



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2019

English - Higher Level - Paper 1

Total Marks: 200

Wednesday, 5 June – Morning, 9.30 – 12.20

- This paper is divided into two sections, Section I COMPREHENDING and Section II COMPOSING.
- The paper contains **three** texts on the general theme of **FEEDING OUR IMAGINATIONS**.
- Candidates should familiarise themselves with each of the texts before beginning their answers.
- Both sections of this paper (COMPREHENDING and COMPOSING) must be attempted.
- Each section carries 100 marks.

SECTION I – COMPREHENDING

- Two Questions, A and B, follow each text.
- Candidates must answer a Question A on one text and a Question B on a different text. Candidates must answer only one Question A and only one Question B.

N.B. Candidates may NOT answer a Question A and a Question B on the same text.

SECTION II – COMPOSING

- Candidates must write on **one** of the compositions 1 – 7.

TEXT 1 – WHAT IS ART FOR?

This edited piece is based on an article by Jeanette Winterson entitled, “What is Art for?” The writer uses the term “art” to include all artistic forms, e.g. painting, writing, music, etc. The original article appears on the writer’s website, jeanettewinterson.com.

An American lady travelling to Paris in 1913 asked the poet Ezra Pound what he thought art was for. Pound replied, ‘Ask me what a rose bush is for.’ I know there is a sneaking feeling, even among art lovers, that art is a luxury. The endless rows over funding centre on an insecurity about the role of art in society. Nobody doubts that hospitals and schools must be paid for by all of us. Mention art, and the answer seems to be that it should rely on the market place; let those who want it pay for it. Art is being treated as a commodity. Dead artists – whether authors or painters or musicians – belong to the Heritage industry. Live artists belong to the PR industry.

Art is a different value system, it leaves us with footprints of beauty. We sense there is more to life than the material world can provide, and art is a clue, an intimation, at its best, a transformation. We can experience it. The experience suggests that the monolith of corporate culture is only a partial reality. This is important information, and art provides it. When you take time to read a book or listen to music or look at a picture, the first thing you are doing is turning your attention inwards. The outside world, with all of its demands, has to wait. As you withdraw your energy from the world, the artwork begins to reach you with energies of its own – very different energies to the getting and spending going on all around. When I read Heaney or Hughes, I’m not just reading a poet’s take on the world, I am entering into a different world – a world built from the beginning on other principles.

‘It’s hard to get the news from poems, but men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there’ (William Carlos Williams).



Art’s counter-culture, however diverse, holds in plain sight what the material world denies – love and imagination. Art is made out of both – a passionate reckless love of the work in its own right, as though nothing else exists, and an imaginative force that creates something new out of disparate material

Art’s experiments are not funded by huge state programmes, venture capital, or junk bonds, they are done when someone picks up a pen or a brush, or sits down at the piano, or takes a piece of clay and changes it forever. A money culture wants the figures, the bottom line, the sales, the response, it wants a return on its investment, it wants more money. Art can offer no obvious return. There is only the experience. Art can’t change your life. It can waken us to truths about ourselves and our lives, but the responsibility to act on what we find, is ours.

I know of a man who volunteered as an ambulance driver in World War II. While other men had pictures of their sweethearts in their breast pockets, he carried a photo of a Queen Anne chair. In his despair at where human folly had brought him, he needed to remember the glory of the human spirit.

He believed that art affirms and sustains life at its highest level. It is the reason why art is timeless. It is the reason why art does not date. We don't go to Shakespeare to find out about life in Elizabethan England; we go to Shakespeare to find out about ourselves now.

Mass production is about cloned objects. Art is about individual vision. It has a way of forcing us to concentrate on the thing in itself as it really is. Capitalism doesn't want you to concentrate – you might notice that much is amiss. A blurred, out of focus consuming is what suits the market place best. Somebody has to buy all that overproduction of useless dead objects. In contrast, all art is live theatre. The dialogue continues between object, maker, owner, viewer, listener, reader.

Art is proof of a living spirit that defies the

orthodoxy of materialism. Yes, art becomes a collector's item, or a rich man's trophy. Yes, art is traded for large sums of money, but this is not art's purpose, nor its nature. If money ceased to exist, art would continue. Why did the Taliban bullet-down the Buddhas? Why did Hitler burn books? Why was Ulysses banned? Why did Franco refuse to show Picasso's masterpiece, Guernica?

Art is potent, confrontational, difficult. It challenges what we are. We can muzzle the power of art in all sorts of ways – destroying it or banning it is too obvious. Don't be fooled by the way capitalism co-opts art. It pretends to do it for money, but underneath money is terror. Terror that there might be a different way to live. There is a different way, it's a celebration of the human spirit. Art reminds us of all the possibilities we are persuaded to forget.

N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

- (i) Based on your reading of TEXT 1, explain three points Jeanette Winterson makes about the value and importance of the arts. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) In TEXT 1, Jeanette Winterson claims that, "We go to Shakespeare to find out about ourselves now." With reference to a Shakespearean play you have studied for your 2019 Leaving Certificate course, identify an image, moment or episode that revealed something to you about "ourselves now". Explain the insight(s) you gained about "ourselves now" from engaging with this image, moment or episode. (15)
- (iii) Identify four elements of argumentative or persuasive language, evident in TEXT 1, and explain why their use might encourage readers to agree with the views expressed by the writer in the article. You may include any combination of elements of the language of argument or the language of persuasion in your response. Support your answer with reference to the text. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

In TEXT 1, Jeanette Winterson extols the virtues of the arts, arguing that artistic activities are beneficial both for individuals and for society in general. She also gives her views on the relationship between art and money. Write **an opinion piece**, suitable for publication in a broadsheet newspaper, in which you extol the varied virtues of sport, put forward a reasoned argument to persuade readers that sport benefits both individuals and society, and give your views on the appropriate relationship between sport and money.

TEXT 2 – A PHOTOGRAPHER’S PERSPECTIVE

This text is composed of two elements. The first consists of a series of edited extracts from David Park’s novel, *Travelling in a Strange Land*. We meet the character Tom, a photographer, who is in a reflective mood as he undertakes a journey. The second is a photograph, taken from the Apollo 17 spacecraft in 1972, that provided us with a startling new perspective on our world.

The wake of the boat tumbles and froths in a V-shape almost like we’re churning snow, but the sea itself as it stretches out beyond seems almost stalled in a grey torpor. There isn’t a feature that would make a photograph even if I had my camera; however there are lots of people taking selfies, either on their own or as a couple. The camera phone and the unrelenting progress of technology and everything coming after it are what will kill off the jobs of people like me. Soon all social photography will be self-done in this way. It sometimes makes me feel like the last of a dying breed. Last of the Mohicans, taking pictures with an actual camera, and it makes it worse to know that however good the technology employed, these pictures of self are in my mind mostly worthless, devoid of whatever it is that makes a proper photograph – one that springs from thoughtful creative decisions and a particular way of seeing. So in my eyes they’re not much more than an indulgence, expressions of human vanity and devoid of the dignity that the right photograph can bestow. But if [my daughter] Lilly’s right, maybe I really am the “fun sponge” she’s called me and I’m railing against something that’s just a bit of harmless pleasure.

I had an exhibition once in our local library but it wasn’t a great success if I think only in commercial terms. Hardly anything sold and then only to people who knew me and wanted to be supportive. Maybe it’s just an excuse for failure but I think where I live most people want pictures of sunsets over Dunseverick Castle, the snowy peaks of the Mourne or right now the Dark Hedges, preferably also with sunset, rainbow or some similar piece of extra-visual drama. So what do I want to take photographs of? It’s hard to put it into words but I suppose the moment that lies just below

the surface of things, or a glimpse of the familiar from a different angle. Maybe I don’t even know.

As a languid drift of snow starts to fall I am mindful of the right image’s power to impact on our consciousness. So I think of the little boy lying in the surf on a Turkish beach, drowned trying to reach a Greek island in a plastic dinghy. And even though I forget his name I do remember the feeling that it produced and I know that somehow for a time, however short it proved, it changed things. Changed more than any reporter’s words or politician could do because in a photograph there’s nothing between you and the subject, nothing to sanitise or mitigate – it’s just you there in that moment as close as the camera places you and held still and silent.

I have come to understand the truth of what Ansel Adams said: that you don’t make a photograph just with a camera, but that you bring to the act all the pictures you have seen, the books you have read, the music you have heard, the people you have loved.

People don’t understand photographs. They think they always freeze the moment in time but the truth is that they set the moment free from it and what the camera has caught steps forever outside its onward roll. So it will always exist, always live just as it was in that precise second, with the same smile or scowl, the same colour of sky, the same fall of light and shade, the very same thought or pulse of the heart. It’s the most perfect thing that sets free the eternal in the sudden stillness of the camera’s click. I find a comfort in that and I’ll take comfort anywhere it offers itself.



N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

- (i) Based on your reading of page 4 of TEXT 2, explain three points the character, Tom, makes about the value and power of “proper” photographs. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) Exploring texts can provide opportunities for “a glimpse of the familiar from a different angle”. With reference to any text on your Leaving Certificate English course*, identify an image, moment or episode that enabled you to see something familiar from a different perspective. Explain the insight(s) you gained into something familiar from engaging with this image, moment or episode.
*Texts specified for study for Leaving Certificate English in 2019, including poetry, single texts and texts (including films) prescribed for comparative study. (15)
- (iii) Identify and discuss four elements of the language of narration, evident on page 4 of TEXT 2, that contribute to making Tom a real and convincing character. Support your answer with reference to the text. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

Look at the photograph on page 5 and imagine you are fleeing Earth on the last spaceship evacuating the planet after human actions have made our world uninhabitable. Write **a reflective journal entry**, which you hope will be preserved for future generations. In it you should criticise humanity’s folly which resulted in the loss of our earthly home, share your personal memories of the planet, and celebrate some of Earth’s former glories.

TEXT 3 – LIBRARIES: CATHEDRALS OF OUR SOULS

The following text is adapted from Caitlin Moran's essay, *Libraries: Cathedrals of Our Souls*. The essay appears in a collection of her work entitled, *Moranthology*, and is also anthologised in *The Library Book*, a series of essays by well-known writers in support of public libraries.

Home educated and, by seventeen, writing for a living, the only alma mater I ever had is Warstones Library, Pinfold Grove, Wolverhampton.

A low, red-brick box on grass that verged on wasteland, I would be there twice a day – rocking up with all the ardour of a clubber turning up to a rave. I read every book in there – not *really*, of course, but as good as: when I'd read all the funny books, I moved on to the sexy ones, then the dreamy ones, the mad ones; the ones that described distant mountains, idiots, plagues, experiments. I sat at the big table and read all the papers: on a council estate in Wolverhampton, the broadsheets as incongruous and illuminating as an Eames lamp.

The shelves were supposed to be loaded with books – but they were of course, really doors: each book-lid opened as exciting as Alice in Wonderland putting her gold key in the lock. I spent days running in and out of other worlds like a time bandit, or a spy. I was as excited as I've ever been in my life, in that library; scoring new books the minute they came in: ordering books I'd heard of – then waiting, fevered, for them to arrive, like they were Word Christmas. I had to wait nearly a year for *Les Fleurs de Mal* by Baudelaire to come: I was still too young for it and abandoned it twenty pages in for Jilly Cooper. But *Fleurs de Mal*, man! In a building overlooked by a Kwiksave supermarket where the fags and alcohol were kept in a locked, metal cage, lest they be stolen! Simply knowing I could have it in my hand was a comfort, in this place so very far from anything extraordinary or exultant.

Everything I am is based on this ugly building on its lonely lawn which allowed a girl so poor



Warstones Library

she didn't even own a purse to come in twice a day and experience actual magic: travelling through time, making contact with the dead – Dorothy Parker, Stella Gibbons, Charlotte Brontë, Spike Milligan.

A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life-raft and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination. On a cold, rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen instead.

A human with a brain and a heart and a desire to be uplifted, rather than a customer with a credit card and a 'need' for 'stuff'. A mall – the shops – are places where your money makes the wealthy wealthier. But a library is where the wealthy's taxes pay for you to become a little more extraordinary, instead. A satisfying reversal. A balancing of the power.

Last month, after protest, an injunction was granted to postpone library closures in Somerset. In September, both Somerset and Gloucestershire councils will be the subject of a full judicial review over their closure plans. As the cuts kick in, protesters and lawyers are fighting for individual libraries like villagers pushing stranded whales back into the sea. A library is such a potent symbol of a town's

values: each one closed down might as well be 6,000 stickers plastered over every available surface, reading 'WE CHOOSE TO BECOME MORE STUPID AND DULL'.

What happens when the economy gets back to 'normal' again? Do we then – prosperous once more – go round and re-open all these centres, clinics and libraries, which have sat, dark and unused, for nearly half a decade? It's hard to see how – it costs millions of pounds to re-open deserted buildings, and cash-strapped councils will have looked at billions of square feet of prime real estate with a coldly realistic eye. Unless the government *has* developed an exit strategy for the cuts, and insisted councils not sell closed properties, by the time we get back to 'normal'

again, our Victorian and post-war and 1960s red-brick boxy libraries will be coffee shops, supermarkets and pubs. No new libraries will be built to replace them. These libraries will be lost forever.

And, in their place, we will have a thousand more public spaces where you are simply the money in your pocket, rather than the hunger in your heart. Kids – poor kids – will never know the fabulous, benign quirk of self-esteem of walking into 'their' library and thinking, 'I have read 60 per cent of the books in here. I am awesome'. Libraries that stayed open during the World War II Blitz will be closed by budgets. A trillion small doors closing.

N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

- (i) Based on your reading of TEXT 3, explain three points Caitlin Moran makes about the social benefits of public libraries. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) Exploring texts can open metaphorical doors into other worlds. With reference to any text on your Leaving Certificate English course*, identify an image, moment or episode that opened a door into another world for you. Explain the insight(s) you gained about the value of imaginatively entering another world by engaging with this image, moment or episode.
- *Texts specified for study for Leaving Certificate English in 2019, including poetry, single texts and texts (including films) prescribed for comparative study. (15)
- (iii) Identify and discuss four elements of the writer's style, evident in TEXT 3, that contribute to making this a good example of a personal essay. Support your answer with reference to the text. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

The expansion of online shopping has had a devastating effect on all types of real shops and department stores. Write **an introduction to a collection of essays** in support of real shops, in which you celebrate the joys of 'real' shopping, explain what the presence of shops and shoppers brings to communities, and discuss some of the implications for us all of the ever-increasing popularity of online shopping.

SECTION II

COMPOSING

(100 marks)

Write a composition on **any one** of the assignments that appear in **bold print** below.

Each composition carries 100 marks.

The composition assignments are intended to reflect language study in the areas of information, argument, persuasion, narration, and the aesthetic use of language.

1. In TEXT 2, Tom expresses the view that people favour photographs that feature sunsets.

Write a descriptive essay which captures a sense of the difference between dawn and dusk and celebrates both the beginning and the end of the day.

2. In TEXT 3, Caitlin Moran describes herself like a time bandit or spy in her local library.

Write a short story, suitable for publication in a collection of spy stories, in which a librarian, a photograph and a chair are central to the narrative.

3. The theme of TEXTS 1, 2 and 3 is “Feeding Our Imaginations”.

Write a personal essay in which you reflect on what feeds your imagination.

4. TEXT 2 is based on a series of edited extracts from the novel, *Travelling in a Strange Land*.

Write a short story which captures the evolving relationship between two characters – one young and one old – as they travel in a strange land.

5. In TEXT 1, we are told that “Art is a different value system”.

Write a discursive essay about some of the items you think symbolise the values held by people of your age in Ireland in 2019.

6. In TEXT 3, Caitlin Moran writes about a place that helped to shape and define her.

Write a personal essay in which you reflect on some of the places that have helped to shape and define you, and the significance of these places in your life.

7. Tom, the character in David Park’s novel featured in TEXT 2, is critical of selfies.

Write a speech, to be broadcast online, for or against the motion: *We are a self-obsessed generation*.

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Acknowledgements

Images and texts that appear on this examination paper were sourced as follows:

Text 1: <http://www.jeanettewinterson.com/journalism/what-is-art-for/>

Image: banksyeditions.com/project/barcode-leopard-signed

Text 2: *Travelling in a Strange Land*, David Park, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018

Image: <https://www.nasa.gov/image-feature/apollo-17-blue-marble>

Text 3: *Moranthology*, Caitlin Moran, Ebury Press, 2013

Image: Photo Richard Law <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1949627>

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Leaving Certificate – Higher Level

English

Wednesday 5 June

Morning 9.30 – 12.20