



DRAMA

General course

Year 12 syllabus for teaching from 2027

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

Important information

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) has revised the course rationale and aims, and updated the General Capabilities to create clearer connections with the syllabus content.

This syllabus is effective from 1 January 2027.

Users of this syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the Authority on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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Contents

Rationale	1
Aims	1
Organisation	2
Structure of the syllabus	2
Organisation of content.....	2
Representation of the General Capabilities	3
Representation of the Cross-curriculum Priorities.....	4
Unit 3 – Representational, realist drama	6
Unit description.....	6
Unit content	6
Unit 4 – Presentational, non-realist drama	9
Unit description.....	9
Unit content	9
School-based assessment	12
Assessment table – Year 12.....	12
Externally set task	13
Grading.....	13
Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 12.....	14

Rationale

The Drama General course introduces students to the world of professional theatre. They not only have the opportunity to step into the lives of characters through originally devised work or published scripts, but also learn the skills of directing and selected elements of theatre design such as costume, lighting, set and sound. As well as developing their artistic skills, students independently build their confidence, adaptability and teamwork through creative collaboration activities.

Students in the course build their understanding of drama language, which includes the fundamental building blocks for developing skills as an actor; contextual knowledge, to understand the background of a character or story; and the technical aspects of staging a production. The course commences with a focus on representational drama and then transitions to presentational drama. Students investigate the pioneering theatre practitioners of these two styles which underpin contemporary theatre performances.

Students learn performance skills through exploring the elements of drama. They become confident in the application of creative theatre design choices to maximise the drama experience, both for creatives involved in the process and for the audience.

Students in the course study both Australian and international texts, enacting global stories which build their intercultural awareness. By reinterpreting and retelling stories, they gain a deeper understanding of and empathy for diverse human experiences. The course also develops students' interpersonal skills including creative problem-solving, adaptability through collaborating and communicating in teams, and leadership.

The course equips students with a wide range of skills that open doors to opportunities such as tertiary education in performing arts, media, education and event management and career pathways in theatre, film and television. Students also develop transferable skills that are valuable in a wide range of areas such as teaching, corporate training, communications, marketing and customer-facing roles.

Aims

The Drama General course aims to develop students':

- ability to create, interpret and present ideas
- skills in techniques, processes, conventions and technologies
- ability to present drama for specific purposes, audience and spaces
- understanding of the role of drama in society
- ability to reflect on and evaluate drama
- transferable skills in creative problem-solving, collaboration, innovation, flexibility, social skills, self-regulation and leadership.

Organisation

This course is organised into a Year 11 syllabus and a Year 12 syllabus. The cognitive complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12.

Structure of the syllabus

The Year 12 syllabus is divided into two units which are delivered as a pair. The notional time for the pair of units is 110 class contact hours.

Unit 3 – Representational, realist drama

This unit focuses on representational, realistic drama. Students explore techniques of characterisation through different approaches to text interpretation, particularly those based on the work of Stanislavski and others.

Unit 4 – Presentational, non-realist drama

This unit focuses on presentational, non-realist drama. Students explore techniques of role and/or character through different approaches to text interpretation, particularly those based on the work of Brecht and others.

Each unit includes:

- a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit
- unit content – the content to be taught and learned.

Organisation of content

The course content is divided into three content areas:

- drama language
- contextual knowledge
- production and performance

Suggested text list

This course has a suggested text list. These are included to support a sense of the focus and pitch of the units in Year 12. The relevant lists are included in Unit 3 and Unit 4.

Roles

In Unit 3 and Unit 4, students will study in the context of drama in performance and responding to drama:

- **Actor:** interprets and presents the text by adopting role or character through action to create the drama event.
- **Director:** decides upon the interpretation or the conceptualisation of the text and works with actors and the creative team to realise the drama event.

In Unit 3 and Unit 4, students will study in the context of drama in performance and responding to drama, one of the roles below:

- **Costume designer:** provides designs for the appearance of characters on stage, including accessories, footwear, make-up and plans costume changes during a drama event.

- **Lighting designer:** provides the design for illumination, focus, mood and atmosphere through lighting technologies in a drama event.
- **Scenographer:** provides design for the stage setting to create the sensory environment and layout of a performance space for a drama event.
- **Sound designer:** provides design for aural support for mood, action, context and transitions in a drama event.

Representation of the General Capabilities

The General Capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will support students to live and work successfully now and into the future. They are not assessed unless identified within the specified unit content. Teachers should find opportunities to incorporate the following General Capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Drama General course.

Critical and creative thinking

In the course, students find satisfying solutions to creative problems by using a broad repertoire of critical and creative thinking skills, including investigating new possibilities for achieving dramatic outcomes. For example, through a nominated approach to performance, students can apply new ideas for character presentation, audience interaction and design choices to highlight particular themes and messages.

Ethical understanding

Through the exploration of drama, students understand and empathise with diverse perspectives and experiences. They devise and enact dramatic works which explore complex moral and ethical dilemmas, prompting them to think critically about right and wrong, justice, and equity.

Intercultural understanding

Students learn that the creation of drama, whether devised or through script interpretation, requires an understanding and thoughtful representation of cultures from different times and/or places. They understand that success in conveying meaning on stage depends on an understanding of historical, social, and cultural contexts, which inform all aspects of performance, from design and direction to acting. When staging stories from other cultures, they carry out research to ensure authenticity and respect.

Literacy

Students develop literacy in the course by reading and analysing a variety of texts, exploring their meaning and communicating this meaning to an audience through performance. They use various forms and styles of communication with appropriate drama conventions, and recognised practitioner or company approaches, to interpret texts for particular tasks.

Numeracy

Numeracy in drama involves students recognising and understanding the use of spatial reasoning and measurement in rehearsing and performing in various spaces. It also informs the application of selected design roles and relevant theatre technologies.

Personal and social capability

All learning in drama is a social, collaborative and cooperative process. Students in the Drama General course work together with empathy and developing self-awareness through their interactions and relationships. They learn to manage their time to achieve goals, whether working in groups or handling solo tasks.

Addressing the other General Capabilities

Although the following General Capabilities have not been identified as a focus in the Drama General Year 12 syllabus, teachers may find opportunities to incorporate them into the teaching and learning program.

- Digital literacy

Such opportunities may occur through the application of different contexts, pedagogical practices and/or assessment strategies that relate to the syllabus as part of the teaching and learning program.

Summary representation of the General Capabilities in the Drama General course

The unit content and assessment types for this course provide students with the opportunity to develop the General Capabilities summarised in the table below.

Year	Course	Course type	General Capabilities						
			CCT	DL	EU	IU	L	N	PSC
Year 11	Drama (GEDRA)	General	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year 12	Drama (GTDRA)	General	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key

CCT: Critical and creative thinking, DL: Digital literacy, EU: Ethical understanding, IU: Intercultural understanding, L: Literacy, N: Numeracy, PSC: Personal and social capability

Representation of the Cross-curriculum Priorities

The Cross-curriculum Priorities address the contemporary issues which students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate them into the teaching and learning program for the Drama General course. The cross-curriculum priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures carry an ancient tradition with stories that communicate mythical histories of Indigenous Australia that are unique and share parallels with other ancient cultures. Exploration of the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures provides a rich opportunity to build a greater understanding of a part of Australian history and society as well as fostering values of mutual understanding and respect between cultures included under the broad identity of this country.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

The Asia region represents a highly diverse spectrum of cultures, traditions and peoples with a third of the world's population located immediately north of Australia. Engaging in a respectful exploration of particular traditions from countries like China, India, Korea (both North and South), and Japan, for example, will enable students to understand more deeply the values and histories of our near neighbours with whom we share important interrelationships.

Sustainability

The challenge of sustainability and the human impact on our environment, including the ongoing challenge of human over consumption and production of waste, remains a critical challenge for all people. This may be explored through drama in two important ways: One, sustainable practices and the ongoing exploration of what they can be for drama; Two, through engagement in creative problem solving through drama to address behaviours contributing to negative and positive impacts on our environment.

Unit 3 – Representational, realist drama

Unit description

The focus for this unit is **representational, realist drama**. Students explore techniques of characterisation through different approaches to group based text interpretation, particularly those based on the work of Stanislavski and others. In this unit, students have the opportunity to research and collaboratively workshop, interpret, perform and produce texts in forms and styles related to representational, realistic drama that educate and present perspectives.

Unit content

An understanding of the Year 11 content is assumed knowledge for students in Year 12. It is recommended that students studying Unit 3 and Unit 4 have completed Unit 1 and Unit 2.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

In the context of drama in performance and responding to drama, students understand, select and combine:

Drama language

Voice and movement

- voice techniques (posture, breathing techniques, pace, pitch, pause, projection, phrasing, tone and accents as appropriate) to create character and dramatic action in the performance of representational, realist drama
- movement techniques (facial expression, posture, gesture, gait, weight, space, time, energy and proxemics) to create character and dramatic action in the performance of representational, realist drama
- voice and movement techniques in representational, realist drama using the processes developed by Konstantin Stanislavski and others (Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner or Jean Benedetti) in devising or interpreting drama
- focus and spatial awareness in representational, realist drama

Drama processes and the elements of drama

- cooperative group work processes (memorising, improvising, interpreting, listening, accepting, delegation of roles, developing an agreed approach) in drama
- the elements of drama (role, character and relationships, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, dramatic tension) refined through improvisation and rehearsal to create realistic characterisation and relationships in performance through processes developed by Stanislavski or adapted by others
- the elements of drama shaped to present identified themes, selected approaches and theories about dramaturgy in representational, realist drama
- the elements of drama used in performance preparation processes (improvisation to explore imagination, character mapping, given circumstances) for representational, realist drama
- the elements of drama shaped through viewpoints in improvisation and text interpretation to create dramatic meaning that educates and presents forces
- directing theory that shapes the application of the elements of drama in representational, realist drama refined through improvisation

Drama forms and styles

- interpretation of representational, realist drama forms and styles (Realism, Naturalism) by shaping the elements of drama
- relationships between representational, realist drama and linear narrative structures

Contextual knowledge

Drama conventions

- techniques in representational, realist drama for engaging the audience through suspension of disbelief
- conventions of improvisation (breaking patterns and creating focus) in representational, realist drama
- linear narrative structures, including Aristotle's plot structures ('mythos')
- conventions of interpreting a script (motivation, tempo, circles of attention and psychological gestures) refined through improvisation in representational, realist drama
- conventions of documenting representational, realist drama (script annotations, blocking notations and plan and elevation views)
- performance and audience behaviours (role of observer in realist drama) in representational, realist drama

Values, forces and drama practice

- impact of audience expectations, attitudes, experiences and understandings on drama production and audience responses
- forces that contributed towards the development of representational, realist approaches to acting, design and drama
- development of representational, realist drama with a focus on the ways particular practitioners, such as Stanislavski, have interpreted representational, realist drama

Production and performance

Spaces of performance

- strategies to present space and time (planned uses of space) when working in different performance areas focusing on representational, realist drama
- ways that audiences are positioned to identify and engage with representational, realist drama
- proscenium arch and thrust stages in representational, realist drama

Design and technologies

- the collaboration of designers, scenographers, actors and directors in representational, realist drama
- principles of design (balance, contrast, emphasis, harmony, repetition, unity, variety, movement, scale/proportion, pattern, rhythm), visual elements (line, shape, texture, colour, tone/value, 3D form and space) and design technologies in representational, realist drama
- drama design and technologies to represent real settings and characters (reproduction of reality, selective realism)

Management skills and processes

- effective group work (selecting social and emotional intelligences) to resolve conflicts and problems
- time management skills (self-motivation, prioritisation and goal setting) in drama
- intellectual property rights and performance rights in drama
- safe working practices in drama in purpose built performance spaces
- posters, programs and publicity in representational, realist drama

Oral and written communication

Students are expected to develop skills and abilities in multiple drama-based forms of communication. Students are to address appropriate aspects of written and oral communication through drama in performance and associated learning activities. This includes:

- short and extended answer forms
- graphic organisers, diagrams, and illustrations with appropriate use of annotations, and of colour
- interviews and other oral presentations
- structuring of ideas and responses.

Suggested text list

This course has a suggested text list:

Suggested Australian texts for Unit 3	Suggested world texts for Unit 3
Richard Beynon: <i>The Shifting Heart</i>	Anton Chekhov: <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> or <i>The Seagull</i>
Sumner Locke Elliot: <i>Rusty Bugles</i>	Henrik Ibsen: <i>Pillars of Society</i> or <i>A Doll's House</i>
Ray Lawler: <i>Summer of the Seventeenth Doll</i> or <i>Kid Stakes</i>	Eugene O'Neill: <i>Anna Christie</i> or <i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i>
Alan Seymour: <i>One Day of the Year</i>	August Strindberg: <i>Miss Julie</i> or <i>Creditors</i>
Katherine Thomson: <i>Diving for Pearls</i> or <i>Barmaids</i>	Tennessee Williams: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> or <i>The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore</i>

Note: by the end of Unit 3 and Unit 4, students should have studied one Australian and one world text.

Roles

Students are required to engage with the role of actor and director and one other role: scenographer, costume lighting designer or sound designer.

Unit 4 – Presentational, non-realist drama

Unit description

The focus of this unit is **presentational, non-realist drama**. Students explore techniques of role and/or character through different approaches to group based text interpretation, particularly those based on the work of Brecht and others. In this unit, students have the opportunity to research and collaboratively workshop, interpret and perform drama texts related to presentational, non-realistic drama that challenge and question perspectives.

Unit content

This unit builds on the content covered in Unit 3.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

In the context of drama in performance and responding to drama, students understand, select and combine:

Drama language

Voice and movement

- voice techniques (posture, breathing techniques, pace, pitch, pause, projection, phrasing, tone and accents as appropriate) to create role or character and dramatic action in the performance of presentational, non-realist drama
- movement techniques (facial expression, posture, gesture, gait, weight, space, time, energy and proxemics) to create role or character and dramatic action in the performance of presentational, non-realist drama
- voice and movement techniques in presentational, non-realist drama using processes developed by Bertolt Brecht and others (Rudolf Laban, Peter Brooke or Jerzy Grotowski) in devising or interpreting drama
- focus and spatial awareness in presentational, non-realist drama

Drama processes and the elements of drama

- collaborative group work processes (memorising, improvising, interpreting, workshopping, refining) in ensemble drama
- the elements of drama (role, character and relationships, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, dramatic tension) refined through improvisation and rehearsal to create role or character through processes developed by Brecht or others
- the elements of drama shaped to present identified themes, selected approaches and theories about dramaturgy in presentational, non-realist drama
- the elements of drama in performance preparation processes (improvisation to explore audience alienation, gestus and historicisation) for presentational, non-realist drama
- the elements of drama shaped through viewpoints in improvisation to create dramatic meaning that challenges and questions forces
- directing theory that shapes the application of the elements of drama in presentational, non-realist drama refined through improvisation

Drama forms and styles

- interpretation of presentational, non-realist drama forms and styles (such as Brechtian Epic Theatre, Shakespearean Theatre) by shaping the elements of drama
- relationships between presentational, non-realist drama and non-linear narrative structures

Contextual knowledge

Drama conventions

- techniques in presentational, non-realist drama for connecting with an audience through imaginative, political or polemical engagement
- conventions of improvisation (justified action and character) in presentational, non-realist drama
- juxtaposition and transition in role, character, space, time, forms and/or styles, including leaps of time, flashback and flash forward, fragmented and cyclical structures
- conventions of interpreting a script (engaging with the audience, *Verfremdungseffekt* (alienation effect), reality effects and shifting roles) refined through improvisation in presentational, non-realist drama
- conventions of documenting presentational, non-realist drama (director's vision, design statements, actors' notes)
- performance and audience behaviours (active audience participation) appropriate to presentational, non-realist drama

Values, forces and drama practice

- impact of changing historical, social and cultural values on drama production and audience reception
- forces that contributed towards the development of particular presentational, non-realist approaches to acting and drama
- development of presentational, non-realist drama with a focus on the ways particular practitioners, such as Brecht, have interpreted presentational, non-realist drama

Production and performance

Spaces of performance

- strategies to present shifts in space and time (adapted spaces) when working in different performance areas focusing on presentational, non-realist drama
- ways that audiences are positioned to interact with, respond to and participate in presentational, non-realist drama
- in the round, traverse and promenade stages for presentational, non-realist drama

Design and technologies

- the collaboration of designers, scenographers, actors and directors in presentational, non-realist drama
- principles of design (balance, contrast, emphasis, harmony, repetition, unity, variety, movement, scale/proportion, pattern, rhythm), visual elements (line, shape, texture, colour, tone/value, 3D form and space) and design technologies in presentational, non-realist drama
- drama design and technology in presentational, non-realist drama (symbolic designs, available lighting, live sound, multiple uses of objects)

Management skills and processes

- effective group work (managing social and emotional intelligences) to build group cohesion
- time management skills (effective use of paired analysis, planning matrices, concentration, managing distractions) in drama
- intellectual property rights and performance rights in drama in a twenty-first century context
- safe working practices in drama in purpose built or found performance spaces
- posters, programs and publicity for presentational, non-realist drama

Oral and written communication

Students are expected to develop skills and abilities in multiple drama-based forms of communication. Students are to address appropriate aspects of written and oral communication through drama in performance and associated learning activities. This includes:

- short and extended answer forms
- graphic organisers, diagrams, and illustrations with appropriate use of annotations, and of colour
- interviews and other oral presentations
- structuring of ideas and responses.

Suggested text list

This course has a suggested text list. By the end of Unit 3 and Unit 4, students should have studied one Australian and one world text.

Suggested Australian texts for Unit 4	Suggested world texts for Unit 4
Alma De Groen: <i>The Rivers of China</i> or <i>The Girl Who Saw Everything</i>	Bertolt Brecht: <i>Measures Taken</i> and <i>Other Lehrstücke</i> or <i>Baal</i>
Angela Betzien: <i>Hoods</i> or <i>The Girl Who Cried Wolf</i>	Carlo Goldoni: <i>A Servant Of Two Masters</i> or <i>The Venetian Twins</i>
Jack Hibberd: <i>White with Wire Wheels</i> or <i>Guantanamo Bay</i>	Christopher Marlowe: <i>Doctor Faustus</i> or <i>The Massacre of Paris</i>
Debra Oswald: <i>Dags</i> or <i>Skate</i>	Plautus: <i>The Prisoners</i> or <i>Epidicus</i>
Indija N Mahjoeddin: <i>The Butterfly Seer</i>	Stephen Sondheim: <i>West Side Story</i> or <i>The Frogs</i>

Roles

Students are required to engage with the role of actor and director and one other role: scenographer, costume lighting designer or sound designer.

School-based assessment

The *Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Manual* contains essential information on principles, policies and procedures for school-based assessment that needs to be read in conjunction with this syllabus.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. The table below provides details of the assessment types for the Drama General Year 12 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

Assessment table – Year 12

Type of assessment	Weighting
Performance/production Improvising and devising original drama, interpreting drama texts, rehearsing, designing lighting, sound, sets, costumes and graphics for programs, posters and promotion. Demonstrating the use of drama skills, techniques, processes and technologies in a range of performance contexts.	55%
Response Response to, and analysis of own, others' or professional drama works in relation to elements, principles, techniques and/or processes of drama. Responses may be oral, or in written forms, and include supporting annotated diagrams and/or illustrations.	30%
Externally set task A written task or item or set of items of 50 minutes duration developed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority and administered by the school.	15%

Teachers are required to use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units.

The assessment outline must:

- include a set of assessment tasks
- include a general description of each task
- indicate the unit content to be assessed
- indicate a weighting for each task and each assessment type
- include the approximate timing of each task (for example, the week the task is conducted, or the issue and submission dates for an extended task).

In the assessment outline for the pair of units, each assessment type must be included at least once over the year/pair of units. The externally set task occurs in Term 2.

The set of assessment tasks must provide a representative sampling of the content for Unit 3 and Unit 4.

Assessment tasks not administered under test/controlled conditions require appropriate validation/authentication processes.

Externally set task

All students enrolled in the Year 12 General Drama course will complete the externally set task developed by the Authority. Schools are required to administer this task in Term 2 at a time prescribed by the Authority.

Externally set task design brief – Year 12

Time	50 minutes
Format	Written
	Conducted under invigilated conditions
	Typically between two and five questions
	Can require students to refer to source materials like script excerpts or require students to refer to viewed performances (live or digital versions of live theatre), own performances or other drama processes in a reflective writing task
Content	The Authority informs schools during Term 3 of the previous year of the Unit 3 syllabus content on which the task will be based

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information.

Grading

Schools report student achievement in terms of the following grades:

Grade	Interpretation
A	Excellent achievement
B	High achievement
C	Satisfactory achievement
D	Limited achievement
E	Very low achievement

The teacher prepares a ranked list and assigns the student a grade for the pair of units. The grade is based on the student's overall performance as judged by reference to a set of pre-determined standards. These standards are defined by grade descriptions and annotated work samples. The grade descriptions for the Drama General Year 12 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, through the Guide to Grades link on the course page of the Authority website at www.scsa.wa.edu.au.

To be assigned a grade, a student must have had the opportunity to complete the education program, including the assessment program (unless the school accepts that there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances).

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information about the use of a ranked list in the process of assigning grades.

Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 12

A	Effectively and creatively applies drama knowledge, techniques and processes in the realisation of published and devised drama performance/production.
	Effectively and collaboratively applies processes and techniques in all specified roles to support drama that communicates meaning and creates audience impact.
	Describes in detail and interprets the forces, values and theories relevant to making meaning and creating audience impact with relevant evidence and justification.
	Communicates clearly and coherently using accurate drama terminology about drama forms, styles and forces.
	Structures work effectively and efficiently using all assigned oral and written communication forms.
B	Competently and with some creativity applies drama knowledge, techniques and processes in the realisation of published and devised performance/production.
	Competently and collaboratively applies processes and techniques in all specified roles to support drama that communicates meaning and creates audience impact.
	Describes with some interpretation the forces, values and theories relevant to making meaning and creating audience impact with evidence and justification.
	Communicates clearly using relevant drama terminology about drama forms, styles and forces.
	Structures work effectively using all assigned oral and written communication forms.
C	Adequately applies drama knowledge, techniques and processes in the realisation of published and devised drama performance/production.
	Adequately, with collaboration, applies processes and techniques in assigned roles to support drama that communicates meaning and creates audience impact.
	Describes the forces, values and theories that make meaning and create audience impact using minimal evidence and/or justification.
	Communicates with relevant drama terminology about drama forms, styles and forces.
	Structures work adequately using oral and written communication forms.
D	Uses drama knowledge, techniques and/or processes in the realisation of published and devised performance/production.
	Uses processes and techniques in some assigned roles to support drama that shows some meaning and/or limited audience impact.
	Briefly describes forces, values and/or theories with some relevance to dramatic meaning.
	Communicates, using limited drama terminology, in a superficial way about drama forms, styles and/or forces.
	Meets task requirements although efforts are sometimes inaccurate, incomplete and/or ineffective.
E	Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.

