



Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure®

TEST INFORMATION BOOKLET

45 Theater

MA-SG-FLD045-04

Massachusetts Department of Education

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Test Information Booklet Order Form

Theater
(Field 45)

Test Overview Chart

Test Objectives

Sample Test Items

Answer Key and Sample Response

***Test Overview Chart:
Theater (45)***

Subareas	Approximate Number of Multiple-Choice Items	Number of Open-Response Items
I. Playwriting, Performance, and Direction of Dramatic Works	36–38	
II. Design, Production, and Management of Dramatic Works	18–20	
III. Theater History and Dramatic Literature	31–33	
IV. Theater Education	11–13	
V. Integration of Knowledge and Understanding		2

The Theater test is designed to assess the candidate's knowledge of the subject matter required for the Massachusetts Theater license. This subject matter knowledge is delineated in the Massachusetts Department of Education's *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* (7/2001), 603 CMR 7.06, "Subject Matter Knowledge Requirements for Teachers."

The Theater test assesses the candidate's proficiency and depth of understanding of the subject at the level required for a baccalaureate major, according to Massachusetts standards. Candidates are typically nearing completion of or have completed their undergraduate work when they take the test.

The multiple-choice items on the test cover the subareas as indicated in the chart above. The open-response items may relate to topics covered in any of the subareas and will typically require breadth of understanding of the theater field and the ability to relate concepts from different aspects of the field. For at least one of the two open-response items, candidates will be expected to write a response to an assignment that requires them to select a major work/playwright from a specific period of theater history. Although candidates may select any of the major works/playwrights from the designated period that addresses the subject of the item, examples of the theatrical periods of history and associated major playwrights are provided below.

Theatrical Period	Examples of Major Playwrights
Classical Greek	Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Euripides, Sophocles
Sixteenth/Seventeenth-Century European (includes Elizabethan)	Jonson, Marlowe, Moliere, Shakespeare
Restoration (English)	Congreve, Sheridan, Wycherly
Nineteenth-Century European	Chekhov, Ibsen, Strindberg
Twentieth-Century British and European	Beckett, Brecht, Camus, Cocteau, Garcia Lorca, Pinter, Shaw
Twentieth-Century American	Albee, Hansberry, Hellman, Mamet, Miller, O'Neill, Wilder, Williams, Wilson
Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Non-Western	Fugard (South African), Soyinka (Nigerian), Tagore (Indian)

***Test Objectives:
Theater (45)***

Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL™)

**FIELD 45: THEATER
TEST OBJECTIVES**

Subarea	Multiple-Choice	Range of Objectives	Approximate Test Weighting
I.	Playwriting, Performance, and Direction of Dramatic Works	01–03	30%
II.	Design, Production, and Management of Dramatic Works	04–05	15%
III.	Theater History and Dramatic Literature	06–09	25%
IV.	Theater Education	10–11	<u>10%</u>
			80%
	Open-Response		
V.	Integration of Knowledge and Understanding	12	20%

SUBAREAS:

PLAYWRITING, PERFORMANCE, AND DIRECTION OF DRAMATIC WORKS
DESIGN, PRODUCTION, AND MANAGEMENT OF DRAMATIC WORKS
THEATER HISTORY AND DRAMATIC LITERATURE
THEATER EDUCATION
INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

PLAYWRITING, PERFORMANCE, AND DIRECTION OF DRAMATIC WORKS [30%]

0001 Understand principles of playwriting and dramatic structure.

For example: principles and skills involved in writing and adapting a play; use of various techniques (e.g., multiple methods of research/information gathering, playmaking, self-scripting, improvisation) for generating ideas for stories, actions, characters, and dramatic environments; ways of structuring a script to communicate ideas and feelings (e.g., plot, characters, setting, theme, mood); and use of various dramatic styles, forms, and genres.

0002 Understand principles of acting.

For example: characteristics associated with historical styles of acting; methods and characteristics associated with modern and contemporary actor training; techniques for developing actors' tools (i.e., voice, body, and mind); characterization techniques; and uses and techniques of improvisation.

0003 Understand principles of directing.

For example: the roles and functions of the director; script selection; methods for audition and casting; concept and design decisions; script analysis; staging a production; and effective collaboration with cast, production staff, and community.

DESIGN, PRODUCTION, AND MANAGEMENT OF DRAMATIC WORKS [15%]

0004 Understand principles of producing and managing theatrical performances.

For example: roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in theatrical management (e.g., producer, stage manager, technical director); factors and considerations involved in selecting a play for theatrical production; legal issues (e.g., royalties, copyrights, liability, contracts, safety) related to theatrical producing; procedures for selecting artistic and technical staff; procedures for scheduling, budgeting, planning, promoting, and managing theatrical productions.

0005 Understand set, costume, and lighting design and execution.

For example: essential design principles and elements as they relate to theater (e.g., space, color, line, shape, texture, repetition, balance, emphasis, contrast, unity); historical periods and styles; fundamentals of stagecraft (e.g., set, costume, property, and mask construction; hang/focus of lighting instruments; sound production; makeup; safety); and the application of principles of design and production in various situations.

THEATER HISTORY AND DRAMATIC LITERATURE [25%]

0006 Understand the history of drama and theater.

For example: the various purposes of theater throughout history; basic elements of a theatrical performance; types and characteristics of various dramatic forms; and the relationship of cultural, economic, political, and other factors to theater.

0007 Understand British and other European dramatic literature from ancient times through the present.

For example: characteristics of European theater and dramatic literature from the classical age through the present; major playwrights and their works; prominent developments in European theatrical performance and production; and major themes, characteristics, and developments in British and other European drama of different periods.

0008 Understand the dramatic literature of the United States.

For example: characteristics of American theater and dramatic literature; major American playwrights (e.g., O'Neill, Miller, A. Wilson, Hansberry, Wilder, Mamet) and their works; prominent individuals and developments in American theatrical performance and production; and themes, characteristics, and developments in American drama through the present.

0009 Understand dramatic literature from other cultural traditions.

For example: characteristics of theater and dramatic literature of Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Americas; major playwrights and their works; prominent individuals; and major themes, characteristics, and developments in drama.

THEATER EDUCATION [10%]

0010 Understand principles of theater education for children and adolescents.

For example: teaching methods and approaches in theater arts education; the artistic development of children and adolescents in the theater arts; and criteria for evaluating acting, theatrical performance, and theater crafts at different age levels.

0011 Understand the interdisciplinary nature of theater.

For example: theater in connection to related arts (e.g., opera, puppetry, mime, music, dance, visual arts, radio, television, video, film, digital media); and theater in relation to the humanities.

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING [20%]

In addition to answering multiple-choice items, candidates will prepare written responses to questions addressing content from the preceding objectives, which are summarized in the objective and descriptive statement below.

0012 Prepare an organized, developed analysis on a given topic related to one or more of the following: playwriting, performance, direction, design, production, or management of dramatic works; theater history; dramatic literature; and theater education.

For example: principles of playwriting and dramatic structure; principles of acting; principles of directing; principles of producing and managing theatrical performances; set, costume, and lighting design and execution; dramatic literature of the United States and other theater traditions; principles of theater education for children and adolescents; and the interdisciplinary nature of theater.

Sample Test Items: Theater (45)

1. Most playwrights include exposition primarily to:
 - A. help restrict the scope of the play to a manageable size.
 - B. provide audiences with essential information and background material.
 - C. help actors find an effective stimulus for sense-memory work.
 - D. adhere to a consistent and time-honored method of beginning a play.
2. An actor can most effectively use the elements of physical gesture and voice by:
 - A. combining them in an appropriate interpretation of the meaning of the text.
 - B. gesturing during pauses in the vocal narrative to maintain audience interest.
 - C. presenting words and gestures with equal emphasis throughout the performance.
 - D. devising a precise vocabulary of gestures to reinforce the meaning of the spoken words.
3. A director who auditions actors using cold readings should provide actors with:
 - A. a detailed synopsis of the play.
 - B. partners who have memorized the scenes.
 - C. a choice of several props.
 - D. sufficient time to look over the scenes.
4. Notating blocking in the prompt book is typically the responsibility of the:
 - A. stage manager.
 - B. director.
 - C. producer.
 - D. choreographer.

5. The most common use of a cyclorama is to:
- A. provide a picture frame for the set.
 - B. isolate the auditorium from the stage during fires.
 - C. mask the sides of the stage.
 - D. surround the set with the illusion of an open sky.
6. In the mid-twentieth century, the Soviet government advocated the theatrical style of Socialist Realism because such theater:
- A. distracted citizens from economic hardships.
 - B. kindled appreciation for traditional Russian aesthetic ideals.
 - C. provided inexpensive public entertainment.
 - D. idealized life within the Soviet system.
7. Which of the following plays is an example of a romantic comedy?
- A. *Romeo and Juliet*
 - B. *As You Like It*
 - C. *Antony and Cleopatra*
 - D. *Measure for Measure*
8. Which of the following is a primary concern of Lillian Hellman's plays?
- A. the appearance of symbolic characters who cause the realism of the stage space to collapse
 - B. an exploration of her characters' memories and a blurring of the line between truth and illusion
 - C. highly sensitive characters who struggle to understand seemingly random actions and dialogue
 - D. the moral positions of her characters and their inability to respond to situations effectively

9. The oppositional and revolutionary drama of Latin American countries in the 1970s and 1980s was a response to primarily which of the following?
- A. the development of indigenous theatrical performances
 - B. dictatorships and widespread political violence
 - C. the absence of realistic acting styles
 - D. low wages and poor working conditions
10. Talk-backs are a valuable addition to a children's theater performance because they:
- A. introduce rules of conduct for both the performers and the audience.
 - B. provide a natural transition back to a classroom setting.
 - C. encourage children to question and comment on the theater experience.
 - D. allow the children to be coached by professional actors.

11. **Use the information below to complete the exercise that follows.**

Many works of dramatic literature employ one of two basic structures: character centered or event centered.

Using your knowledge of theater history and dramatic literature, write a response in which you:

- select *one* theatrical work by a major twentieth-century American playwright (e.g., O'Neill, Albee, Wilson, Hellman, Williams, Miller);
- identify the structure of the work you have selected (i.e., character centered or event centered) and describe the general characteristics of this type of structure; and
- explain how the work you have selected exemplifies this structure.

Answer Key and Sample Response: Theater (45)

Question Number	Correct Response	Test Objective
1.	B	Understand principles of playwriting and dramatic structure.
2.	A	Understand principles of acting.
3.	D	Understand principles of directing.
4.	A	Understand principles of producing and managing theatrical performances.
5.	D	Understand set, costume, and lighting design and execution.
6.	D	Understand the history of drama and theater.
7.	B	Understand British and other European dramatic literature from ancient times through the present.
8.	D	Understand the dramatic literature of the United States.
9.	B	Understand dramatic literature from other cultural traditions.
10.	C	Understand principles of theater education for children and adolescents.

The sample response below reflects a strong knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

With titles ranging from *Judgement at Nuremberg* to *The Towering Inferno* to *Betsy's Wedding*, event structured dramatic writing appears more frequently in film than in theater. However, with the play *Inherit The Wind*, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee created a theatrical work that follows these familiar conventions.

Unlike most plays, event-structured works are not centered around the journey of a central character, but around a larger event or occurrence. Whereas character-structured works typically consider whether a character or characters will achieve a given objective, event-structured works examine how the larger event will engage and shape the characters. Possible subjects include large-scale disasters, family reunions, bank heists, and, of course, historical trials.

In creating a fictionalized dramatization of the Scopes Monkey Trial, Lawrence and Lee chose a single event that would give the play its structure. The first act focuses on the preparation for the trial, the second act shows the testimony *during* the trial (focusing particular attention on Drummond's climactic questioning of Brady), and the third act examines the trial's verdict and direct consequences.

Although *Inherit the Wind* would essentially collapse without the event of the trial as its backbone, it is interesting to note that some of the individual *scenes* in the play are character-structured. One example occurs in the first act, in which Rachel Brown tries to convince Cates to confess his wrongdoing. The scene rests on whether or not Rachel will achieve her objective, but the central event of the play requires Cates to maintain that he was right in teaching Darwin to his students.