



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2008

English – Higher Level – Paper I

Total Marks: 200

Wednesday, 4th 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 IDENTITY.
- 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.



SECTION 1

COMPREHENDING (100 marks)

TEXT 1

TEENAGE IDENTITY

This text is adapted from Jon Savage's book, "Teenage, the Creation of Youth, 1875 – 1945", in which he traces the history of the modern teenager.

Modern teenagers are the ultimate psychic match for the times: living in the now, pleasure-seeking, product-hungry, embodying the new global society.

But where did teenagers come from? Teenage culture is not a modern phenomenon. Teenagers did not simply appear fully formed when the term entered everyday use in the 1940s. In fact the whole business machinery of modern youth culture – hit songs, heavily marketed products, commercial venues for dancing – was up and running, particularly in America before the 20th century even began.

The phrase "juvenile delinquent" was coined in America around 1810 in response to teenage gangs who, with their own dress codes, rituals and street-corner poses, were filling newspapers and populating novels. *The Daily Graphic* described an 1890s London gang member as having "a peculiar muffler twisted around the neck, a cap set rakishly forward, well over the eyes, and trousers very tight at the knee and loose at the foot". In 1899 Clarence Rook's South London novel *The Hooligan Nights* featured a highly strung 17-year-old male protagonist with a darting gaze "like the eyes of a bird perpetually prepared for conflict". It is hard not to imagine Victorian adults keeping away from him on the top deck of a tram.

It was the American social psychologist G. Stanley Hall who coined the term "adolescence" in 1898 and defined it as "a period of ten years, from twelve or fourteen to twenty-one or twenty-five".



Characterising it as a period of "storm and stress", he advised adults to treat adolescents with sympathy, appreciation and respect before subjecting them to the relentless responsibilities of adult industrial life. The term "generation" up to this had been used to describe "all men living more or less in the same time" but now it began to refer to "the new generation", the idea of youth as a separate class, with its own institutions and values.

In Britain this took the form of small earnest groups such as the Woodcraft Folk who offered young people contact with nature and loyalty to the community. Their counterparts in Germany were the Wandervogel, adolescents who rebelled against authoritarian schooling before World War One by hiking, camping and singing folk songs. In France there were the Zazous who listened to jazz and swing, wore extravagant clothes and flirted like there was no tomorrow.

The decade of the Roaring Twenties introduced an international party scene of pleasure-seeking bright young people, similar to today's celebs, Paris Hilton and Lindsay Lohan, who saturate our own media. Bobby-soxers, the female swing fans with their sporty outfits and dance-ready shoes, screamed en masse for Frank Sinatra and laid the groundwork for gyrating rock'n'rollers, Elvis Presley fans and "Beatlemania".

In 1944 the magazine *Seventeen* was published, a fashion and pop magazine aimed at high-school girls. It was a landmark crystallization of teenage identity. Now teenagers were neither adolescents nor juvenile delinquents. They were a separate consumer grouping. "*Seventeen* is your magazine," proclaimed the first issue. "It is interested only in you and everything that concerns, excites, annoys, pleases or perplexes you."

1945 was Year Zero, the start of a new era after the atrocities of World War Two and the unleashing of the ultimate terror weapon, the atomic bomb. The best placed group to flourish in a post-war era were the young. "Their lives are lived principally in hope," Aristotle had once written of the young, while for Stanley Hall, adolescence was nothing less than "a new birth".

The future would be *Teenage*.



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

Questions A and B carry 50 marks each.

QUESTION A

- (i) "Teenage culture is not a modern phenomenon". Give **three** pieces of evidence that the writer, Jon Savage, uses to support this statement. (15)
- (ii) Comment on **three** features of the style of writing which contribute to making this an interesting and informative text. Refer to the text in support of your answer. (15)
- (iii) Do you think the writer of this text is sympathetic to the modern teenager? Give reasons for your view with reference to the text. (20)

QUESTION B

Write a letter to Jon Savage **responding to this extract** from his book **and giving your own views** on today's teenage culture. (50)



TEXT 2

FALSE IDENTITY?

This text is taken from Clare Kilroy’s novel, “Tenderwire”, narrated in the voice of Eva Tyne, an Irish violinist living and working in New York. The story involves Alexander who has offered Eva the opportunity to buy a rare violin, a Stradivarius, at a fraction of its market value. However, this violin comes without documents of identity or rightful ownership.



Nobody believed the real story of how I found the Magdalena (all old violins have names and Magdalena is this one’s name). Her origins are suspicious at best. I got her from a Russian. At least I thought he was Russian. He was a giant of a man and blond as a child. His name, he told me, was Alexander. I encountered him in a bar done up like a KGB office, or a New York bar owner’s impression of one: red lights, black walls, yellow scythes. I couldn’t say at what point Alexander started telling me about violins, about a very special one, about a Stradivarius.

That name was all it took and I was in the passenger seat of a battered car driving at speed over the East River to Alexander’s apartment, a few blocks away. Here he produced the violin, holding it out like a cushion on which a crown is placed. “It is the real thing, I promise you,” he said. By agreeing there and then to pay him 600,000 dollars, I confirmed that this violin was no ordinary instrument. As a musician you instinctively sense when something is special and I heard something special when I put bow to string and began to play. I heard something that unveiled an Aladdin’s cave of possibilities.

This is not what Zach, manager of the orchestra I played in, thought, when I related the encounter to him: “The more I hear, the worse it gets,” he said. “It’s either fake, or worse – it’s the real thing and the Russian doesn’t have a rightful claim on it; it’ll be seized within days of your first performance. Have you considered what that will do to your career? Being linked with a stolen violin? You might be arrested? You’ll be deported from the States at least.” The absoluteness of his voice, the surety of his manner: everything Zach said was right. Logical, reasonable and right! And yet I couldn’t allow myself to agree with him.

When Zach left, I organised the money that I had managed to get together. Everything my father had left me and more for a violin! The cash formed an unwieldy bulk. How was I to transport it to Tompkins Square Park where I had arranged to meet Alexander? What was to stop him from grabbing it and making off? I swept the money into one large pile and made a big pyramid of it, a drift of autumn leaves, then shoved it into a plastic bag. Now it had no separate identity. It was just counters in a game. A game of high risk!

Saturday night’s blizzard had deposited an icing of snow. New York has a way of seeming brand-new sometimes. I put on my runners in case I had to run and stepped out onto the street. The faces around me looked fresh in the bracing whiteness. I tried not to look in their eyes lest they detect the alarm in mine. It was natural to feel jittery as the pressure of walking around with such a large sum was breathtaking. I took out my inhaler and wheezed piteously. There was a faint warmth in the January sun that shone on my face.



I wiped snow off a bench and sat on it. My hands in my lap were like two dead puppies. Between them was the plastic bag. I was happy, that was the odd thing. It was like sitting in a darkened cinema waiting for a horror movie to begin.

Then I saw Alexander as he trudged doggedly through the snow. Shafts of sunlight spilled through the trees onto his ash-blond hair, causing it to flicker like fire. He cut through the

centre of the park, sat down beside me and let out a companionable sigh as he placed the violin case by my feet. “Open it,” he grinned, as if it were a carefully chosen gift.

I put the plastic bag on the ground and wedged it securely between my ankles, then lifted the lid of the case. It looked like the same violin. My hands unstrapped it, fine-tuned the strings and then hesitantly sounded the high notes. How ethereal they were on the icy air!

It was the first time since childhood that I’d played outdoors and in the frozen world of Tompkins Square Park, the sound was startlingly pure. I was almost laughing, almost crying in wonder at the loveliness of the sound. I listened to the laughter of the children in the playground, the cooing of the wood pigeons, the barking in the dog run.

If I was about to make the biggest mistake of my life, then so be it.

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

Questions A and B carry 50 marks each.

QUESTION A

- (i) “A game of high risk!” Give **three** pieces of evidence from the text which suggest that Eva was “about to make the biggest mistake” of her life. (15)
- (ii) What impression of the character Eva Tyne is created in this extract? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (iii) One reviewer of the novel *Tenderwire* described it as “a compelling and well-written thriller”. From your reading of the extract, do you agree with this view? Refer to the text in support of your answer. (20)

QUESTION B

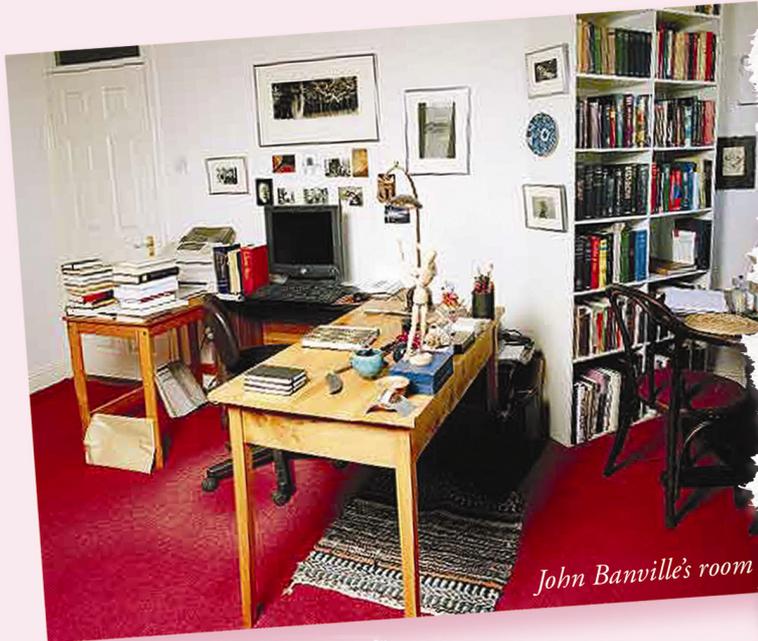
Write **two** diary entries: **one written by Alexander**, recalling his encounter with Eva in Tompkins Square Park and the **second by Zach**, giving his thoughts on hearing that Eva has purchased the violin. (50)



TEXT 3

CLUES TO IDENTITY

This text consists of a visual and written element adapted from a series in the Guardian newspaper entitled "Writers' rooms" where photographer Eamonn McCabe talks to writers about their places of work.



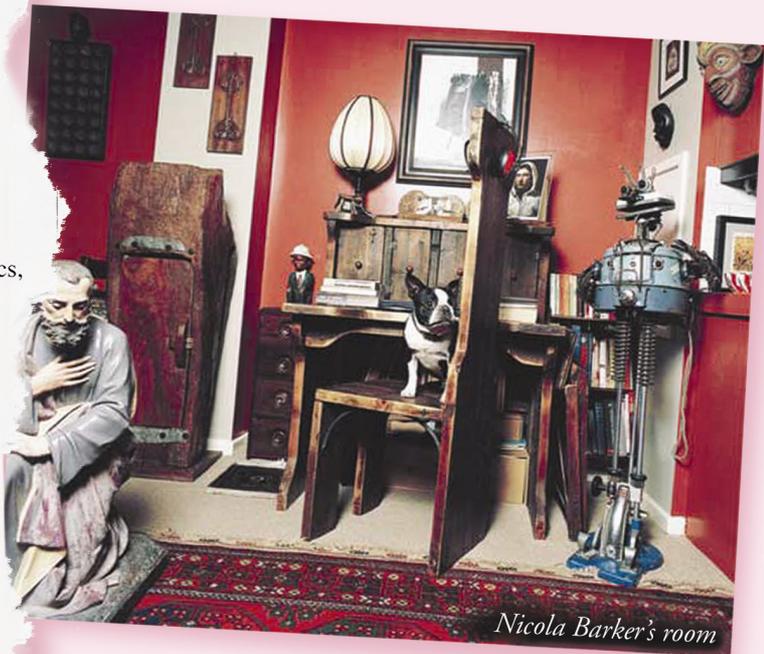
John Banville

In my time I have had to make do with some strange work-spaces. To write fiction I must have my own desk, my own wall with my own postcards pinned to it, and my own window not to look out of.

My present study – a word that always makes me uneasy, I am not sure why – is a small apartment in a huge, anonymous block in Dublin city centre. My window, the one I do not look out of, gives on to a courtyard where no one ever goes, and where the silence is day-long and almost pastoral. When I first began to come here to work, a dozen years ago, I used to shut my door on entering each morning and put the chain on. The place is clean, or cleanish, and, yes, well lighted. Here I am out of reach. Or so I like to imagine.

Nicola Barker

I've never had a study - never really needed one. I like to work in the middle of things, so my desk is in the far corner of my living-room, pressed up against the kitchen cabinets. I have a beautiful view of the river but I rarely turn to look at it. I'm very focused when I work. I wear a pair of industrial earmuffs, even though I'm partially deaf and don't really need them. I love the gushing silence they provide and the pressure of them against my head. My desk is my camp, my small launch, my treehouse. It's made from some old stairs and it has loads of little cupboards in front full of interesting stuff – letters and rosary beads, faulty discs, stickers and whatnot. As I work, my dog, Watson, insists on positioning himself under my chair which has a little arch cut into it just big enough for him to slot his head through. In general it's always possible to tell which phase I'm in with a project by the number of books piled up on my desk. At the start there's just a few, by the end they pose a serious health-and-safety hazard.





Russell Hoban

This room is composed of tottering stacks and shaky heaps of DVDs and videos, bulging shelves of books, slithery carpets of undiscarded draft pages, and delicately balanced objects of various weight and fragility poised to fall on my head. I have often been buried under DVD slides and video-topplings and

once the TV fell on me while I was trying to squeeze between it and a precarious stack. Luckily the fallen DVDs I landed on acted as a shock absorber for the weight of the TV, which might have broken one or two legs otherwise. I accept daily bruises as a matter of course.

I can't always find what I'm looking for, and many of my

books, although visible, are out of reach because of stacks and heaps in front of the shelves and no floor space for a ladder. In cases like this it is more economical to buy a new DVD, CD or book than to spend a day in search-and-rescue operations. This room, full of all kinds of reference materials, is almost an extension of my brain.

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

Questions A and B carry 50 marks each.

QUESTION A

- (i) What impression of each of the three writers' personalities do you form from the **written texts** describing their places of work? (15)
- (ii) If you had to choose **one** of these rooms to study in, which would you select? Refer to the **image** of the chosen room in support of your answer. (15)
- (iii) Select **one of the other two images** of the writers' rooms and write a detailed description of it. You might consider the use of colour, light, details or objects in the image. [In your answer you may not re-use the image you have selected in question (ii).] (20)

QUESTION B

Students in your school have been invited to contribute articles to the school website on issues relevant to young people. This week's issue is "**We are what we wear**". Write an article for the website expressing your views on the topic. (50)

SECTION II

COMPOSING (100 marks)

Write a composition on **any one** of the following.

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. “...advised adults to treat adolescents with sympathy, appreciation and respect...” (TEXT 1)

Write a magazine article (serious and/or light-hearted) in which you give advice to adults on how to help teenagers cope with the “storm and stress” of adolescence.

2. “...the new global society.” (TEXT 1)

Write a speech in which you argue for or against the necessity to protect national culture and identity.

3. “...17-year-old male protagonist with a darting gaze...” (TEXT 1)

Write a short story in which the central character is a rebellious teenager (male or female).

4. “I have a beautiful view...” (TEXT 3)

Write a personal essay in which you describe a place that you consider beautiful.

5. “...fake, or worse...” (TEXT 2)

Write the text of a talk you would deliver to your classmates on the topic: *Appearances can be Deceptive.*

6. “I was happy...” (TEXT 2)

Write an article for a school magazine in which you explore aspects of life that make you happy.

7. “...my camp, my small launch, my treehouse.” (TEXT 3)

Write a short story in which setting/location is a significant feature.

(Your story may be prompted by one or more of the locations depicted in Text 3 or by any other setting of your choice.)

Blank Page

Blank Page

Blank Page

Blank Page