



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2023

English - Higher Level - Paper 2

Total Marks: 200

Thursday, 8 June – Afternoon, 2.00 – 5.20

Candidates must attempt the following:

- **ONE** question from SECTION I – The Single Text
- **ONE** question from SECTION II – The Comparative Study
- **ONE** question on the Unseen Poem from SECTION III – Poetry
- **ONE** question on Prescribed Poetry from SECTION III – Poetry

N.B. Candidates must answer on Shakespearean Drama.

They may do so in SECTION I, The Single Text (Macbeth) or in Section II, The Comparative Study (Macbeth, Othello).

INDEX OF SINGLE TEXTS

<i>All the Light We Cannot See</i>	Page - 2
<i>A Doll's House</i>	Page - 2
<i>Macbeth</i>	Page - 2
<i>Frankenstein</i>	Page - 3
<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>	Page - 3

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SECTION I

THE SINGLE TEXT

(60 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** question from this section (A – E).

A ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE – Anthony Doerr

- (i) In your opinion, to what extent do innate personal qualities or environmental factors, or both, shape the behaviour of at **least two** characters in *All the Light We Cannot See*?

Develop your discussion with reference to Doerr's novel.

OR

- (ii) "We learn many interesting lessons from Doerr's exploration of resilience and resistance in *All the Light We Cannot See*."

Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to Doerr's novel.

B A DOLL'S HOUSE – Henrik Ibsen

- (i) "Torvald Helmer is a complex and tragic character who evokes both disdain and sympathy in the audience."

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Develop your discussion with reference to Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House*.

OR

- (ii) To what extent does Ibsen's use of dialogue and symbolism in *A Doll's House* increase or diminish the impact of this play on you?

Develop your discussion with reference to Ibsen's play.

C MACBETH – William Shakespeare

- (i) "Macbeth's unstable and tragic identity is shaped by a variety of ambiguities and complexities in his character."

Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth*.

OR

- (ii) "Shakespeare makes effective use of Lady Macbeth and the Witches to heighten the dramatic impact of his play *Macbeth* in a variety of ways."

Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth*.

D FRANKENSTEIN – Mary Shelley

- (i) In your opinion, to what extent do innate personal qualities or environmental factors, or both, shape the behaviour of at **least two** characters in *Frankenstein*?

Develop your discussion with reference to Shelley's novel.

OR

- (ii) "We learn many interesting lessons from Shelley's exploration of companionship and friendship in *Frankenstein*."

Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to Shelley's novel.

E THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY – Oscar Wilde

- (i) In your opinion, to what extent do innate personal qualities or environmental factors, or both, shape the behaviour of at **least two** characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*?

Develop your discussion with reference to Wilde's novel.

OR

- (ii) To what extent does Wilde's use of social satire and gothic darkness in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* increase or diminish the impact of this novel on you?

Develop your discussion with reference to Wilde's novel.

SECTION II THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** question from **either A** – General Vision and Viewpoint **or B** – Literary Genre **or C** – Theme or Issue.

In your answer you may not use the text you have answered on in **Section I** – The Single Text.

All texts used in this section must be prescribed for comparative study for this year's examination. Candidates may refer to only one film in the course of their answers.

Please note:

- Questions in this section use the word **text** to refer to all the different kinds of texts available for study on this course.
- When used, the word **reader** includes viewers of films and theatre audiences.
- When used, the term **technique** is understood to include techniques employed by all writers and directors of films.
- When used, the word **author** is understood to include all writers and directors of films.
- When used, the word **character** is understood to refer to both real people and fictional characters in texts.

A GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT

1. (a) To what extent does the level of compassion and kindness, evident in **one** text on your comparative course, influence your sense of the general vision and viewpoint in that text? Develop your response with reference to your chosen text. (30)
- (b) Compare the extent to which the levels of compassion and kindness, evident in **two other** texts on your comparative course, influence your sense of the general vision and viewpoint in these texts. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

OR

2. Compare how the response of characters to personal or societal crises, in **at least two** texts on your comparative course, influence your sense of the general vision and viewpoint. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. In your response you may discuss personal or societal crises, or both. (70)

B LITERARY GENRE

1. (a) In the case of **one** text on your comparative course, discuss how the author employs a variety of techniques to heighten or lessen your empathy with a central character in that text. Develop your response with reference to your chosen text. (30)
- (b) In the case of **two other** texts you studied on your comparative course, compare how each of the authors employ a variety of techniques to heighten or lessen your empathy with a central character in these texts. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts.
You may refer to the same or different techniques in relation to each of your chosen texts. You may refer to the same or different techniques to those you referred to in 1. (a) above. (40)

OR

2. Compare how the authors, in **at least two** texts on your comparative course, use a variety of techniques skilfully to produce a riveting climax in each of these texts. You may refer to the same or different techniques in relation to each text. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (70)

C THEME OR ISSUE

1. (a) In the case of **one** text on your comparative course, discuss how contradictory aspects of human nature emerge from a study of a particular theme or issue. Develop your response with reference to your chosen text. (30)
- (b) Compare the extent to which contradictory aspects of human nature emerge from a study of the same theme or issue discussed in 1. (a) above, in **two other** texts on your comparative course. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

OR

2. Compare how comprehensively similar or different ethical (moral) questions are explored in the treatment of the same theme or issue, in **at least two** texts on your comparative course. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (70)

SECTION III

POETRY

(70 marks)

Candidates must answer **A** – Unseen Poem **and** **B** – Prescribed Poetry.

A UNSEEN POEM (20 marks)

Read the following poem by Victoria Kennefick and answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2 which follow.

Guest Room

I change the duvet cover like she showed me,
inside-out, corner-to-corner; lift it over
my head, seams must be flush.
I fold a pyramid of towels jewelled
with tiny soaps, body lotions borrowed
from hotels, the red hot-water-bottle
I'll fill later – her rubber husband.
I *Shake n' Vac* the carpet forest fresh; suck
spiders' webs from each corner, grey
and fuzzy, thick as pelts.

My mother's perfume sniffs out
that I did not iron the sheets.
Her nightdress pressed into a perfect square,
a village of potions on the bedside locker.
My heart sags, an empty hammock
yawning for the cradle of her arms,
the animal comfort of her wolf-fur
coat. I hear her pottering in my kitchen,
tidying. I turn out the light; night
cracks its knuckles.

Victoria Kennefick

1. (a) What impression do you form of the daughter in this poem? (10)
- (b) Did the poet's use of language in the above poem add to its impact on you?
Develop two points with reference to the poem in your response. (10)

OR

2. "*Guest Room* is a fascinating exploration of the complex relationship between mother and daughter." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Develop your response with reference to both the subject matter and style of the poem. (20)

B PRESCRIBED POETRY (50 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** of the following questions (**1 – 5**).

1. Derek Mahon

“Mahon’s evocative imagery conveys thematic concerns that are haunted by suggestions of darkness and anxiety.”

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the above statement, developing your response with reference to the poems by Derek Mahon on your Leaving Certificate English course.

2. Patrick Kavanagh

How successfully, in your opinion, does Kavanagh employ both a lyrical style and a celebratory tone to elevate the mundane realism of life in his work?

Develop your response with reference to the poetry by Patrick Kavanagh on your Leaving Certificate English course.

3. Paula Meehan

“Meehan employs vibrant and forceful language skilfully to challenge the often-oppressive forces identified in her poetry.”

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the above statement, developing your response with reference to the poems by Paula Meehan on your Leaving Certificate English course.

4. John Donne

“Donne makes effective use of inventive and paradoxical language to explore the human condition in his poetry.”

Discuss this statement with reference to the poetry by John Donne on your Leaving Certificate English course.

5. Adrienne Rich

“A powerful sense of sadness is conveyed in Rich’s poetry through her exposure of the flawed nature of our existence.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above statement? You should refer to both the language and the themes in the poetry by Adrienne Rich on your Leaving Certificate English course.

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English

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