

SHAKESPEARE (Pair) - Guidance on alternative pathways

This document will help to guide teachers who have previously entered learners for the Shakespeare (Pair) syllabus strand onto alternative pathways.

Foundation level - grades 1-3

Working in pairs requires learners to develop a strong sense of trust, to work as a team and develop sophisticated listening and reactive skills. **Shakespeare in Pairs** exams can be adapted to the following options in the syllabuses:

- Acting in Pairs
- Performance Arts (pairs)

The syllabus options discussed allow Shakespeare to be the focus of the exam. For example the **Grade 2 Shakespeare in Pairs** exam has the following requirements:

1. An incident from a Shakespeare play, told or acted out in the candidates' own words.
2. A performance of approximately 18 lines from the same play shared equally between the candidates, relating to the incident in Task 1, performed from memory.
3. A conversation with the examiner on the meaning and mood of the pieces performed.

The **Grade 2 Acting in Pairs** exam asks candidates to:

1. EITHER introduce and perform from memory one or two extracts from a play OR Introduce and perform a scene developed through improvisation.
2. A conversation with the examiner either about the meaning and mood of the performed pieces OR about the preparation of the scene developed through improvisation.

Tasks one and two of the Shakespeare exam can be convincingly aligned to task one of the **Acting in Pairs** exam.

In the **Grade 2 Performance Arts (pairs)** candidates are asked to perform:

1. One or two presentations which demonstrate at least two performance skills, one of which may be a contributory performance skill.
2. A conversation with the examiner about the work presented, the two candidates making an equal contribution.

Performance Arts exams provide learners with an opportunity to be creative with the material they present, choosing from a range of performance and contributory skills, and therefore making this syllabus strand an attractive option to the Shakespeare in Pairs exam.

Intermediate level - grades 4-5

At intermediate level the syllabus strands and options to align Shakespeare material remain flexible and open. For example for **Grade 5 Shakespeare in Pairs** the requirements are:

1. A performance of an extract from a Shakespeare play
2. A performance of an extract from a Shakespeare play from a different genre.
3. Either a re-working of EITHER Task 1 OR Task 2 devised by the candidates OR in role of the characters for EITHER Task 1 OR Task 2, respond to questions from the examiner
4. A discussion with the examiner on the meaning and content of the prepared pieces. Shakespeare's use of language and how this contributes to characterisation and choices made in staging the performance pieces.

The **Grade 5 Acting in Pairs** exam requires candidates to:

1. Introduce and perform from memory an extract from a play with two characters of different status.
2. Introduce and perform a scene developed through improvisation related to Task 1.
3. A discussion with the examiner on the meaning and context of the performed pieces, the choices made in staging and the writer's use of language and how this contributes to characterisation

The opportunities to align Shakespeare material with **Acting in Pairs** exams at intermediate level are evident as Shakespeare's writing is often about status and the impact of status upon characterisation. The improvisation task allows the learner to respond creatively and show a deeper understanding of the material presented.

Performance Arts (pairs) provides learners with a similar opportunity to show a range of skills and contributory skills.

Advanced level - grades 6-8

Advanced level graded exams require candidates to perform confidently and with a sense of ownership of the material presented. A **Grade 8 Shakespeare in Pairs** exam asks the learner to perform a range of Shakespeare texts and one may be a contemporary of Shakespeare (Jonson, Middleton etc.). Additionally, the candidate will be asked to work on a piece of text by Shakespeare with the examiner and finally discuss the extracts performed in depth.

A **Grade 8 Performance Arts (pairs)** exams give candidates the opportunity to choose and perform material using a range of performance skills and this can be tailored to Shakespeare works with the requirements as follows:

1. A sustained, fluid and varied dramatic presentation incorporating at least four performance skills.
2. A shared talk and demonstration about two contributory performance skills.
3. A discussion with the examiner about the work presented, context of individual items, interpretation, preparation and possible alternative approaches, the two candidates making an equal contribution.

The **Performance Arts (pairs)** exams are flexible and exciting and allow creative expression to be focused upon a range of material chosen by the candidate.

For further details and full explanations of the **Acting & Speaking** and **Performance Arts** syllabus strands discussed, email drama@trinitycollege.com