

Mime

Additional notes on the Mime component of the Speech & Drama Syllabus

In Speech and Drama Grades 1 and 2 candidates are required to perform “a simple, prepared mime”.

The emphasis throughout the syllabus is on story-telling and when performing mimes candidates should experiment with telling stories through use of their bodies and the physical space they inhabit.

Examiners are not expecting to see French-style illusory mime (Marcel Marceau stuff, getting trapped in a glass box etc.) However, candidates should be aware that the clarity of their performance will almost certainly be enhanced if they make some attempt to adopt some of the techniques associated with illusory mime (e.g. the use of fixed point) to establish physical objects.

An occupational mime such as sewing on a button would not give the candidate much opportunity to do this. But if they sewed on the button, pricked their finger, put on a band-aid/plaster and threw the sewing away in annoyance they would begin to show “creative engagement with the materials and careful preparation.” Some children are very keen on mimes based on sport. E.g. “a cricket match”, “a football match”, “a round of golf” which allow a candidate to relate physical action with emotional response - a bodged shot leads to expression of frustration, a good putt to delight and triumph.

Example: a recent Grade 2 candidate performed a piece called “The Goalkeeper”. This allowed the candidate to relate in a variety of ways to “other characters” - his team-mates, the opposition, the referee, the crowd. The mime - which lasted about 2 minutes - told the story of the game. After a promising start, the goalie makes a mistake and our team goes 1 nil behind. He urges his team-mates on, cheering on the crowd. We score - all level. The opposition make a concerted attack and he makes a series of heroic saves. In the last moments our team score. The final whistle goes. Jubilation.