



*IB Theatre (HL) 2008-2010*

# The Journal

*“The journal is not directly assessed or moderated but, since what it contains will reflect the sensibility of individual students, and will contain their responses to the different areas of learning, it should be regarded as a fundamental activity of the course.”*

## ***What is the Journal?***

Students should keep a journal from the outset of the course. This is the student’s own record, charting development, challenges and achievements. The aim of the journal is to support and nurture development and reflection, and it is expected that much of the students’ assessed work will emerge from it. Students should also be encouraged to explore connections between different areas of learning throughout the course.

- ***Focus and Selection of Material***

The journal should contain an objective review of the work done during the course, and the student’s reflection on his or her own progress. It should ***focus specifically on learning experiences***, rather than being simply a record of triumphs or an exhaustive chronicle of everything the student experiences in theatre. Therefore, ***students should select carefully those experiences from the course that illustrate personal growth and understanding of theatre***. It should indicate development and progress that reveal the extent and direction of the student’s journey throughout the course. Challenges and obstacles in activities should be included, as well as steps forward.

Students ***should develop a critical relationship with theatre*** and may use the journal to debate theory and practice in their own work. They may use it as a space for experimentation, where different stylistic approaches to acting or theatre design could be articulated either in words or visuals. Critical responses to external productions should also be included, where students can test their own ideas about performance against what contemporary productions offer.

Students ***should not*** use the journal to engage with their personal emotions, but ***should strive to reflect on and analyse their experiences at various stages of development***. Before adding anything to it, students should ask the questions “Why am I including this?” and “How is this a reflection of my experience of theatre, my discoveries in theatre, and the development of my knowledge, understanding and skills?” Students should draw upon the journal as a useful resource once they start work on their ***Independent Project Portfolio***.

## ***What should the Journal look like?***

As the journal is the student’s own record, charting development, challenges and achievements, students are free to determine what form it should take (written, audio and / or visual).

Physically, it could be a bound notebook, a ring binder full of papers, a collection of electrical particles on a computer, or an audio tape: this list is by no means exhaustive. The form that it takes is completely up to the individual student.

***Suggestions for the Journal: Writing, drawing, diagram, collage, chart, tape recording, blog, commonplacing (the act of selecting important phrases, lines, and / or passages from texts and writing them down; the commonplace book is the notebook in which a reader has collected quotations from works he or she has read. Commonplace books can also include comments and notes from the reader; they are frequently indexed so that the reader can classify important themes and quotations related to particular topics), etc...***

The student should keep in mind, however, that it is expected that much of the students’ assessed work will emerge from the Journal. Therefore, it must take on a format that will assist the student in meeting this goal. As it is not directly assessed, how it looks is far less important than how well it aids the student’s learning.

## ***When is the Journal due and how will it be assessed?***

Every week you will be asked to hand in a recent excerpt from your journal so that your progress and understanding can be reviewed. Also, approximately once a month you will have the opportunity to conference with a small group of students and the teacher. This will serve as an opportunity to check-in on our understanding, to fill in any gaps that may occur, and to provide insight and spark further discussion. Anecdotal feedback will be provided by the teacher. Also, feel free to meet with the instructor at any time to discuss the work in your Journal.

Please note that sometimes you will be given specific journal questions to consider based on our work in class and our readings, however, a great deal of the journal writing should be self-initiated. Again, ***the Journal is meant to be the springboard from which your assessed work emerges!*** If you don't put the time and effort into making this a worthwhile resource, you may find it very difficult to find success with the major assessment activities.

• ***Evaluating the Quality of Your Work***

On two occasions during the first semester (at the start of November and at the end of January), you will be asked to hand in a portfolio of journal work that you select to allow for informal evaluation of your progress in the course. To assist in your learning, you will be informally evaluated using the following criteria:

***Range and quality of work represented***

*This criterion is concerned with the range and quality of the candidates work. The best candidates will have successfully attempted demanding tasks and shown a real, practical interest in theatre from more than one culture and historical epoch. For this criterion, the quality of writing is secondary to the quality of the work it represents.*

<b><i>Level 5</i></b>	<b><i>Level 4</i></b>	<b><i>Level 3</i></b>	<b><i>Level 2</i></b>	<b><i>Level 1</i></b>	<b><i>Level 0</i></b>
The Portfolio contains evidence that the candidate has successfully undertaken ambitious work in Theatre in the Making, Theatre in Performance and Theatre in the World. S/he evaluates external productions perceptively, and shows knowledge and understanding of an excellent range of theatre practices.	The Portfolio contains evidence that the candidate has successfully undertaken challenging work in Theatre in the Making, Theatre in Performance and Theatre in the World. S/he evaluates external productions intelligently, and shows knowledge and understanding of a good range of theatre practices.	The Portfolio contains evidence that the candidate has undertaken adequate work in Theatre in the Making, Theatre in Performance and Theatre in the World. S/he evaluates external productions satisfactorily, and shows knowledge and understanding of a range of theatre practices.	The Portfolio contains evidence that the candidate has undertaken some work in Theatre in the Making, Theatre in Performance and Theatre in the World. S/he makes some effort to evaluate external productions, and shows knowledge and understanding of some theatre practices.	The Portfolio contains evidence that the candidate has undertaken limited work in Theatre in the Making, Theatre in Performance and Theatre in the World. S/he makes little or no effort to evaluate external productions, and shows limited knowledge or understanding of theatre practices.	The candidate has not reached level 1.

***Ability to select and edit***

*This criterion is concerned with the candidate's ability to select, cut, amend and annotate work produced throughout the course in order to demonstrate, in as concise and interesting a way as possible, the process of her/his development in both practical and critical work.*

<b><i>Level 5</i></b>	<b><i>Level 4</i></b>	<b><i>Level 3</i></b>	<b><i>Level 2</i></b>	<b><i>Level 1</i></b>	<b><i>Level 0</i></b>
The Portfolio shows a highly developed ability to select relevant evidence, to adjust and annotate it where appropriate, and to present it in a concise way which gives a clear and precise illumination of the candidate's thinking and practical work in Theatre.	The Portfolio shows a sound ability to select relevant evidence, to adjust and annotate it where appropriate, and to present it in a way which gives a clear picture of the candidate's thinking and practical work in Theatre.	The Portfolio shows a satisfactory ability to select relevant evidence, to adjust and annotate it where appropriate, and to present it in a way which gives an adequate picture of the candidate's thinking and practical work in Theatre.	The Portfolio shows some ability to select relevant evidence and present it in a way which gives some indication of the candidate's thinking and practical work in Theatre.	The Portfolio shows limited ability to select relevant evidence. It is presented in a way which gives only a minimal indication of the candidate's thinking and practical work in Theatre.	The candidate has not reached level 1.

***Quality of reflection***

*This criterion is concerned with the candidate's ability to reflect critically and honestly about her/his progress through the Theatre Arts programme, including both her/his own work in class production and performance, and experiences of other productions.*

<b><i>Level 5</i></b>	<b><i>Level 4</i></b>	<b><i>Level 3</i></b>	<b><i>Level 2</i></b>	<b><i>Level 1</i></b>	<b><i>Level 0</i></b>
The Portfolio shows a high quality of reflection on an impressive range of Theatre Arts activities, with strong evidence of learning and development.	The Portfolio gives good evidence of sustained reflection on a wide range of Theatre Arts activities, with good evidence of learning and development.	The Portfolio shows a thoughtful response to a satisfactory range of Theatre Arts activities, with adequate evidence of learning and development.	The Portfolio shows some evidence of reflection on Theatre Arts activities, with some evidence of learning and development.	The Portfolio is limited: it reports a few Theatre Arts activities in a superficial fashion. There is limited evidence of learning or development.	The candidate has not reached level 1.

***What is the Journal worth?***

Nothing and everything (*see above*).

## What should I consider in producing my Journal?

It is expected that you will produce at least 2 to 3 journal entries each week, and sometimes you may have something to write about following every class.

- **Suggestion #1**

As you write a journal entry on a topic, you should consider addressing the following in an attempt to clarify your understanding:

- *What is it?*
- *Why is it important?*
- *How will it be realized? (How can you put this into practice?)*

- **Suggestion #2**

The following has been taken directly from the Teacher Support Material for the IB Theatre course to give you some idea of the level of reflection that will be expected of you in the journal process as the course progresses.

***How does the process of assessing a performance and recording the critical responses in the journal, support the development of knowledge and skills in the theatre course?***

The culturally ritualistic experience of being part of an audience is, for a student of theatre, a vital opportunity for observing the elements of production and performance in action; interpreting the holistic effects of directorial choices and experiencing the responsibility of being a causal element in a dramatic event. All three of these aspects contribute to a fuller understanding of theatre, its function in society and, thus, the core elements of the theatre course. Throughout the two years of study, theatre students will regularly explore theatre as part of an audience and record their observations and reflections in the journal. These responses will offer essential insights into processes, effects and consequences of their own work in theatre.

The journal recordings may consider the experience of being part of an audience from three distinct but interconnected viewpoints. These are as follows:

**Viewpoint 1: Observational / Analytic**

From this perspective the student views the performance as an informed and interested spectator. Based on the skills and knowledge acquired in “Theatre in the making”, “Theatre in performance” and “Theatre in the world”, the student will make critical commentary on the workings and technical proficiency of individual production elements and of the performance as a whole. Recordings of this aspect of performance assessment contribute directly to the ***Theatre Performance and Production Presentation*** as well as supporting the ***Practical Performance Proposal*** and ***Independent Project Portfolio*** assessment components. These critical responses may also help guide the student towards their choice of independent project. Some areas for consideration from this critical perspective of the performance can be found in the following table and questions.

***Observational / Analytic Considerations***

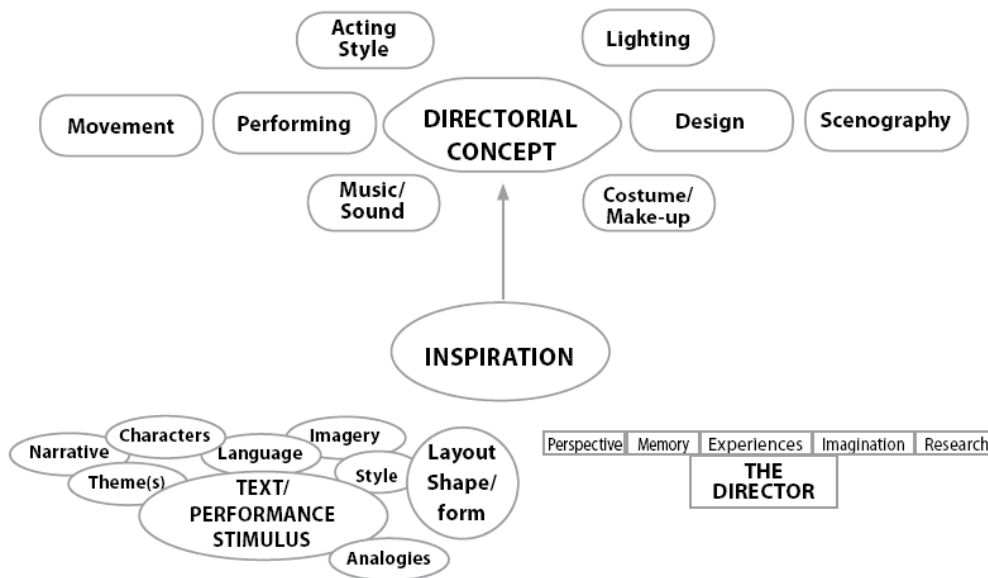
- Genre / style of production
- Growth of plot
- Use of space (actor / spectator relationships)
- Use of individual design elements
- Depth and style of character representation (acting)

***Sample questions:*** *How did that scene change take place? What caused the lighting effect on stage left? What practical problems were caused by those costume choices? How did so many characters get on stage so quickly? How were levels created and used? What colours in costume and set design worked and what colours were lost?*

**Viewpoint 2: Interpretational / Holistic**

The standpoint assumed by the student for these critical responses is that of artistic director. In this instance, the journal may contain not only observations of productions the student has seen, but also comments on the artistic effect of choices made. Attention should also be paid to the effect of the interrelationships between the elements of production and performance and whether this achieved a holistic impression. These

reflections should be informed by the students’ experiences and work on the course. Critiques of performance from this standpoint could play a part in the drafting of the *Practical Performance Proposal* and could be included in the *Theatre Performance and Production* and *Independent Project Portfolio* tools of assessment. This aspect of critical response both feeds and draws on an understanding of the “director’s concept” and the complex process of artistic creativity as suggested in the following diagram:



**The Way to the Director’s Concept**

The director draws inspiration from the “chemical reaction” between the stimulus for performance and their personal creativity and imagination. This inspiration is then transformed into a plan of action and realized through directorial performance choices.

Some areas for consideration from this critical viewpoint of the performance can be found in the following table and sample questions.

- Interpretational / Holistic Considerations**
- Interaction and interdependence of production elements
  - Displays of harmony / discord
  - Visual / verbal / aural use of symbols and metaphors
  - “Time”, its interpretation and depiction through performance
  - Creation / use of dramatic tension through pacing, timing, rhythm
  - Use of line / shape / form / texture / colour - as practical / aesthetic / symbolic choices
  - Acting and blocking choices from a practical / aesthetic / symbolic perspective

**Sample questions:** *Could I perceive the themes of the piece in the design elements? Could I identify the director’s interpretation and their practical / aesthetic / symbolic choices in the performance / production elements? Did I find them effective? How? Why? How did the director “mark the moment” when necessary? How did the different performance / production elements fuse to create effect? What directorial choices did I not understand? What could have been the reasons for those choices? How did the different layers of directorial choice produce a coherent, significant whole?*

**Viewpoint 3: Reflective / Philosophic**

The third standpoint from which the student should record critical commentary of the performance in the journal is concerned with the impacts and resonances of the performance upon the individual and the audience in general.

In the former situation, the student will record perceptions of the relationship between “self in theatre” and “theatre in self” and consider how aspects of this performance relate and link to areas of personal theatre growth in the course.

Journal reflections in the latter case will focus on how the performance provoked the intellectual, emotional and subconscious faculties of the audience. These deliberations would be based upon observation of audience responses to the performance, reflection and in-class group discussion.

Further research into the production, play, period, style, personnel and past productions recorded in the journal can also nurture the skills necessary to develop a research investigation and contribute to the theatre performance and production and independent project portfolio assessment components. The process of observation, research, reflection and recording developed during this viewpoint of performance assessment also resonates strongly with the theory of knowledge approach to learning.

Some aspects for consideration from this standpoint of performance critique can be found in the following table and sample questions.

***Reflective / Philosophical Considerations***

- Individual versus universal themes and ideas
- Audience interaction and response
- Striking / engaging and uninteresting / disengaging moments
- Construction of “altered” state of reality
- Comparisons to other theatre traditions / cultures / practices experienced by the student
- Performance / production provocations

***Sample questions:*** *How, in this performance, did the drama of everyday life become theatre? What did I feel / think / experience while being part of this performance? Is there an attempted pedagogy in this piece of theatre? A lesson? A moral? How were my / our perspectives challenged by this performance? How was meaning conveyed to the audience? What links were there in this performance to other theatre practices / cultures / traditions I have experienced? What other aspects of work I have covered in class did I recognize in this performance?*

• ***Suggestion #3***

It is also advisable that students keep an Actor's Handbook as part of their Journal, in which they record valuable experiences throughout the course. This may include particular exercises and workshops, and especially those which are associated with the development of a production. It may also be used to record notes for seminar orals, include illustrations of historical theatre traditions, staging conventions and relevant information, provide notes from which critical reviews are developed and technical drawings, plots, illustrations and cue sheets. Research on character development, playwrights, world theatre traditions and theorists for example would also be included in the handbook, with appropriate annotation to indicate how that has inspired and/or influenced the student's development as an actor and theatre artisan.