



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2015

English - Ordinary Level - Paper 1

Total Marks: 200

Wednesday, June 3rd – 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 PARENTS/GUARDIANS.
- 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

ANIMALS

This adapted text is based on an edited extract from *Animals*, a short story by Roddy Doyle in which he tells us about George, George's family and their pets.

1. George came home one Saturday morning. He'd been away in England. The house was empty. Sandra, his wife, had taken the kids to visit her mother in Wexford. George saw the brand new cage – and the canary. And the note, in red marker: 'Feed it.' And he would have, happily, if the canary hadn't been dead. He phoned a taxi, waited an hour for it to arrive and told the driver to bring him to Wacker's pet shop in Donaghmede.

2. Wacker had no canaries. Neither did the guy beside Woodie's. Or the shop on Parnell Street. When the kids got home the next day they found that the canary had turned into two finches. George explained it to them; two of anything was better than one.

– A fella on the plane told me that finches were much better than canaries. So I swapped the canary for these lads here. A boy and a girl.

– Cool.

He'd no idea at the time if this was true – the male and the female – but it must have been, because they made themselves a nest, and an egg was laid and the two finches became three. The finches, Pete and Amy – he knows the names, as solidly as his kids' names – built a nest in the top corner. Amy stayed in there while Pete came out, hung on the bars of the cage and looked intelligent.

3. George went to his mother's house one day to change a few light bulbs. He made a morning of it, smuggled the book he was reading out of the house, bought a takeaway coffee, drove to the sea-front



and stayed there for an hour reading *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*, after he'd finished at his mother's. He drove home and walked into the end of the world.

4. Sandra and the kids had wheeled the cage outside and had started to go at it with soapy brushes and cloths. A child opened the hatch, Pete flew out, and George found four hysterical children in the kitchen, long past tears and snot, and a woman, Sandra, outside in the back garden, talking to the hedge.

– I can hear him, she said.

– Where?

– In there, she said.

She was pointing into the hedge, which stretched from the house to the end wall.

George could hear the kids in the house. He could hear lawnmowers and a couple of dogs. He couldn't hear Pete. But he did hear the big whoop of a great idea going off in his head.

– Listen, he said. I'm going to bring the kids to Wacker's, to see if Pete flew back there. Are you with me?

Sandra looked at him. And he knew: she was falling in love with him, all over again.

Or maybe for the first time – he didn't care. She was in her dressing gown, looking attractively distraught, and she was staring at George like he was your man from *ER*.

– While I'm doing that, said George, – you phone Wacker's and tell them the story. You with me?

– Brilliant.

– It might work.

– It's genius.

– Ah well.

5. It did work, and it was George's greatest achievement. The happiness he delivered, the legend he planted – his proudest moment. All the gang in Wacker's were waiting, pretending to be busy. George carried the girls up to the counter; the boys held onto him.

– Dylan here's finch flew away, said George. And he was thinking that maybe he flew back here.

This text has been adapted, for the purpose of assessment, without the author's prior consent.

The lad behind the counter looked up.

– Zebra finch?

Dylan nodded.

– He flew in twenty minutes ago.

– Flaked, he was, said an older man who was piling little bales of hay and straw.

Exhausted. Come over and pick him out, Dylan.

6. The new Pete wasn't a patch on the old Pete – he was a bit drugged looking. George liked the finches but they were a pain in the neck. He was halfway to Galway one day when they had to turn back because they had forgotten about the birds and who would look after them. But then, another time, he was up earlier than usual. He went into the kitchen and saw Dylan sitting in the dawn light, watching the cage. George stood there and watched Dylan. Another of those great moments. *This is why I live.*

**N.B. Answer ONLY ONE Question A and ONLY ONE Question B.
DO NOT answer a Question A and a Question B on the same text.**

Question A – 50 marks

- (i) From your reading of the above extract, what impression do you form of George? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) Which of the following word or words would you choose to describe the above extract from *Animals*? Humorous Descriptive Realistic
Explain your answer, supporting the points you make by reference to the text. (15)
- (iii) (a) Imagine you are Dylan. Based on the above text, write a paragraph telling the story of how you lost and found your pet finch, Pete. (10)
- (b) George deceives his children twice: once, when the canary died, and again when Pete flew away. Do you think George was right to deceive his children on these occasions? Explain your answer with reference to the text. (10)

OR

Question B – 50 marks

You have decided to apply for a weekend job in the pet shop featured in TEXT 1 above, Wacker's in Donaghmede, Dublin. Write the **letter of application** you would submit to the Manager of the pet shop.

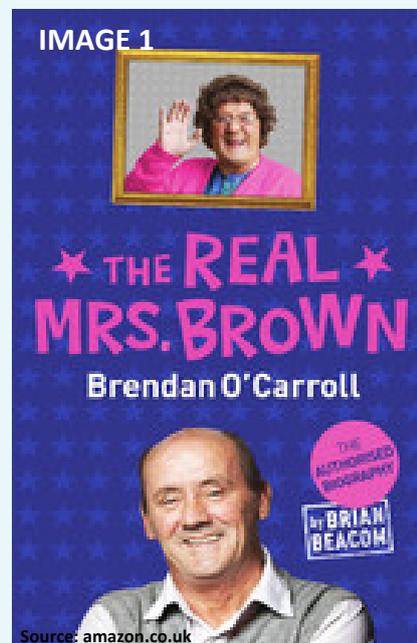
TEXT 2

THE REAL MRS. BROWN

This adapted text is based on edited extracts from *The Real Mrs. Brown*, Brendan O'Carroll, an authorised biography by Brian Beacom. In it we discover the influence of Brendan O'Carroll's mother, Maureen, on his popular sitcom character, Agnes Brown.

1. Flashback to 17 September, 1911 in Dublin City, Ireland. Seventeen-year-old Lizzie was set to marry Michael McHugh. The pair were madly in love and ready to head to America together to start a new life – but without telling Lizzie's parents. Lizzie's father was deeply against them marrying. When he heard of their romance he attacked Michael, breaking his forearm and collarbone. Michael and Lizzie knew that they had to escape Ireland. That's why they had saved for a year to buy tickets for the long sea voyage. But Lizzie's mother found out about the plan and convinced her husband he had to accept Michael, or he'd lose his daughter for ever. Michael and Lizzie's father shook hands and the next day Michael McHugh put an advertisement in the newspaper offering his boat tickets for sale. The ship they would have sailed on was the *Titanic*.

2. Meanwhile, Lizzie and Michael became Mr. and Mrs. McHugh and a child was born. A baby girl. She was christened Maureen and she was to become Brendan O'Carroll's mother, the woman who provided most of the inspiration for Brendan's sitcom heroine, Agnes Brown. Speaking of his mother, Brendan O'Carroll said, 'People used to ask me if Agnes Brown was based on my mother and I'd say no. But in recent times, I've come to realise just how close they are.' Indeed. Both are battlers. Both could find a colourful adjective when roused, although Maureen was smarter and way more ambitious than the havoc-creating, uneducated, Agnes Brown. Maureen could definitely deliver a cutting one-liner, just



as Agnes does. Maureen could also take a simple tea towel and turn it into a weapon, as Agnes frequently does. Both Maureen and Agnes would lay down their lives for their kids, but loved to make fun of them. Brendan's mammy also had the ability to get what she wanted out of people, just as Agnes can, using the cleverest of psychology; becoming a bit pathetic when required. And if that didn't work, like Agnes, she would tell the world exactly where it was going wrong.

3. Maureen's healthy disrespect for authority – life is to be challenged; rules are there to be broken – is evident in Agnes. As Agnes does, Maureen lived in crowded houses, and managed to create her own safe little world. There are more similarities. Maureen wasn't entirely comfortable with modern devices either. She had little time for small-minded people. Agnes Brown now, and Maureen O'Carroll then, would be ready and willing to smack the face of injustice.

4. Maureen had incredible energy and studied hard, and her reward was to be sent to University College Galway, a rare achievement for a woman at that time. She became a teacher of languages, and loved her career. But on the day she married Gerry O'Carroll in 1936, she was fired from her job as it was illegal for female teachers in Ireland to be married. Did Maureen O'Carroll take this lying down? 'My mother was a force of nature,' Brendan recalls. 'She said, "I'm not having that!" and joined the union and battled to get that law changed. She shares that feisty, fighting spirit with Agnes Brown.'

5. It wasn't a huge surprise when the Irish Labour Party asked her to run for parliament, Dáil Éireann. But it was a surprise when she won in the General Election of 1954. It was remarkable for a working-class female to achieve that level of success. What made it all the more extraordinary was that she had given birth to nine children. And, in what offers an

insight into the character of Maureen O'Carroll, one of her kids, Phil, was adopted.

6. Why does *Mrs. Brown's Boys* work? Agnes Brown, of course. Every family has one: the busybody, the scathing commentator, the woman with a sharp tongue who can still hug her kids like they are babies.



Brendan O'Carroll and his mother, Maureen

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N.B. Answer ONLY ONE Question A and ONLY ONE Question B.

DO NOT answer a Question A and a Question B on the same text.

Question A – 50 marks

- (i) From your reading of the written text and IMAGE 2 above, what impression do you form of Maureen O'Carroll? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) Based on Maureen O'Carroll's experiences, outlined in the extract above, which of the following word or words do you think best describe the situation experienced by many women in Ireland in the past? Challenging Difficult Unequal
- Explain your answer, supporting the points you make by reference to the text. (15)
- (iii) (a) Based on the above text, what aspects of Agnes Brown's character appear to be inspired by Maureen O'Carroll? Support your answer by reference to the text. (10)
- (b) Imagine you are either Lizzie or Michael McHugh. Write a paragraph giving your version of the events outlined in paragraph one of the above text. (10)

OR

Question B – 50 marks

Maureen O'Carroll stood up against injustice. Write the talk that you would deliver as a **podcast or radio diary** in which you identify an injustice about which you feel strongly, and suggest ways in which you think this injustice could be addressed or overcome.

TEXT 3

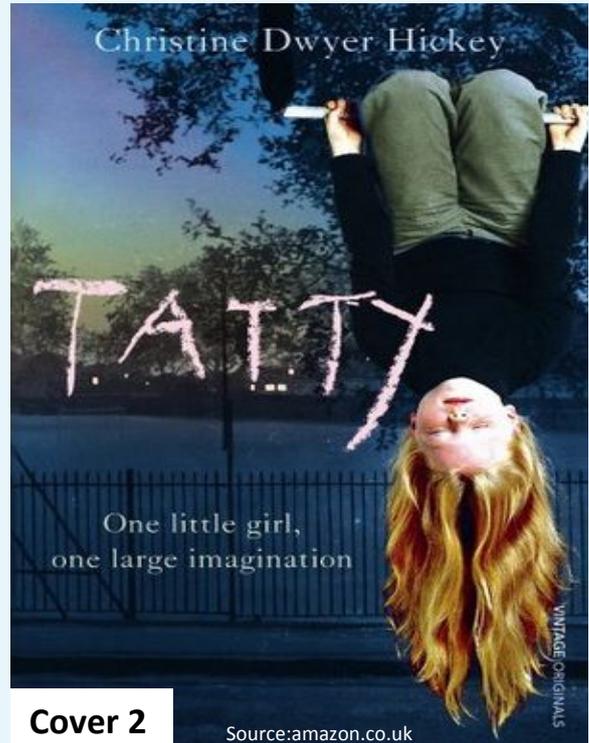
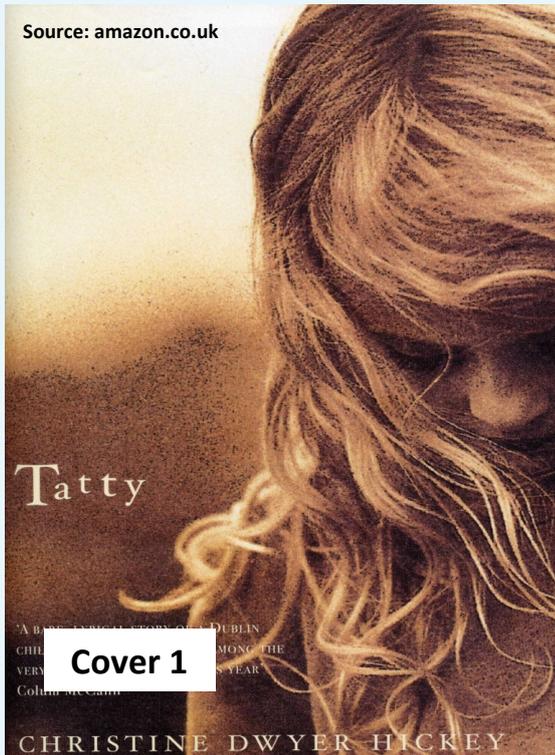
TATTY

This adapted text is based on an edited extract from *Tatty*, a novel by award-winning writer, Christine Dwyer Hickey. It is about a young girl, Tatty, and her complicated family life, from when she was a child until her early teenage years.

1. She's nearly five and gets lost at the races. One minute she is standing behind Dad, the next minute she's lost.
2. She's standing under his long brown raincoat and it's like as if she's inside her own little tent. The lining is shiny, with bumps here and there from all the stuff that fell through his raincoat pockets. The bigger things stayed in his pockets: newspaper, notebook. And there's the big fat book full of horses' names that you always see him reading. Dad tells her that when he gives her the nudge that means she has to grab a hold of his jacket because he's going to start running and she has to run out behind him. Like a circus horse, he says, do you know what I mean?
3. She doesn't, but likes the sound of it anyway and can't wait for Dad to get going. She puts her hands out of her mittens so she can get a good hold of his jacket. But the rain is too bad he says. So he changes his mind and says he'll have to leave her behind. He pulls his coat away, lifts her up and puts her down in a doorway near the men's smelly toilets. You stay here he says, till I get back. Do you hear me now? You're not to budge, not an inch. He tugs her collar up around her ears, tells her to put her mittens back on, pulls her pixie-cap down over her forehead, then leaves her.
4. As soon as she stops seeing his long brown raincoat she goes out after him. But there are too many big bodies in the way and too many brown coats and the cold rain keeps smacking her in the face. So she follows the heat back into the bar.
5. When Dad comes back to the doorway there's no sign of her anywhere and then he's up the wall. He runs around everywhere pulling at people's sleeves. Did you see? Did you see? A little girl, this size ... copper-colour hair, a fringe...? The voice from the sky calls out her name. The voice from the sky tells everyone her business – her age, her size, where she lives and what she is wearing: brown jacket, brown trousers, yellow jumper. Dad told the voice what to say; if it had been Mam the clothes would have been different. It would have been: a biscuit-coloured sheepskin coat, chocolate-brown slacks, a mustard polo-neck sweater, a cream-coloured pixie-cap. Because that's the way Mam talks about clothes, like you could eat them.
6. When Dad finds her, she's behind the counter sitting on a beer crate. She has one big rosy cheek from the big heater behind her and she's sucking a bottle of fizzy orange through a straw. She has one hand on top of the heater and her mitten is flapping from the string in the sleeve of her jacket. Dad starts shouting at the barman. Did you not hear her name being announced? Are you deaf? Ah how could I – the noise in this place? And wasn't she grand in there? You'd no business taking her like that. He didn't take me, she says. I went in myself.
7. Then Dad starts laughing his head off. He lifts her up and sits her on the counter. She keeps on saying, I wasn't lost, I *wasn't*. You better not tell your mother, Dad says.

Or there'll be murder. Do you hear me now? You won't get me into trouble? I won't.
Is that a big fat promise?
Yes Daddy.

When he opens the front door she runs under his arm and comes shouting into the house. Mam! Mam! I wasn't lost. I wasn't. They said I was. But I wasn't lost, *I wasn't*.



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**N.B. Answer ONLY ONE Question A and ONLY ONE Question B.
DO NOT answer a Question A and a Question B on the same text.**

Question A – 50 marks

- (i) From your reading of the above extract, what impression do you form of Tatty's father? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) Which of the following word or words would you choose to describe the above extract from *Tatty*? Humorous Descriptive Realistic
Explain your answer, supporting the points you make by reference to the text. (15)
- (iii) (a) Outline what you learn about Tatty from each of the book covers above and explain which one of the covers you think tells you the most about her. Support your answer with reference to both book covers. (10)
- (b) Imagine you are Tatty's mother. Write a paragraph which captures your reaction to Tatty's day at the races. (10)

OR

Question B – 50 marks

Write **two diary entries**, one in which you record a time when a misunderstanding arose between you and one or more of your parents or guardians, and a second one, in which you record how you clarified the misunderstanding.

Write a composition on **any one** of the following composition assignments 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. George deceives his children in two separate incidents in TEXT 1.

Write a short story in which one character deceives another.

2. We are told, in TEXT 1, that George spent an hour reading a book.

Write an article for your school magazine, in which you explain why you love reading; discuss some of the books that you have most enjoyed and encourage everybody to read more.

3. “I’m not having that!” (TEXT 2).

Write a personal essay about an occasion when you overcame opposition to do something you believed to be important.

4. In TEXT 3, Tatty’s mother appears to be very interested in clothes.

Write an article for a popular magazine entitled, *My Passion for Fashion*.

5. George and his family try to take good care of their pet birds in TEXT 1.

Imagine you are a representative of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA). Write a speech, to be delivered in schools, in which you explain the practicalities and responsibilities involved in keeping a pet and encourage the students in your audience to treat animals with respect.

6. In TEXT 3, Tatty’s father briefly loses his daughter.

Write a personal essay in which you reflect on various significant losses in your life.

7. In TEXT 2, we are told that Brendan O’Carroll’s mother was not entirely comfortable with modern devices.

Write a short story in which one or more modern devices make life difficult for the character or characters in the story.

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