3.12 Elizabethan Leisure and the Growth of Theatre: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 Name one leading Elizabethan playwright, famous for writing many plays performed in London theatres.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Give the term used for groups of professional actors who performed seasonally at theatres and also toured the country.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

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3 State two physical features commonly found in purpose-built Elizabethan playhouses.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Explain why professional theatre and playhouses grew in Elizabethan England.

You may use the following in your answer:
- the building of purpose-built playhouses such as The Theatre and the Globe
- the increasing urban population and demand for entertainment in London

You must also use information of your own.

(Total for Question 4 is 12 marks)

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5 'Public entertainment, such as theatre and bear-baiting, did more to unite Elizabethan society than to divide it.' How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:
- the shared experience of spectacle at playhouses and blood sports
- the moral criticism and occasional restrictions from Puritans and civic authorities

You must also use information of your own.

(Total for Question 5 is 16 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.12 Elizabethan Leisure and the Growth of Theatre: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

William Shakespeare **B1**

Answer: William Shakespeare

Question 2

playing companies **B1**

Answer: Playing companies

Question 3

identifies a feature, e.g. an open yard where 'groundlings' stood **B1**

identifies a second feature, e.g. covered galleries with seating for wealthier spectators **B1**

Answer: An open yard where groundlings stood, and covered galleries with seating for wealthier spectators.

Question 4

Level 1 Identifies one or two simple reasons for the growth of theatre, with little or no development or supporting detail. **1-3**

Level 2 Identifies and begins to explain some reasons, supported by accurate detail. **4-6**

Level 3 Explains several reasons for the growth of professional theatre, with appropriate supporting detail and some analysis of connections between reasons. **7-9**

Level 4 Gives a well-developed explanation of the growth of theatre, analysing the interaction of factors and supporting the argument throughout with precise and accurate detail. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- Purpose-built playhouses provided a reliable, permanent venue with stages, seating and facilities, making theatre a regular commercial enterprise rather than occasional entertainment in inns or courts.
- An increasing urban population, especially in London, created a large audience with leisure time and money to spend on entertainment, allowing companies to earn regular income from ticket sales.
- The growth of professional playing companies meant a more consistent supply of actors and repertory, and the development of paid playwrights such as Shakespeare and Marlowe produced new material to attract audiences.
- Competition between companies and playhouses, plus the patronage system where noble patrons offered status and protection, encouraged companies to invest in better productions and to tour, expanding the market.
- Improvements in transport and communication, and the presence of fairs and markets, made it easier for companies to tour the provinces and for news of popular plays to spread back to London audiences.
- While moral critics such as some Puritan preachers opposed public entertainments, their objections were not strong enough to prevent playhouses from growing commercially in the late sixteenth century, though such opposition did sometimes shape regulations and where theatres were sited.

Question 5

Level 1 Shows limited knowledge of Elizabethan public entertainment and offers only a simple, unsupported opinion on the statement. **1-4**

Level 2 Shows some relevant knowledge and identifies factors on both sides, but the argument is only partially developed. **5-8**

Level 3 Shows good knowledge and offers a balanced evaluation, explaining reasons for unity and division and reaching a supported judgement. **9-12**

Level 4 Shows precise, well-selected knowledge and offers a thorough, analytical evaluation, weighing evidence for unity and division and reaching a sustained, well-supported judgement. **13-16**

Indicative content:

- Arguments for 'unite': public entertainments brought together people of different social backgrounds in a shared space, for example groundlings standing in the yard alongside wealthier gallery patrons, creating shared cultural references and gossip.
- Arguments for 'unite': popular pastimes such as feast-day celebrations and communal games reinforced local identity and social bonds, while touring companies brought performances to towns and countryside, spreading common stories and actors' reputations.
- Arguments for 'divide': entertainments could reinforce social divisions, since galleries and private boxes offered different experiences to wealthier spectators while groundlings faced a rougher environment and lower-cost access.
- Arguments for 'divide': moral critics, especially some Puritans and magistrates, condemned theatres and blood sports as immoral or disruptive, leading to conflicts over licensing, location of playhouses outside the city, and occasional attempts to restrict performances.
- Contextual points: the economic dimension, where commercialisation of entertainment benefited theatre owners and traders but sometimes caused local tensions over noise, crowding and licensing; and political uses, where authorities sometimes used festivals for propaganda while opponents saw them as occasions for disorder.
- Judgement: a strong answer will weigh both sides, arguing that while entertainments created shared cultural practices and popular spectacles that could unite many people, they also exposed and sometimes deepened social, moral and regulatory divisions, so the truth is that entertainments both united and divided Elizabethan society in different ways and contexts.

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