

LAMDA

Graded Examinations in Performance

with effect from 1st August 2024

Teacher Support Materials

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Introduction

This document has been put together to support Teachers who are preparing Learners for LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance.

This document should be used in conjunction with a range of other documents to provide comprehensive and holistic guidance for the Teacher. It should not be used alone. Other Essential Documents include:

- LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance syllabus specification, valid from 1 August 2024: [Graded Examinations for Performance | London academy of music & dramatic art \(lamda.ac.uk\)](https://www.lamda.ac.uk/Graded-Examinations-for-Performance)
- How to Guides and other Guidance Documents: [How to Guides & Download centre | London academy of music & dramatic art \(lamda.ac.uk\)](https://www.lamda.ac.uk/How-to-Guides)
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Teachers and Learners: [Help & Resources | London academy of music & dramatic art \(lamda.ac.uk\)](https://www.lamda.ac.uk/Help-and-Resources)

How to Use the Syllabus and Guidance Documents

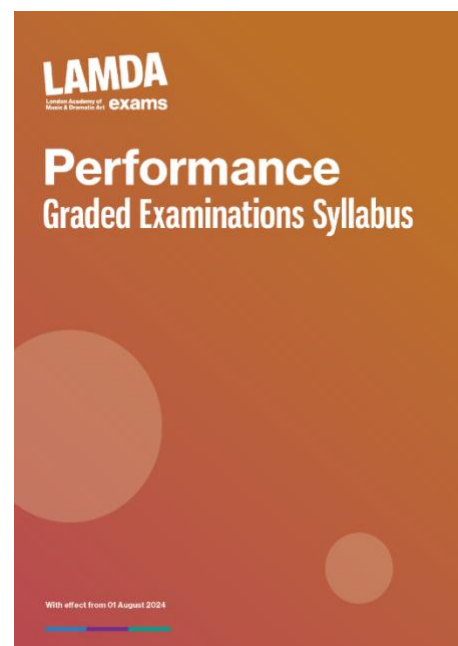
Syllabus

The Syllabus includes information that applies to all examinations in a suite and contains essential information that applies to specific Disciplines, Levels and Grades.

General information will be found at the front and back of the Syllabi (e.g. at the front there are notes on Reasonable Adjustments, the LAMDA Invalidation Policy, Language and at the back are Glossaries).

Specific Information is divided, as required, into Disciplines, Levels (L) and then Grades (G).

It is essential that all General and Specific information is read and understood to ensure that Learners are prepared appropriately for all examinations.



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For example:

Performance											
Acting			Devising Drama			Miming					
EL	Entry Level (EL)										
L1	G1	G2	G3	L1	G1	G2	G3	L1	G1	G2	G3
L2	G4		G5	L2	G4		G5	L2	G4		G5
L3	G6	G7	G8	L3	G6	G7	G8	L3	G6	G7	G8

Key parts of the Level and Grade sections includes:

- **Examination Content:** This is where the format of the exam is laid out, including the pieces that should be presented, the rules that define how to select the right pieces to ensure Learners present the appropriate range of skills and knowledge in the appropriate context(s) to meet the purpose of the qualification.
- **Assessment and Grading Criteria:** This is where the Learning Outcomes (LOs) and Assessment Criteria (ACs) are laid out. These are the standards that the Examiners assess against. There is also an explanation of how assessments will be graded. These explanations are used by Examiners to ensure their assessment decisions are standardised and the relevant parts are used when considering the Learners grade against each Assessment Criteria and more holistically when considering the mark applied to the Learning outcomes. Further detail on how to fully understand the LOs and ACs can be found later in this guidance.
- **Marking Scheme:** This is where the maximum mark for each assessment is laid out. All exams are marked out of 100 and each assessment within that exam has a maximum mark.

LAMDAs qualifications have been designed to test the skills and knowledge in a range of ways and all skills and knowledge has been deemed essential to meet the purpose of the qualifications. For this reason, Learners must achieve a minimum of a pass against each assessment criteria to achieve a pass overall. If they are graded as a Fail against any one or more assessment criteria in any assessment, they will Fail overall, irrespective of the overall mark achieved.



Guidance Documents

For each syllabus and examination there will be a range of support materials and guidance that provides important information on how to interpret and apply the rules and regulations in the syllabi.

For example:

- **LAMDA Published Policies** – will provide information to help you understand the principles upon which LAMDA procedures are based and how we will act in certain circumstances. Examples of Key Policies include:
 - **The Enquiries About Results Policy and Appeals Policy** tells you how to request an investigation in the event that you disagree with a decision made by LAMDA.
 - **The Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy** explains how to request adjustments in advance of an exam that enables learners with different learning needs to experience a fair assessment (reasonable adjustments). It also explains how to apply for a special consideration if something unforeseen and unexpected that may have impacted a Learners performance happens during an exam (special consideration).
- **How to Guides, Operational Guidance Documents** – will provide additional detail to help to navigate booking an exam, working with Exam Track (our IT system), how to set up an exam room and any specifications for recording or other technical equipment associated with particular exams (e.g. Musical Theatre Remote Online Assessments).
- **FAQs** will offer further detail on how to interpret our written rules in a handy bite-sized manner.

All these resources are free and available on our website: [Help & Resources | London academy of music & dramatic art \(lamda.ac.uk\)](https://www.lamda.ac.uk/help-resources)

It is essential that Teachers refer to all relevant documents and take on board all guidance provided to ensure that Learners are prepared fully, entered for the right exam in the appropriate timescales and they have the right adjustments applied to offer them a fair and comparable assessment.

LAMDA will always attempt to accommodate any late applications or requests, however timescales stated in policies and guidance documents are based on the time taken to facilitate the appropriate background administration. As such if requests and applications are late, LAMDA may not be able to accommodate.

For example, we request that RA applications are submitted within 6 weeks of the start of the exam event (or 8 weeks if Braille resources are required). This allows us the time to be able to review the application, communicate with the Teacher if we have further questions and then to implement the adjustments ensuring that any printed materials are ready and available, information is provided to the Examiner and scheduling can take into account any room requirements or additional time.

LAMDA will always put the Learner first and take all actions possible to prevent any negative impacts or Learner disadvantage, so where genuine mistakes or misunderstanding are made, we will try to work with the Centre to achieve the most positive outcome. LAMDA however do have to ensure that the value of each qualification and certificate is preserved for each Learner and as such there are occasions where we have no option but to take action (e.g. Invalidate an assessment or examination, launch a maladministration or malpractice investigation, apply Sanctions on a Learner, Teacher or Centre). In this event, LAMDA will communicate the action taken and there will always be a chance to Appeal the decision via the Enquiries About Results or Appeals Policy.

To ensure that such occurrences are kept to a minimum, it is an expectation of Teachers that they will read, understand and will regularly update their knowledge of all syllabi, relevant guidance documents and FAQs. This will ensure that the risk of errors in preparation are minimal and as such this will ensure that unavoidable Learner impacts are minimal.



Applying for Reasonable Adjustments

Some Learners who have special educational needs (SEN) will require adaptations to their examinations in order to give them a fair chance to complete the examination. These are called Reasonable Adjustments, and they should be applied for at least 6 weeks prior to an examination (8 weeks if Braille resources are required).

To complete a Reasonable Adjustment application, it is important that a Teacher works with a Learner to decide on what their particular needs are in relation to the specific LAMDA examination they are taking.

All Reasonable Adjustment Applications are handled by our Qualifications Team who are trained to review applications and ensure that adjustments are applied in a manner that provides the Learner with an equitable and fair opportunity to demonstrate their skills. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the validity or reliability of assessment outcomes or give the Learner in question an unfair assessment advantage.

Please refer to our How to Make a Reasonable Adjustment Application Guide and our Reasonable Adjustment Policy for more details. You can find these documents and make an application here: [Reasonable Adjustments | London academy of music & dramatic art \(lamda.ac.uk\)](https://www.lamda.ac.uk/Reasonable-Adjustments)

Selecting, devising and performing with sensitivity

LAMDA recommends Teachers and Learners cast with sensitivity and consideration of the themes and experiences of the character portrayed, particularly in relation to age, religion, race, gender and disability. Learners can play characters of any age, religion, race, gender and disability where it is suitable for the individual Learner and where the part can be played positively with full consideration of cultural sensitivity.

Unless explicitly stated in the Examination Content, Learners presenting a published or Set text should not change the text. Character names and pronouns should remain as originally written by the playwright/author.

Where a Set piece includes an expletive word which is deemed to be too mature for a particular Learner, that expletive word can be replaced for another word that maintains the intent of the author and the fluency of the writing. Expletive words cannot be removed.

Unless explicitly prohibited in the Examination Content for the specific examination in the syllabus, when selecting Own Choice pieces, text can be adapted to tame mature content, replace names, pronouns to meet the needs of the individual Learner. This must be done in a manner that maintains the intent of the author and the context of the piece.

It is important in these contexts that Teachers work with Learners to ensure that they can perform their text (Set, Own Choice, Devised or Mimed) in a way that allows the Learner to meet the Assessment Criteria. For example, 'to demonstrate an understanding of the character' the Learner must be able to portray the character in a way that complements the context within which pieces were originally written.

LAMDA welcomes Learners from all over the world and encourages performances in a wide range of individual accents. Whilst taking examinations, LAMDA encourages Learners to find clarity and intelligibility within their own accent rather than speaking in any particular accent.

LAMDA Examiners are fully trained to view the pieces performed fairly and in these contexts. For example:

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- There is no explicit need to inform the Examiner of the age, religion, race, gender, disability or ability of the character. The portrayal of stereotyped characteristics is not a component of any assessment criteria. Portrayal of a character in line with the intentions of the author to effectively present understanding of these intentions and the meaning of the text through their performance is the key. The Learner may feel that these explanations are important to contextualise a piece or to fully answer a knowledge question, however the use of these details should be directly relevant to the question and/or the assessment criteria and given with consideration of cultural sensitivity.
- They do not need explicit prior information to indicate that a Learner speaks in English as a Second Language. Examiners assess against the criteria and make decisions based on their in the moment performance. Accent is not a component of any assessment criteria.

Understanding Exam Regulations and their application

It is essential that the Teacher builds a familiarity with the Exam Regulations that are applied for each type of Examination. Across all LAMDA qualifications, there are rules that apply to every exam; however, each Discipline also has its own specific regulations based on the risks presented within each Discipline.

Regulation Examples: Use of Electronic Devices

In the launch of the 2024 syllabus, LAMDA has expanded the regulations surrounding the use of electronic devices to improve accessibility for a range of Learners. The use of these devices however cannot risk the integrity and security of the exams and as such there are key rules to understand, if your Learners wish to use a device in an exam.

In all exams, if a device is to be used, the Examiner will need to be shown the device and its status (e.g. off or on airplane mode). This demonstration must not impact the flow or timing of the exam and the Learner must be able to manage this themselves, providing the Examiner with the views they require to effectively verify the status.

Within Acting and Devising Drama:

Scenes must be performed from memory and as such an electronic device cannot be used to either read from or prompt with. LAMDA cannot allow use of an electronic device to read the Pieces from in these contexts, even if a Reasonable Adjustment was applied for because it would provide an advantage and would impact the 'memory' requirement of the assessment.

Devices may be used a prop; however, they must be turned off.

Devices may also be used to play music or sound effects, however it must be in airplane mode and be in the view of the Examiner throughout its use.

Once a device has been used, it must be turned off and placed out of the reach and view of the Learner for the remainder of the exam.

If the use of the device as a prop or to play music or sound effects cause the Learner concern, stress or impacts their performance or the time taken to perform, then we would highly recommend that the need for their use is considered against the risks presented.

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Within Miming:

To increase the accessibility of this discipline for a range of Learners, we have expanded the potential to use devices.

Within Miming exams Learners can use an electronic device to:

- Play music or sound effects if it is in airplane mode.
- Answer knowledge questions (this is the only discipline where this use is allowed without an authorised Reasonable adjustment).

If Learners choose to use a device to write answers to their knowledge questions, they can do this without submitting a Reasonable adjustment if they can write at speaking pace and there is no risk of extra time being required. Should there even be a possibility that extra time may be required, then LAMDA highly recommends that a Reasonable Adjustment is applied for.

It is important to note that Learners must still be able to manage the relevant demonstrations and use of the device themselves and no unauthorised third persons will be allowed in the exam room to help with the use of an electronic device. If the use of the device causes the Learner concern, stress or impacts their performance or the time taken to perform, then we would highly recommend that the need for their use is considered against the risks presented.

Minimum and Maximum Timings of Assessments

Most assessments within an examination have minimum and maximum timings listed. It is important for the flow of the examination and for all Learners that these timings be upheld.

It is worth noting, however, that Examiners are pragmatic, and they will ensure that there is consideration given to Learners who maybe perform a little slower or quicker on the day of examination.

Where possible, we do encourage that pieces allow for these tempo changes and enable Learners to meet these stated timings even in the event of a pace increase or decrease. It is also highly recommended that Learners practice enough to be able to control their tempo and pace effectively in a range of circumstances.

Even in knowledge sections, it is advised that Learners understand how to give a succinct answer that allows demonstration of their knowledge within the timescales of the overall exam. It is worth note that long answers often do not fully answer the question, they may include information which strays off topic, or may lead the Learner onto a tangent. Long answers that are learned and then recited may also not allow Examiners to fully explore a Learner's understanding using supplementary questions and as such this may not allow a Learner to fully achieve their potential.

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Handy Performance Hints

The Learner should always ensure that they perform with the appropriate focus. Performances should always be performed to an imagined wider audience, of which the Examiner is only a part.

When performing a duologue scene, both Learners should be focused within the world of their characters and, for each individual, on their duologue partner where appropriate, as the other character in the scene.

When a solo Learner performs a monologue with an unseen character present, their focus should be within the world of their character and on the unseen character where appropriate.

When a solo Learner performs a soliloquy or a monologue without an unseen character present, the Learner's focus should be within the world of their character. Where the Learner should focus specifically within the world of their character will depend on what the Learner feels is appropriate for the scene

When choosing where to position themselves, Learners should avoid:

- Playing in profile for too long, especially in duologue examinations as this can mask facial expression, movement and use of the performance space.
- Placing themselves too near the Examiner's table for the duration of performance as this limits their overall use of the performance space.

Understanding the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

To fully prepare a Learner for their examination, it is essential to fully understand the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria in the Syllabi. Each qualification has been designed using input from a wide range of stakeholders to consider the skills and knowledge required to meet the purpose.

The LOs provide the overarching skill or knowledge that is assessed by the ACs and understanding the particular LO provides invaluable detail that helps to understand the purpose of the AC and the factors that will be of key importance within the assessment itself.

Understanding each individual AC will also be invaluable when preparing Learners for their assessment. To fully understand, it is useful to understand the way an AC is built:

- The Verb: Each AC starts with a verb – To explain, to respond, to use, to describe, to summarise, to outline. At the back of the syllabus there are definitions of the verbs. By knowing how LAMDA uses these verbs, it gives you information on what is expected.

For example: Summarise is defined as *'to express the information in a concise and succinct manner, combining topics, themes, contexts and examples to highlight key points'*. By using this definition, it is clear that an answer that is long and describes every step of a plot within a book or play will not fully meet the assessment criteria and may not be marked as highly as an answer that combines key pieces of information to provide a succinct answer that demonstrates a high level of understanding.

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- An AC may have one, two or multiple factors. When designing an AC, consideration is always given as to whether the skill or knowledge required needs to be considered in isolation, or holistically with other factors.

For example: A common performance criterion refers to Posture, Body Language and Facial Expression together in one AC. This is intentional as they are skills that work together to create engagement, enjoyment and to communicate the meaning behind words.

If a knowledge criteria asks a Learner to *'Explain the role of each character portrayed and how they contribute to the plot of each piece as a whole'* then the AC is requiring answers that cover multiple aspects. In this example the Examiner would expect to hear an explanation that covers the role of each character played and their contribution to the plot of the piece as a whole'.

- In the latest iteration of the syllabi, there are more knowledge ACs included that ask for examples, or for personal reflection (how does a piece make the Learner feel). The reason for this is to provide the Learner with the best opportunities to demonstrate their individual understanding against the particular AC. Further guidance can be found in the Knowledge Requirements section below.
- Use of the terms 'Appropriate' or 'Effective', for example, when referring to skills such as 'use of the performance space' or 'movement, posture, body language and facial expression'. It is important to understand that the use of these words allows the Examiner to review the skill demonstrated in the context of the piece.

For example: Appropriate or effective use of the performance space, movement, posture, body language and facial expressions does not mean that there is a specific expectation that Learners will move into every area of the space, or use 4 different movements, postures, body languages, or facial expressions. It means that in the context of the piece, the Learner's use of these skills should be appropriate and effective in their portrayal of the necessary elements of the character, their mood, the meaning of the text and the style of the performance (e.g. Sonnet performances tend to have less explicit movement, but may include more gestures, body language to fully utilise and fill the performance space.

Knowledge Requirements

The Examiner will ask the Learner the questions detailed in the syllabus for the relevant grade they have been entered for.

In the first instance the Examiner will ask the Learner the question as it is written in the assessment criteria. Should the Examiner feel it is appropriate in order to give the Learner the best opportunity to perform to the best of their ability, the Examiner may ask supplementary questions, or they may re-word questions.

To fully prepare Learners for their knowledge section it is worth understanding how knowledge is examined. If a Learner is recalling or reciting an answer, this demonstrates a basic level of knowledge to the Examiner. Even a long explanation that is recited can only demonstrate a basic understanding on the Learner's behalf because the Learner could have purely learnt this response and not really understand the true content or meaning behind the words. To fully demonstrate their underlying, individual understanding, Learners should be answering questions in their own words, and they should be able to expand when supplementary questions are asked.

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Consider preparing Learners for the knowledge section by practicing the following:

- Asking the questions as laid out in the syllabus and getting them to answer in their own words.
- Asking supplementary questions that require them to expand and demonstrate their underlying knowledge and understanding.

Please note: Examiners are fully trained in how to get the best from a Learner and give them an opportunity to perform to the best of their ability. Their use of supplementary questions is never to catch out Learners, it is always to provide them with a fair chance to do their best.

The LAMDA Knowledge Matters – Volume 3, may provide additional resources to assist Teachers and Learners in the development of some key knowledge useful for these sections of the examinations. This is available to purchase through our online shop: [LAMDA Online Shop \(lamda-drama.myshopify.com\)](https://lamda-drama.myshopify.com)

Acting – Specific Guidance

Selecting Set Pieces

Set selections of Acting for each grade are printed in full in the LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 5 and alternative options can be found in the LAMDA Additional Set Piece List found here:

[Graded Examinations for Performance | London academy of music & dramatic art \(lamda.ac.uk\)](https://lamda.ac.uk)

As a minimum the Additional Set Piece List contains all pieces from the previous volume of the Acting Anthology (Volume 4).

When selecting Set Pieces from any of the authorised sources, they must be taken from the same Grade as the Exam (e.g. If a Learner is taking a Grade 4 exam, their Set Piece must come from the pieces listed for Grade 4 in Acting Anthology Volume 4, 5 or from the Additional Set Piece List).

For Levels 1 and 2, Learners are not expected to read the full text, however it may be useful for their performance.

LAMDA Anthologies are compiled with a range of Learners in mind and as such Set Pieces may contain some mature words and references that may only be suitable for older Learners. There may also be some mature words and references contained within the full text. Teachers are advised to use their judgement in selecting material appropriate to their Learners.

Selecting Own Choice Pieces

It is important to understand that the process of selecting own choice pieces is an individual one. Teachers, having reviewed the information in the syllabus, must work with Learners to consider their individual needs, skills, abilities and interests and to identify if the potential piece may give the Learner the choice to meet the assessment requirements (as laid out in the examination regulations, examination content, learning outcomes and assessment criteria). As LAMDA does not have that relationship with the Learner, it cannot provide any feedback on whether a specific piece would be suitable for use in a specific examination. Therefore, all requests to provide opinion on whether a specific piece meets the criteria for a specific examination will be rejected. To avoid disappointment, we recommend the following approach is taken:

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1. Pieces are checked to ensure they have been published by a third party and have undergone a third-party review.
2. Pieces are selected that exactly meet the Examination Content requirements (e.g. has it been published in the right year range; does it meet the definition as stated in the glossary?).
3. Would the piece allow the Learner to perform to their best and meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria related to the specific qualification?
4. Would the piece allow the Learner to answer the knowledge questions related to the specific qualification?
5. Consideration is given to how the appropriate piece choice matches the Learners strengths and interests.
6. If there is any doubt and you are concerned that the Piece may not fulfil any of the above, then LAMDA recommends that a different piece be chosen.

When selecting duologue scenes, each Learner should have an equal balance of dialogue, giving them both the opportunity to develop the character they are each portraying.

Level 3 Guidance (Grade 6-8):

At this level, Learners are required to select pieces from a range of time periods, reflecting a range of styles and writing styles.

Publication Dates: Where publication dates are specified, LAMDA takes the publication date of the original publication, as opposed to any later editions. Please refer to the LAMDA definition described in the Glossary at the back of the syllabus for more details.

Translations not Adaptations: If a non-English language text is selected for the Ancient Greek and Roman period, Elizabethan and Jacobean period or Restoration and Post-Restoration period, translations of the original play into English must be used. Adaptations or new versions are not permitted and do not meet examination requirements. For example, Jean Anouilh's adaptation of 'Antigone' would not be an appropriate choice for the Ancient Greek and Roman period, as it is not a translation of the original, and instead, is a play inspired by the original text and set in a different period.

Scene selections: At this level, Learners are required to study the plays/feature film scripts from which their scenes have been taken to effectively prepare for the knowledge element of the exam.

Scenes from Television shows and serials are not permitted. A television show is a one-off episode or group of episodes (serial). A television serial is a story which is broadcast in a number of parts over a period of time.

The reason we do not allow Learners to use a serial is because the character arcs and story lines are on-going. Even if a character has been written off, the character could return at any point and their story line revisited. Also, in the era of reboots, many TV shows which had previously concluded have been revitalised and the character arcs and story lines continued.

Where there is no definite ending for a character or story line, the Learner cannot answer the knowledge question on: "The character's role within the context of each play as a whole."

Scenes adapted from novels are not permitted for similar reasons. The typical type of adaptations does not allow for Learners to answer knowledge questions on the character's role within the context of a play as a whole.

Many scenes from stand-alone monologue and duologue scenes would also not be appropriate for a similar reason. They are not completely disallowed because there are variations that may be suitable.

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For example, *Talking Heads* by Alan Bennett would not be appropriate to use since this would not allow the Learner(s) to talk about the characters context within the play as a whole.

In contrast, scenes from one act plays and plays consisting of a series of linked monologues/ duologues may be suitable, providing there is enough material to enable the Learner to fulfil the knowledge requirements of the exam. For example, *Confusions* by Alan Ayckbourn.

LAMDA therefore highly recommend that, when selecting a character, piece and play or feature film, significant consideration is given to the type of piece selected, the character(s) selected, their role in the piece as a whole and their arc and story line. Does the selection enable the Learner to perform and answer questions that fully cover the assessment criteria in a manner that gives them the opportunity to achieve a result that best reflects their ability and knowledge?

Checking the Publisher of a piece

In the 2024 version of the Syllabi, LAMDA have introduced a regulation that states:

'Own Choice Selections must be Published by a professional Third Party (e.g. a Publishing House). Self-Published Selections that have not been reviewed and published by a third party are not allowed.'

In most instances it is very simple to quickly identify if a piece is Self-Published or Published by a professional third party if you know what you are looking for.

- Look for pieces that have been published by a well recognised Publisher such as Nick Hern Books, Penguin, HarperCollins etc.
- Compilations of Monologues and Duologues which include pieces from different authors are a simple option as the organisation or person who compiled the pieces have performed a third-party review and as such this would meet the criteria.
- If you don't already recognise the Publisher, then Google the name and if their website reflects, they are an organisation that publish works by a range of different authors, then they would have a third-party review process in place and as such they would meet the criteria.
- If the piece is for sale on one of the major distribution platforms and the Publisher name is the same as the Author name, then this is likely to be Self-Published.
- If you perform a quick search on the internet and the piece is not available for sale anywhere and can only be found as a free PDF, or a free word document, then this is likely to be Self-Published.
- The biggest giveaway that a piece has been self-published and has not been reviewed by a third party is likely to be the quality. If a piece is not of sufficient quality to allow a Learner to perform in line with the assessment criteria to the best of their ability, then it should not be used.

The main reason for LAMDA including this regulation in the 2024 syllabus is to ensure that the Learner's opportunity to perform to the best of their ability in line with the assessment criteria is maximised. So, to summarise, if there is a case where a Self-Published piece is used in an exam, LAMDA will always review each case individually and they will take proportionate and fair action that minimises the impact on the Learner whilst preserving the validity and integrity of the exams.



Presentation of a clean, legible unannotated copy of pieces to the Examiner

In all cases, where a Learner is to perform a piece, they should bring in a clean, legible, unannotated copy in to give to the Examiner. This allows the Examiner to effectively follow the Learner's performance and provide prompts where needed to support a Learner in delivery of their examination.

Examiners have been fully trained to provide encouragement, guidance and prompts in a standardised manner that minimally impacts the potential flow and focus of the Learner. They will only take this action if this is appropriate and allowed in the specific context and is needed by the Learner in the moment.

It is also worth note that if the piece is clean, legible and free from annotations of any kind, they can refer to their pieces during the knowledge section of the examination. If there are any markings on a piece, the Examiner will not allow the Learner to refer to their pieces to prevent the risk of invalidation on the grounds of a potential security breach.

Building a Portfolio

It is a good idea, when selecting Own Choice pieces, to put together a portfolio that you can use over time with different Learners and at different grades. To put together a portfolio of Own Choice selections, consider the following:

- Progression between grades.
- Suitability for different age groups.
- Variety and balance of characters, for example young person, professional, animals.
- Variety of situations
- Appropriate length
- Appropriate use of language
- Variety of period
- Equal balance and contrast between characters in duologue scenes.
- Keep a clean, unannotated version available and consider which formats would be useful (printed, electronic, is the full book required, or is a selection)

If you are adapting an own choice scene from a published novel (suitable for Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 exams only), here are some handy hints to remember:

- Look at the overall shape of the scene; a scene has to have a strong beginning and a firm ending with a clear journey in-between.
- Dialogue can be lifted from text, providing the style of writing is sustained.
- Characters should be clear.
- When adapting duologue scenes, ensure that both Learners have an equal balance of dialogue, giving them both the opportunity to develop the characters they portray.
- Think about the stage directions which will be included in the scene.

Previous LAMDA Acting Anthologies are useful for sourcing Own Choice selections. It is worth note that when selecting Own Choice Pieces, they do not need to be taken from the same Grade as the Exam, however it is the Teacher's responsibility to ensure that the Learner is able to meet all the Assessment Criteria (performance and knowledge) to the correct level when using the selected piece.

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Other useful sources for Own Choice Scenes are:

- Nick Hern Books: [Nick Hern Books | Nick Hern Books](#)
- Concord Theatricals and the Samuel French theatre bookshop in London: [Homepage | Concord Theatricals](#)
- Bloomsbury (the Home of Oberon Books): [ACADEMIC: Drama & Performance Studies: Books: Bloomsbury Publishing \(UK\)](#)

Devising Drama – Specific Guidance

Devising Drama is the process of devising a new work without a pre-existing script and building on the work through the devising process. This means that Learners should work through any hitches in their performance without reliance on a script. As such, Examiners will not prompt during the performance, even if Learners provide a script.

Devising Scenes

It is important that all devised scenes have a clear structure. Consider the following structural elements of the piece:

1. Beginning
2. Middle
3. End

Consider a clear line of development throughout the scene towards a climax and how individual characters within it can be well defined.

If the scene uses a title or an object as a stimulus, the link should be clear and not tenuous. The stimulus must play an important part in the development of the scene.

For some exams (e.g. Grade 1), the stimulus is an object, and it must be brought into the examination room and used in the performance. If the relevant object is too big, or not available, the Learner should bring another item to represent the object.

In duologue scenes it is important that both devised characters have roles that are equally balanced.

Improvisation

At Level 3, the Learner(s) are required to present an improvised scene based on a word stimulus provided by the Examiner at the time of the examination. The Learner(s) will be given one minute to prepare the scene prior to its performance.



Miming – Specific Guidance

Introducing Mime and Mime Scenes

The Examiner will ask the Learner(s) to announce the title prior to the performance. As from this 2024 syllabi release, this information can be provided verbally, or it can be presented in writing on a sign that is handwritten or printed. Learners may also choose to display their sign on their electronic device if the screen is large enough to ensure the Examiner can see it and if they can manage this without discomfort, distress or any impact on their performance. If the use of the device causes the Learner concern, stress or impacts their performance or the time taken to perform, then we would highly recommend that the use of the device is considered against the risks presented.

The introduction should only contain the title and a succinct outline of how the performance links to the stimulus. This provides the Examiner with the information they need to understand what they are watching. For example, if providing an introduction to a mime about an animal, the Learner may give the name of the animal and what activity they are performing. If they are providing an introduction to a mime scene depicting characters from a storybook, there may need to be a brief outline of the characters and the key aspects of the story.

Miming Technique

Mime often has to be presented with a physicality that is 'larger than life' in order to make the simplest of actions clear to an audience using a vocabulary consisting of only gesture and movement.

Words must not be mouthed by the Learner(s) in their mimes/mime scenes as this detracts from the importance of the movement alone. A mime/mime scene should incorporate the following technical skills:

- Clear and accurate movements.
- Controlled and coordinated movements.
- Expressive facial reactions.

Specific requirements on Miming technique are detailed in the Assessment Criteria for Technique at each grade.

Props are not permitted for use in Miming examinations. Tables and chairs are permitted in the examination room for the purposes of staging a mime or mime scene, however LAMDA only requires examination rooms to have one chair available for Learners, therefore there can be no guarantee of other table or chair availability. Any staging using tables and/or chairs must be managed by the Learner themselves and must not affect the timing or flow of the examination.

Mime and Mime Scenes

Mime: A mime is a concentrated moment showing the mood and movement of one particular activity. At its simplest it could be 'eating a banana' or 'walking across pebbles'. It can involve the creation of a character, but this character must be focused on one occupation. An animal can be depicted, showing its shape and natural movements. It is always a solo piece. Marcel Marceau called such mimes his 'exercises' but in performance, for example *The Cage* or *The Mask Maker*, they kept his audience enthralled.

Mime Scene: A mime scene is a series of activities that create a piece of drama. This can range from a simple episode, for example looking at the exhibits in a museum, to a more complicated scene in which museum exhibits come to life. It can show conflict between characters. It may be abstract or tell

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a story, be comic or poignant. A mime scene needs to use space theatrically to portray the illusion it is creating. The scene should take the audience on a journey.

The Learner(s) should consider the structure of their mime scene, including the following:

- A well-defined storyline, with a beginning, middle and end.
- The performance criteria of the Mime or Mime Scene require the Learner to meet (for example, to communicate an understanding of the intentions and objectives of the character, to demonstrate an understanding of the place, period and situation).

Miming to Music

Music can be a helpful introduction to mime. It can inspire the creation of a situation, support a characterisation and sustain a complete performance. Rhythms and evocative emotional qualities can guide the Learner(s) away from self-consciousness and help them to find movement and create moods with greater confidence.

Consider using music and sound effects with mime to create a satisfying whole. Strong rhythms can be an effective accompaniment to a comic situation. Lyrical music can support and help develop an abstract mime. The performer must know their music perfectly so that every change of emphasis supports the movement. In order for a piece to be a complete blend of timing and sensitivity, the Learner(s) need to build each movement in response to the music.

If the Learner(s) have developed a character and possible situation, then it may be interesting to play some different pieces of music and ask the Learner(s) to choose which piece might best fit the idea. Alternatively, you may propose a piece of music and see what this evokes in the Learner(s) minds. For example, *Walking to Regios*, a track by Isaac Hayes, provides the inspiration for a devious character. This piece of music clearly takes that character and their actions across a cityscape – it is furtive, searching and it concludes with a meeting and possible conflict.

Film music such as the soundtracks for *Chocolat* or *Amelie*, and classical music such as Holst's *Planets Suite*, can be useful.

When considering the use of music within a performance, it is important to consider what the Learner will use to play the music on, any potential skills required to manage the playing of the music and any potential impacts on the Learner's performance. If the management of the device used to play music causes the Learner concern, stress or impacts their performance or the time taken to perform, then we would highly recommend that the need for their use is considered against the risks presented.

Grade 6 - Miming in Slow Motion

Slow motion is the continuity of movement at a slow, steady pace and this continuity can be difficult to sustain. However, once it is mastered it is indispensable to a mime artist who can use it in many ways, for example to get themselves in and out of dream sequences.

To help develop the technique of moving in slow motion, ask the Learner(s) to be aware of moving normally while feeling the air push past every part of their body. They can then imagine a thick fog curling around them. It gradually becomes even thicker, changing to liquid and they must feel the energy needed to push through water. To slow the Learner(s) down further the liquid can become pea soup or custard, which becomes harder and harder to move through until it eventually becomes concrete.

As they move, the Learner(s) need to be aware of any part of the body that wobbles and allow the liquid to be thicker around that area. Eventually the whole body will be able to sustain the slow continuity of movement.

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Grade 7 - Commedia dell'Arte

Commedia dell'Arte is a form of Italian theatre containing stock characters, masks, farcical action and scenes full of beatings, acrobatics and comic stage business.

At Grade 7, the Learner(s) must perform a prepared mime scene based on one Commedia dell'Arte mime character selected from a list provided in the syllabus. They are also required to discuss Commedia dell'Arte and the reasons for their choice of character in the Knowledge section of the examination.

Please note: Learners are not advised to wear a Commedia dell'Arte mask or a mask in general for the performance of the Commedia dell'Arte scene. There is a requirement in the Assessment Criteria to communicate the personal characteristics of the character through appropriate movement, posture, body language and facial expression. If a face mask is used for this scene, it will impede the Learner's ability to meet the Assessment Criteria for the examination in full, as the Examiner may not be able to fully assess the Learner's use of facial play.

Whilst dialogue cannot be used in prepared mimes and mime scenes for LAMDA Miming exams, it is permitted for the Learner(s) to use grammelot, or gromalot, in their Commedia dell'Arte scene at Grade 7. Grammelot, or gromalot, is a style of language which dates back to 16th century Commedia dell'Arte. It incorporates elements of gibberish with macaronic and onomatopoeic elements.

Grade 8 - Using a Full-Face Mask

Masks have been worn in performance for centuries, from the actors in Greek theatre to players in the Commedia dell'Arte and contemporary cartoon characters. They can help the body to suggest a whole range of expressions, some realistic, others highly exaggerated and they can be used to develop the physicality of characters.

The plain white mask is used to completely take away facial play and encourage the performer to focus on their body language. In a full mask, the performer needs to be physically precise and to connect with the audience through gestures. To focus on communicating in a mask, the Learner(s) need to warm up well so that the body is flexible enough to show the tiniest detailed gesture or the greatest effort of strength.

Physical control can be used to create rhythmic, precise movements which help the progression of mood and thought.

To help develop these techniques, the Learner(s) can be asked to create a statue or freeze of a particular reaction, such as shock or surprise. As you count down from five to one, the Learner(s) transfer all the emotion and expression out of their faces and into their bodies, so that every part of the body is communicating the shock, apart from the face where there is no feeling at all.

It is important for the masked performer to be aware of the fourth wall (the audience in an end-on configuration) and keep their mask towards the audience as much as possible. By watching others in mask, the Learner(s) can observe how the slightest change of angle or difference in gesture may communicate a different action or emotion and how all of the body has to be committed to communicating a clear message.



Grade 8 - Knowledge: Selecting a Practitioner

For the Knowledge section of Grade 8 Miming examinations, the Learner(s) must discuss the influences on the development and presentation of mime for one influential practitioner.

The choice of the practitioner can be the Learner's/Teacher's choice, but when making that selection, it is essential that consideration is given to the Assessment criterion against which the Learner will be examined on. In order to meet the minimum requirements of the assessment criterion, the practitioner must have been influential on the development and presentation of mime. It would not be sufficient to just select a notable practitioner of mime, they must have had influence on the development and presentation. For example, Charlie Chaplin, Marcel Marceau, Etienne Decroux or Jacques Lecoq all influenced mime in notable ways.

Version control

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