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Dramatic Arts

Cycle Test – Marking Guidelines

Grade 12

Question 1: Absurd Theatre

Question 1

1.1 In waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett presents a world that is absurd and seemingly meaningless.

In a well-developed paragraph, explain how Beckett uses either the theme of waiting, repetition or the breakdown of communication to convey the ideas of Absurd Theatre.

Refer to at least one character and one example from the play in your answer.

(10)

Model Answer:

In waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett uses the idea of waiting to express the meaninglessness of human existence, which is a key feature of the Theatre of the Absurd. Vladimir and Estragon spend the entire play waiting for Godot, who never arrives, and this endless waiting reflects the lack of purpose and direction in their lives. Their actions are repetitive and lead nowhere, as when they consider leaving but remain where they are, saying, “Nothing to be done”. This repetition emphasizes the circular structure of the play and suggests that human beings are trapped in routines that offer no real meaning. Communication between the characters also breaks down, as their conversations are often illogical and filled with pauses and silence, reinforcing the idea that language fails to provide understanding. Through these techniques, Beckett presents a world that is irrational and meaningless, leaving the audience to confront the absurdity of human existence.

Markers Note:

- Award marks holistically within the level achieved.
- Credit valid alternative interpretations supported by the text.
- Penalise only where language errors impede meaning.

Refer to Annexure A

1.2 Explain what is meant by the term 'Theatre of the Absurd.

- **A Theatrical movement that reflects the meaninglessness and absurdity of human existence.**
- **A Theatre movement which rejects traditional plot, logic and realism to express existential anxiety.**

Award any possible answer

(2)

1.3 Using **Source B**, identify **two** ways in which Absurd Theatre differs from Realistic Theatre.

Possible answers (any TWO, 2 Marks each)

- **Absurd Theatre presents life as meaningless or illogical, unlike realism which presents logical cause and effect.**
- **Its rejects traditional plot structure.**
- **Characters are often non-realistic or symbolic.**
- **Dialogue may be fragmented or repetitive instead of naturalistic.**

(4)

Award any possible answer

1.4 Explain how Waiting for Godot reflects the Absurd view of human existence.

Award Marks for clear links to Absurd philosophy.

- **The characters wait endlessly for Godot, who never arrives, showing pointlessness of existence.**
- **There is no clear beginning, middle or end to the play.**
- **Actions and dialogue are repetitive and circular.**
- **The play suggests humans search for meaning in a meaningless world.**

(4)

1.5 Discuss how spectacle in WFG was used by Samuel Beckett in the play text to reveal social, political and economic issues.

Guideline:

Minimal set

- **This empty lifeless environment symbolizes a world that lacks hope, opportunity and direction.**
- **Represents people feeling isolated and disconnected from society.**
- **The barren setting suggests poverty and scarcity of basic needs.**

(6)

- **The tree can be a symbol of hope (ACT II) or the loss of hope (ACT I)**
- **The road leading to nowhere reveals the lifeless environment and their lack of direction and how they felt disconnected from society.**

Characters physical appearance:

- **Worn out clothing**
- **Suggests homelessness and poverty**
- **Reveals peoples struggle for basic needs.** (6)

[26]

Question 2: Performance and Directing

- 2.1** Identify **one** convention of Absurd theatre evident in this extract. Motivate your answer using the source.

1 mark for convention + 2 marks for motivation

Possible answers:

- **Minimalist setting- bare tree and empty stage.**
- **Repetition/ lack of action- they consider leaving but do not move.**
- **Pause and silence – long pause reflects emptiness.** (3)

- 2.2** As an actor, explain how you would use voice and movement to communicate the sense of waiting and frustration in this scene.

Award marks for practical performance understanding

Possible answers:

- **Voice- slow, hesitant speech to show boredom.**
- **Sudden changes in volume to show frustration.**
- **Movement: pacing, slumped posture, repetitive gestures.**
- **Minimal movement to emphasise stagnation.** (4)

- 2.3** As a director, suggest how you would use acting styles to reinforce the ideologies of Absurdism in the play text. Justify your answer.

Accept any answers that would avoid naturalistic acting and instead use exaggerated, stylized movement:

Possible answers:

- **Physical actions slightly exaggerated or repetitive.**
- **Movements may seem purposeless** (4)
- **You can direct actors to repeat gestures and vocal rhythms.**
- **Dialogue can be delivered with deliberate pauses and restarts.**
- **Puppet like movements(Lucky) to show oppression and control.**
- **Use slapstick actions such as tripping, falling or struggling with props**

- **The humor contrast with the bleak themes reinforcing the absurd idea that humans laugh in the face of a meaningless world.**
- **Actors hold uncomfortable pauses and stare into space or stand still without clear motivation**
- **The silence reflects emptiness and uncertainty, reinforcing the idea that communication and meaning often fail.**
- **Emotional reactions are sometimes delayed, muted or inconsistent.**
- **This shows the instability and unpredictability of human existence.**

[11]

Question 3

3.1 Explain how the character of Godot, despite never appearing on stage, remains central to the structure and meaning of the play.

Possible Answers:

- **Godot gives the characters a reason to wait.**
- **He represents hope, meaning or salvation.**
- **The entire structure of the play revolves around waiting for him.**
- **His absence reinforces Absurd philosophy.**

(4)

3.2 Critically discuss whether Waiting for Godot can still be considered relevant to a modern South African audience. Refer to themes and human experience in your answer.

(6)

Learner must evaluate, not just describe.

Mark holistically using a rubric style approach:

6	4-5	2-3
Insightful Response	Clear discussion with examples	Basic response

Possible discussion points:

- **Themes of waiting relate to unemployment and social uncertainty.**
- **Feelings of hopelessness resonate with modern audiences.**
- **The search for meaning and survival is universal.**

3.3 Characters in Absurdist plays were representational.

Identify one character except for Godot and give clear explanation on who/what the character mentioned represents.

(3)

Characters:

- **Vladimir**
- **Estragon**
- **Lucky**
- **Pozzo**

- **The boy**
- **May represent humanity's search for meaning.**
- **Represent every human being trapped in a meaningless, repetitive existence, searching for purpose in a world that provides no answers.**
- **They may represent people who struggle with identity and purpose, through their waiting confusion, dependence and inaction, they embody the absurdist belief that the human condition is defined by uncertainty, isolation and struggle**
- **The boy is a messenger that brings no message. This defies the ideology of a messenger as he brings no message and has no answers for all questions asked.**

[13]

Test Total: 50 Marks

Annexure A

Criteria	Level 7 9-10 (Outstanding)	Level 6 7-8 (Meritorious)	Level 5 6 (Substantial)	Level 4 5 (Moderate)	Level 3 3-4 (Elementary)	Level 2 0-2 (Not achieved)
Understanding of Absurd Theatre	Shows excellent, insightful understanding of Absurd and links it convincingly to the play.	Shows clear understanding with relevant links to the play.	Shows good understanding but explanation may lack depth.	Shows basic understanding with limited explanation.	Shows little understanding of Absurd Theatre.	Shows no understanding.
Use of Evidence from the play	Uses well-chosen accurate examples from the play. (characters and events)	Uses relevant examples mostly accurate.	Some relevant examples but not always well explained.	Limited or general reference to the play.	Very little or inaccurate reference.	No reference to the play.
Analysis and Interpretation.	Insightful analysis showing how techniques convey absurdity.	Clear analysis, though not always fully developed.	Some analysis; tends to be descriptive.	Mostly narrative or descriptive with limited analysis.	Very weak analysis.	No analysis.
Language and Structure.	Well-structured paragraph, fluent and accurate language.	Mostly well-structured minor errors.	Adequate structure; Some language errors.	Weak structure; noticeable language errors.	Poor structure; frequent errors	Incoherent; serious language problems.

Blooms Taxonomy Levels.

Level	Cognitive Process
Level 1	Remember (Recall/Identify/Define)
Level 2	Understand (Explain/Describe/Interpret)
Level 3	Apply (Use knowledge in performance or directing context)
Level 4	Analyse (Discuss/Examine/Interpret meaning)
Level 5	Evaluate (Critically discuss/Justify opinions)

Question By Question Bloom's Alignment

Question	Sub-question	Marks	Blooms-Level
Question 1	1.1	10	HO
	1.2	2	LO
	1.3	4	LO
	1.4	4	MO
	1.5	4	HO
	1.6	6	MO
Question 2	2.1	3	LO
	2.2	4	LO
	2.3	3	MO
Question 3	3.1	4	MO
	3.2	6	MO
Final Cognitive Distribution			
Cognitive level		Marks	Percentage
Lower Order		17	34%
Middle Order		19	38%
Higher Order		14	28%
Total		50%	100%