorporates both their personal presentation and the presentation of their material.

IMPROVISATION:

When improvising with an object, given to the candidate on the day by the examiner, the candidate must ensure he or she uses the object as it is intended. For instance, a key must be incorporated into the improvisation as a key and not as a phone. However, the key could transport the candidate to a magical world etc. Imagination is encouraged.

INTRODUCTIONS AND LINKS:

In most exams, all syllabi for Speech and Drama, students are required to introduce and link their work. This means, they need to introduce their theme or collection of texts in a few sentences according to a time limit. In Level 1 the introductions are brief (for example: Second Grade "The candidate will be required to give a talk related to a theme (one minute) then link and perform...") At Level Two, candidates are required to 'introduce and link the program' in most cases. The time limit for introductions and links is usually around 3 minutes. Introductions should be interesting, talking about the theme that the texts surround, or information about the period or style of texts. Links are two or three sentences which make a segway between performance pieces or readings.

An example of an introduction and links from a senior 8th Grade exam (student was aged 15)

"Great stories are often considered 'classics' in literature. There are many different types of classics – you could be referring to 'the classics' of English literature, or 'the classics' as a collection of great writers in America. My program today is also about three texts, which I consider to be great 'classics' because of the wisdom they impart in their great narratives.

There's no doubt that Banjo Patterson is considered to be one of Australia's greatest writers and poets of times gone by. His style is very much relaxed, colloquial and undoubtedly Australian in style. The Man from Snowy River was written at a time in the 1880s when Australia was developing its own identity as a nation. People often looked to 'the bush' for their sense of mythology, characters and legends. The man from Snowy River, in New South Wales, was one such character who became a hero in Australian folklore (and in Banjo Patterson's poetry) as a result of his bravery and risk taking to collect 'the colt that got away'. His characteristics mirrored what a new nation, in the south, Australia, could be like – a place where people take chances, are heroes and can adapt to the surroundings, always making the best of it."

