

The research investigation

The **research investigation** is an exercise for **external assessment**, which invites the student to carry out dramaturgical research into an unfamiliar theatre practice.

It is:

- an externally assessed component
- 25% of the final mark
- written as a formal essay with supporting visual and/or textual material
- titled with a clearly defined research question.

It has:

- all sources clearly cited and attributed
- a word limit of
 - 2,000–2,500 words at **HL** plus visual documentation and/or textual references
 - 1,500–1,750 words at **SL** plus visual documentation and/or textual references.

Purpose

The purpose of this research investigation is to inform the work of a practitioner working on the production of a particular play or theatre piece from the chosen theatre practice. The findings, therefore, need to inform practice and should be **relevant, specific and focused**. The job of the investigation should be to provide the research to aid and inform the realization of the chosen play/piece of theatre and **not** to describe how it should be realized. In this respect the focus of this task is research based. It is **not** about the creative interpretation of the play/piece of theatre.

Dramaturgical research is used to inform a production. This does not necessarily mean that a practitioner would take the research and use it to create a piece of theatre from the particular theatre practice that has been researched. Rather, it gives the practitioner insight into the theatre practice from which the play/piece of theatre originates. The practitioner would then make the creative decision to use this material either to create a “traditional” performance by exactly transferring this information into action or to use the information simply to inspire or inform their own creative interpretations.

Example 1

- A director is staging *Woyzeck* by Buchner. A dramaturg provides information on Expressionism which is the theatre practice related to the play. The director then decides, however, that having considered the research, she wants to direct it in a naturalistic style. The director’s decision is made **after** the research not before. The dramaturg does not have this information at the outset. **The dramaturg’s job is to focus on the theatre practice and the play, not on how the director/actor/designer may choose to use this research (in this instance on Expressionism).**

Example 2

- An actor is playing the Monkey King in a Kathakali production of a story from the *Ramayana*. The dramaturg provides information to the actor on how this role is performed in this particular theatre practice. This will inform the actor and may or may not influence the final production for the director may choose to present the story in a different style. The actor would not have this information prior to rehearsal but still requires the research into the way this role is traditionally played to inform his work.

In both examples the research has provided information, but is not necessarily forming the basis of the production.

For this reason the student (the researcher) should not make creative decisions though they may offer creative possibilities if this is relevant.

What needs to be in the research investigation?

The elements that **must** form the basis of the research investigation are:

- research into an unfamiliar theatre practice
- selection of a play/piece of theatre appropriate to the chosen practice
- a particular question to focus the research arising from the production of the selected play/piece of theatre in the chosen theatre practice
- useful, clear and relevant information to the reader on how the unfamiliar theatre practice (or aspect of that practice) relates/informs an aspect or the whole of the play/piece of theatre selected.

It **must**:

- be presented as a formal, academic essay clearly titled and with **all** sources clearly and fully cited
- include a research question that is clearly formulated and indicated
- consult a variety of sources.

The **HL student** is required, in addition, to write a critique of the sources used and cited. This is not part of the word count. The sources critiqued should be relevant to the specifics of the research. This critique should form a separate section at the end of the research investigation and should demonstrate the relevance and usefulness of the sources used and referred to. Naturally the focus of these sources would be primarily the chosen unfamiliar theatre practice, the play/piece of theatre and anything related to the research question.

How are the skills for this assessment task developed through the three components of the IB theatre course?

Theatre in the making

This component develops the student's dramaturgical and research skills so that they understand the function and role of the dramaturg and researcher in the process of creating theatre. By building their skills in a variety of production roles they understand the role of the various practitioners and the areas each one is responsible for in production. They become aware of the different creative processes, conventions and techniques relating to theatrical practices from around the world and/or from different historical periods. They develop practical knowledge and skills relevant to this task, which may include approaches to research, reading plays/pieces of theatre, critiquing sources.

Theatre in performance

The students understand what is involved in staging a production and what research may be useful. They see how a piece of theatre/play is realized and how dramaturgical research is a useful base from which the director/performer/designer might work, either by using it directly or by using it as a base to inform artistic decisions. They may take on the role of dramaturg for a particular production being presented.

Theatre in the world

The student develops research skills by researching and examining unfamiliar theatre traditions and practices from different cultures and/or times. This component makes them aware of how different practices and traditions work in action. It gives them an awareness of the broad range of theatre from around the world and through history, the commonalities and the differences and the ability to analyse them. They

develop an appreciation of theatre and its political, social, aesthetic and intellectual context and the way in which it contributes to a variety of different communities. It develops their curiosity for the unfamiliar. They learn to research appropriately, relevantly and with focus, selecting what is useful and understanding how to use the different sources relevantly. The teacher should also create opportunities for the students at HL to develop the skill of critiquing sources.

The teacher

Throughout the two years the teacher works on exercises exploring methods of research and the process of dramaturgy, as well as exploring different theatre practices through both academic and practical research. Students should examine a number of different plays/theatre pieces and look at the practice that has informed them or from which they originate. The nature of the approach is such that this examination assessment method, which carries 25% of the final mark, is an organic extension of classwork during the course. The knowledge and skills necessary for success in this component need to be developed through regular practice and a routine of doing, reflecting, recording and revising. All students should have access to relevant literature and research materials and should have been encouraged to make connections between research and the practical work. HL students should also work on developing skills needed to critique sources.

It is useful for the teacher to hand out a list of deadlines for the various drafts required, allowing for the work to be submitted in time for it to be sent off to the relevant examiner by the required date. In this list of deadlines there should be a number of drafts requested for the teacher to see (at least two recommended) before the final submission. Time should be organized so that the teacher can meet with each student individually to advise them on their work and give appropriate feedback on the drafts.

The starting point

1. Choose an unfamiliar theatre practice

The student identifies a theatre practice that is unfamiliar to them. This may be:

- a theatrical **tradition** from a particular culture and/or time, for example, Kathakali
- a theatrical **style** originating from a particular time, movement, culture, practitioner, for example, Restoration comedy
- a theatrical **movement** originating from a particular time, culture, practitioner, for example, Butoh
- a theatrical **form** developed by a practitioner, theorist, playwright, for example, Brecht's Epic Theatre.

The student does some initial research to get a feel for this tradition.

2. Choose a play/piece of theatre appropriate to or chosen from the selected theatre practice

The student researches into plays/pieces of theatre that are either from or appropriate to the chosen theatre practice. The student selects an appropriate play that would be rich as a primary source on which to base the research into the unfamiliar practice.

3. Examine the play/piece of theatre

The student reads and examines the play/piece of theatre, keeping in mind the practice that is going to be researched. Regarding the practice, which aspects of the play/piece are most appropriate for further examination and exploration?

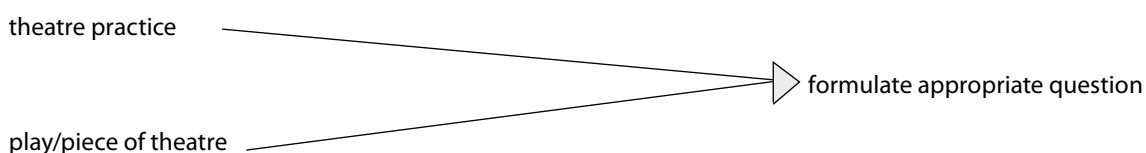
4. Formulate a research question

A question requires an answer or a solution. The point of a question is to narrow down and concentrate the research so that the student has a focus and can demonstrate relevance. At this point the student might also think about which member of the production team (designer, director, performer, choreographer, music director) might find the information most useful. The formulation of a research question also makes it

easier for the student as it helps them to narrow down the sources that they will consult and examine, and guides them in their search for research materials. It also helps them to check their investigation against the research question they have set, to ensure:

- that the question has been addressed or answered and possible solution/s found
- that everything included is relevant and useful.

The question should emerge from the relationship between the unfamiliar practice selected and the play/piece of theatre from that practice.



The teacher

It is recommended that at the end of the first year/beginning of the second year, the teacher works with the students, advising them on their choices and steering them towards theatre practices which are unfamiliar to them. These may be theatre practices and plays that have been touched on or mentioned but **not** covered during the course. The student should do some initial research into the unfamiliar theatre practice to see if there are enough materials to research so that a variety of sources are used and referred to. The teacher should steer the student in the direction of materials and could also have a variety of resources built up which are made available to the student throughout the course and which may provide possibilities for a research investigation. Once the student has found a relevant play/piece of theatre from or appropriate to the chosen practice and examined it, the teacher and student discuss what aspects may be most appropriate to research for that particular practice and that particular play. The student then formulates a question. The student submits the question to the teacher and the question is examined with attention paid to the phrasing and to whether or not it is a question that will focus the student's investigation and encourage them to create a body of work that will be of practicable help.

The process

Phase 1

The student:

1. begins by examining the question in relation to the play/piece of theatre and begins to look at what information is required to answer it
2. consults a variety of primary and secondary sources focusing on the aspects of the question that need answering
3. organizes research
4. writes the first draft.

The teacher

The teacher should check to see if the student has enough material and if the research is relevant to the question they have formulated. Students often need to be reminded of the different types of sources and encouraged to look beyond books and the Internet. The teacher should also make sure the student has found a useful and efficient way to record their research. They need to be reminded to keep a record of all resources and research they have consulted. The HL students need to be reminded that they also have to keep a record of the usefulness of each source they have consulted. In effect they are working simultaneously on gathering appropriate information and judging and recording the usefulness of each of the sources. The teacher should take in the first draft and read it but **not** mark it. Advice should be given to the student on how it can be improved and what further work needs to be done. It is useful for the teacher and student to put themselves in the shoes of a theatre practitioner working on the selected play and see how useful the research would be. The teacher should also ensure that the student is writing in the correct form and register.

Phase 2

The student:

1. redrafts
2. compiles all the materials—visual and/or textual—that will accompany the research investigation
3. checks the word count
4. checks all sources have been attributed and that a bibliography is attached (at HL with all sources critiqued)
5. submits the research investigation.

The teacher

The teacher should take in a draft of the completed investigation to look at before submission so that the student can be advised of anything that needs to be added. Once the final research investigation has been submitted the teacher cannot hand it back, but must send it to the relevant examiner through the coordinator, allowing sufficient time for it to be received before the deadline.

Checklist for the research investigation

- Does it meet the word count? (2,000–2,500 words plus visual documentation and/or textual references at HL; 1,500–1,750 words plus visual documentation and/or textual references at SL)
- Is the research question clearly formulated and stated?
- Has the research question been explored?
- Are accurate observations made, supported by appropriate research evidence?
- Has the visual and/or textual material been carefully selected and presented? Is it appropriate?
- Is the linguistic register of the written work formal in nature?
- Has the work been clearly set out as a research investigation essay?
- Is there a range of sources and have these been attributed properly?
- Is there a critique of sources accompanying the research investigation? **(HL only)**
- Is there an indication of how the sources are relevant to the dramaturgical research? **(HL only)**

Key ideas: assessment

The research investigation is an exercise designed to assess the student's:

- understanding of an unfamiliar theatre practice
- ability to understand what information is useful for the realization of a particular selected play/piece of theatre
- ability to write a formal research investigation
- ability to select and apply relevant research appropriate to the requirements of the research area
- ability of a student to formulate an appropriate research question and respond to it
- ability to cite, attribute, and at HL critique, primary and secondary sources
- ability to research with imagination and resourcefulness
- ability to select appropriate visual/textual information that is appropriate to the research investigation
- ability to present his/her ideas and answer the question fully in the designated number of words.

The teacher

The theatre course attracts students from a wide spectrum of learning styles. The many different types of activities that are explored in class, ranging from practical hands-on workshops to academic-style discussions, should ensure that all the students are engaged in the learning process of theatre. Assessment of learning is critical in determining progress. Throughout the coursework in each module explored, different assessment tools are employed, to offer access to different learners but also to give experience of the different external assessment methodologies.

Dramaturgy

There is a myth that a dramaturg is an elusive profession, difficult to define, and even more difficult to pin down. Is s/he a director, an assistant director, a stage manager, or a playwright? The answer is simple. S/he is, and should be, none of the above. A dramaturg's task is to offer another perspective in the theatre production process, and his/her role will depend on a project, or a stage in the project. It may include the skills of a researcher, an editor, an audience's eye in the rehearsal room, working through and with a director, but not necessarily agreeing with them all the time, and always observing, questioning and recording. A good dramaturg is invaluable to a director/designer/performer at any stage of the theatre production process.

The history of modern dramaturgy dates from 18th century Germany, when the Hamburg National Theatre hired a dramatist-critic, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, to write essays about the plays the company produced. Those who hired Lessing wanted him to advertise the plays so the audience would want to see them, but Lessing had a different idea altogether. He went beyond mere reviewing to identifying the flaws he saw in those productions, in the acting and in the choice of repertoire that he publicly denounced as trite bourgeois entertainment. His critical discourse was innovative and became the learning base for new generations of dramaturgs throughout Europe who followed his example. These dramaturgs have often been seen as resident scholars, the true keepers of artistic goals.

Dramaturgy can be seen on various levels—as a role, it refers to a profession, while as a function, it implies a set of activities that might include research into a play's historical, critical and theatrical contexts, the very understanding of the main elements of drama such as structure, characterization, language, and style, as well as the understanding of theatre making processes. As such, dramaturgy forms an integral part of producers', directors', designers' and actors' work. In a way, all of them undertake their own dramaturgical research. Even though a dramaturg might not be assigned to a particular project, dramaturgical functions still need to be performed.

In the context of the research investigation dramaturgy operates as a function, focusing on applied research into a theatre practice, a complementary play/piece of theatre and an aspect of production.

The skills

The skills identified in the Diploma Programme *Theatre guide* objectives:

- demonstrate a theoretical and practical knowledge of theatrical traditions from more than one culture
- demonstrate an understanding of production elements and theatre practices
- acquire appropriate research skills and apply them
- evaluate the relevance of selected research sources to personal practice.

These skills can be clearly distinguished by analysing the elements within each band descriptor.

Credit is awarded based on qualitative evidence of these skills within the appropriate sections of the research investigation.

HL/SL	Descriptor element: Key ideas	What it means
A. Research skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurate observations supported by research evidence use of a range of primary and secondary sources attribute sources properly 	The student provides accurate information that would be helpful to a practitioner working on a particular play/ piece of theatre from the unfamiliar theatre practice chosen. All information is supported by research evidence. Sources have been used, cited and attributed correctly.
B. Task relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the specific requirements of the research investigation are met an appropriate research question has been formulated and responded to with appropriate evidence 	Evidence of an understanding of the theatre practice that's been researched and the application of that research to a specific play/piece of theatre. The marriage of these two elements is partly dependent on the formulation of an appropriate research question that allows this to happen. The question should focus the research. The formulation of an appropriate question is key and that in itself shows an understanding of the theatre practice. The research needs to be helpful to the realization of the play/piece of theatre and all sources need to be cited.
C. Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> written in appropriate register and style carefully selected and presented visual/textual material word count has been met 	The research investigation is written as a formal essay with a bibliography and appropriate citing of sources. The accompanying material has been carefully selected and is appropriate and relevant. The student has neither exceeded the word count nor substantially gone below it.
HL only	Descriptor element: What it says	What it means
D. Critique of sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sources have been critiqued there is a clear demonstration of the relevance of these sources 	There is an accompanying bibliography which critiques all sources, describing their usefulness, relevance, what they cover and how useful they have been for the task.

Preparing the student for this task

It is obvious that the skills needed to produce the research investigation should be taught before the task is undertaken. The final essay should be the result of mature reflection upon the ideas and information collected during the research process. Knowledge of the work of theatre practitioners, already drawn from the rest of the course, will be invaluable. The content of the final essay itself and the processes of research cannot be based upon last-minute decisions. Students need to know what lies ahead from the very beginning. They need to recognize that the research investigation will be the culmination of much of what they have discovered during the course and their engagement with previously unfamiliar theatrical practices.

For students unfamiliar with the skills of independent research this area may appear rather daunting. The teacher, therefore, needs to create an environment that helps students through this process.

During the course the teacher needs to help the students to:

- develop sophisticated and high-level research skills
- know how to use the Internet safely and wisely
- be clear of the rules of research such as proper referencing and avoiding plagiarism.

The relationship between teacher and student is also often different during research work as the teacher will also need to be supervisor, advisor, guide, support, idea prompter and troubleshooter.

Strategies

The teacher will need to teach specific strategies to enable the students to take an independent approach to their research and to focus on the quality of both the research and the finished essay. The teacher is also a source of research—in specific areas of theatre, in knowing where sources may be found and in relating their own experience of research. Some of these strategies might include how to:

- look for what is there, rather than what they want to find out
- choose suitable areas of the course that they have covered for possible areas of extended study, not only for the research investigation but for other areas of the course
- keep a record of their sources
- organize their materials efficiently from the start
- refine a specific area to be studied
- read a live performance
- use and apply material to a practical context
- analyse material and support all points with evidence
- interview
- read different texts actively for different purposes
- formulate research questions
- take notes during an interview, lecture or from an academic text
- cite sources, create a bibliography.

Resources

Beyond text and image

The repeated use of the term “information” may give the student the idea that research is a predominantly text and image exercise, but we know from practice that traditions and practices in theatre are always about much more than words. Resources may also be places, people and live productions and encounters.

Box library

If possible, have easy access to some resources in the classroom in the form of a box library that contains books, articles, lists of useful web sites, lists of traditions, practices and styles. This may help to set a student’s project easily in motion and is also useful for mini-practice research exercises and investigations.

Text resources

Examples of research by previous students, abstracts of university theses, a small library of key textbooks, a range of magazines, posters with key learning approaches and phrases, glossaries of key terms, quotes by theorists, journals.

Image resources

Contrasting theatre posters, photographic stills, magazine covers, moving image resources, art galleries, newspapers, videos, CD-Roms, DVDs.

IT resources

Topic files containing copies of Internet printouts by students, lists of recommended web sites, images.

Oral resources

Interviews, people, discussions, audio tapes, music.

People

Practitioners, audience members, experts, professionals, members of the community.

Organizations

Embassies, cultural centres, theatres, research centres, training schools.

Resource centres

Art galleries, museums, costume warehouses, shops, theatres and theatre sites, archeological sites, public spaces and buildings.

General guidelines for writing the research investigation

Critiquing sources

In any research, the student reads extensively to form a background knowledge base of the area they are researching into, but not all of that material will be included in the writing. After an initial extensive search, the following stage in the research process is careful editing, weeding out unnecessary material, and deciding upon those sources that can help develop and focus their argument. This is also why the bibliography that follows the text must reflect not only the extent and depth of their research, but also their ability to select and edit sources that are relevant for one's chosen topic. In the research investigation, HL students are asked to critique the sources that they have used in their essay. This is extremely important, as it enables them to develop a researcher's instinct for the type of sources that can, or cannot, be useful for their work. Does this source shed any light on the research question? Is it relevant to the question? Does it provide any answers? How can it be used in the best possible way? A way of organizing this critique of sources at the end of the research investigation is to begin by identifying the source, briefly summarizing the contents, describing how it was used and why it was useful and finally making a value judgment as to its usefulness. The student can also comment on the credentials of the author.

Illustrations

Presentations and overall neatness are important, and it is essential that illustrative material, if included, is well set out and used effectively. Graphs, diagrams, tables and maps are effective only if they are well labelled and can be interpreted with ease. All such material must be directly related to the text and acknowledged where appropriate. The use of photographs and postcards is acceptable only if they are captioned and/or annotated and are used to illustrate a specific point made in the research investigation.

References/bibliography

The direct or indirect use of the words of another person, written, oral or electronic, must be acknowledged appropriately, as must visual material in the essay, derived from another source. Failure to comply with this requirement will be viewed as plagiarism, and will therefore be treated as a case of malpractice.

The bibliography or list of references should include only those works, such as books and journals, that have been consulted by the student. An accepted form of quoting and documenting sources should be applied consistently. The major documentation systems are divided into two groups, parenthetical in-text

systems and numbered systems; either may be used, provided this is done consistently and clearly. It is good practice to require students to study a major style guide appropriate to the subject of the research investigation so that they can present their list of references professionally.

Each work consulted, regardless of whether or not it has already been cited as a reference, must be listed in the bibliography. The bibliography should specify: author(s), title, date and place of publication, and the name of the publisher, following consistently one standard method of listing sources. Possible examples are:

Peterson, A.D.C. *Schools Across Frontiers: the Story of the International Baccalaureate and the United World College*. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1987.

Peterson, A.D.C. (1987), **Schools Across Frontiers: the Story of the International Baccalaureate and the United World College**, Open Court: La Salle, Illinois.

Bruckman, Amy S. "MOOSE Crossing Proposal." mediamoo@media.mit.edu (20 Dec. 1994)

Note that for personal e-mail listings, the address should be omitted.

The use of other media and materials

Apart from graphic material, materials in other media may be submitted only as supporting appendices and should not detract from the written extended essay.

A step-by-step approach to research for students

1. The very first step is **choosing** an appropriate topic. This is often harder than it appears. Choose either something you are already interested in and know a little about or an area that you believe you would enjoy given your interests.
2. **Discuss** the choice with your teacher.
3. Once a topic has been broadly decided upon, research can begin. Begin by **browsing** and trying to find out if there is enough material and sources for this to be an area of research. Remember at this stage you are still free to change direction if you find the topic too problematic or you cannot find adequate sources for research. Browsing will also give you a **general** sense of the topic.
4. Remember to keep a **record** of everything that you have looked at and researched, no matter how insignificant these sources may seem to you. Everything you looked at should be recorded.
5. **Brainstorm** this idea and any areas connected to it that you may have discovered through your research.
6. **Define** the area of study for research
 - what is the bare outline of the area that will become the core of the project?
 - break down the topic into sub-topics or key concepts
 - develop a broad overview of the topic by browsing sources
 - become fully conversant with the necessary terminology.
7. Formulate a **research question** that will help to focus your search. Then break this question into smaller questions to help guide you with what you need to include.
8. Develop a **research strategy**
 - what is the scope of the project?
 - how manageable is the project?
 - how much information will be needed?
9. Locate and retrieve the **information**
 - determine what type of information is needed—books, articles, current or retrospective information
 - identify the likely and unlikely sources or places to find information
 - ensure that you have all the information you need including the full citation of any references that are collected. When photocopying, always write down the title and author of the book.
10. **Evaluate** the information
 - establish authority—who is the author and what is their credibility?
 - determine the scope of the work—what is its purpose? Consider whether this work is an academic text, a review or promotional material.
 - evaluate accuracy and relevance
 - recognize bias and/or point of view.

11. Determine whether there is **enough** information
 - look at the length and focus of your project, whether you have any unanswered questions.
12. **Internet research**—web pages require the same, and sometimes more, caution as any other source. Anyone with access to a server can put material on the web. Do not assume statements are true. As a critical user you should consider:
 - who is responsible for the site? What are the credentials of the author of the site?
 - its rationale/purpose
 - whether the information is recent or part of an archive
 - whether the site is permanent or part of a permanent organization.
13. Create an **outline** for your investigation
 - introduction—which will define the area of study and the scope of your investigation
 - body—a detailed breakdown of the ideas, your findings and the answer/s to the question you have formulated, backed up by information and evidence from your research with every source of information cited
 - conclusion—summing up the main findings and offering possibilities for further research and development.
14. Write the first draft.
15. Redraft as many times as is necessary to produce a coherent and clear investigation.
16. Work on your bibliography and any supplementary materials.
17. Now check:
 - is the research question clearly formulated and stated?
 - has the research question been explored?
 - are accurate observations made and supported by appropriate research evidence?
 - has the visual and/or textual material been carefully selected and presented? Is it appropriate?
 - is the linguistic register of the written work formal in nature?
 - has the work been clearly set out as a research investigation essay?
 - is there a range of sources and have these been attributed properly?