



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2017

English - Higher Level - Paper 1

Total Marks: 200

Wednesday, 7th 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 DIFFERENT WORLDS.
- 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.

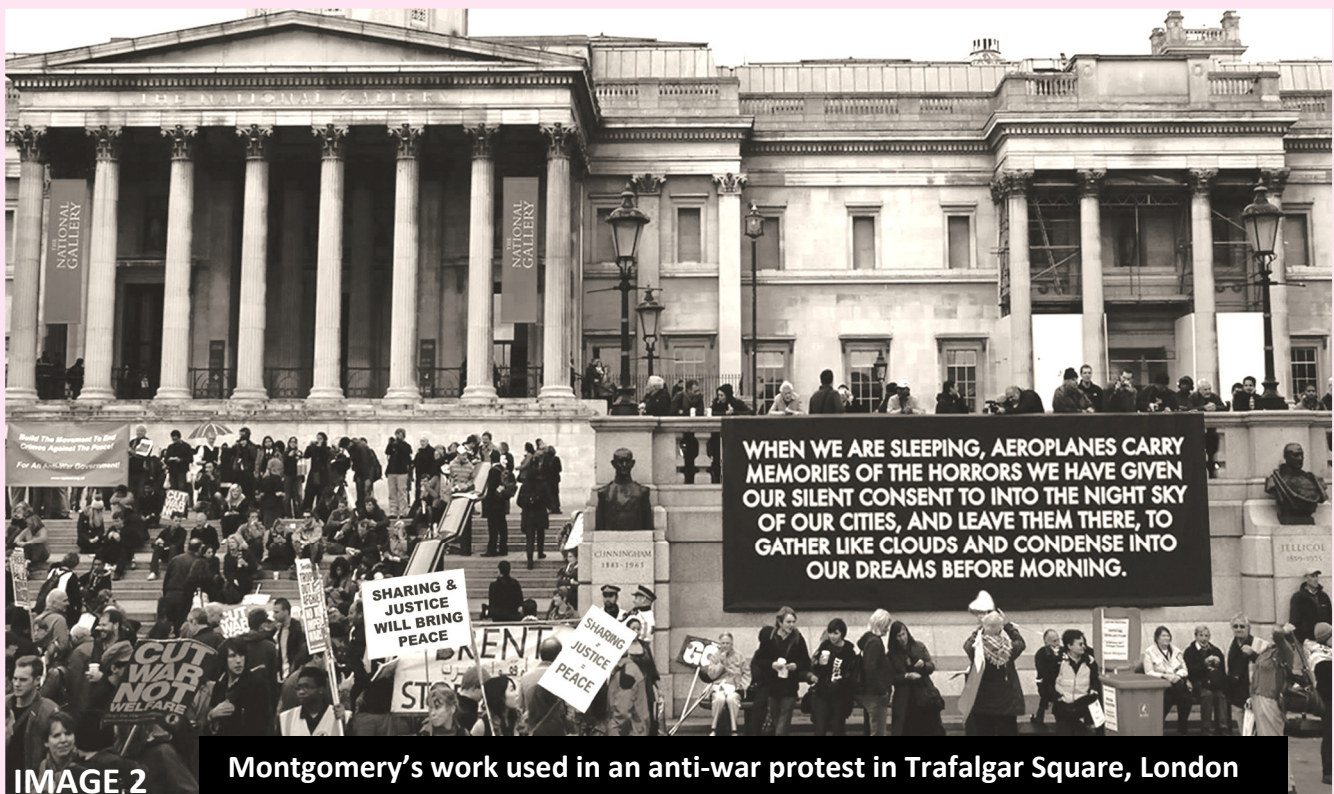
SECTION II – COMPOSING

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



TEXT 1 – THE WORLD OF POETRY

This text is based on two images that incorporate work by the poet Robert Montgomery, and *The Medium is the Message – The Power of Public Poetry*, an edited article from *The Guardian* newspaper, written by Marta Bausells. The images are from the website robertmontgomery.org.



The Medium is the Message – The Power of Public Poetry by Marta Bausells

He has been called a vandal, a street artist, a punk artist. Scottish poet Robert Montgomery has consciously made an “awkward space” for himself in between artistic categories – and he thoroughly enjoys it. His work puts poetry in front of people in eye-catching visual formats, from advertising billboards he has covered with poems, to words he has set on fire or lit with recycled sunlight in public spaces. The texts tend to be lyrical, dreamy and almost optimistic. “I feel it’s a kind of responsibility to critique things that you think are bad – but I also feel an almost moral obligation to propagate hope,” he says.

A new global crisis has propelled him to focus his work on climate change. “I think the ecological crisis we are facing is the major historical crisis of our time and our generation will be judged on it.” By putting poetry in our faces, Montgomery hopes to bring it into the public discourse. “I’m interested in Roland Barthes’s idea that speech defines a culture. Poetry can define the dominant languages we have in culture.”

Montgomery approves of another kind of page leaping phenomenon: the proliferation of new

“Instagram poets” who also mix the written word with careful visual presentations. “The internet is a wonderful medium for poetry,” he says. He celebrates the fact that poets can garner audiences that “bring their work alive” before they get a chance to get published.

His work seems to have developed into the realm of inspirational quotes for fans, with his poems popping up on selfies, clothes, walls and bodies. “Getting institutional recognition is great, but someone getting tattooed is such a personal compliment. After all, the goal of art, for me, is to communicate our innermost feelings to strangers.”

Montgomery’s work on London billboards has, on occasion, provoked run-ins with the law. He was put into the back of a police van after he pasted his poem for William Blake on a billboard in Bethnal Green. “But I got into a conversation about literature and one of the police officers was really engaged with it. I guess it was a lucky experience. I think most people wouldn’t be averse to having a poem at the end of the street instead of another Diet Coke ad.”

These texts have been adapted, for the purpose of assessment, without the authors’ prior consent.

**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) Based on your reading of TEXT 1 (images and written text), what do you learn about Robert Montgomery’s approach to poetry? Support your answer with reference to TEXT 1. (15)
- (ii) Robert Montgomery believes that poetry can be of benefit to society. In your opinion, have you benefitted from engaging with poetry during your time at school? Give reasons for your answer. (15)
- (iii) Compare the two images featuring Robert Montgomery’s work that appear on Page 2. You should address the following in the course of your answer: setting and atmosphere, the poems, the visual impact of the images. Support your answer with reference to both images. (20)

QUESTION B

Your school Principal has agreed to your suggestion to display three poems, or extracts from three poems, on the 2017 Leaving Certificate Higher Level English poetry course, in your school. You have been asked to choose the poetry and decide how and where it will be displayed. Write **an article for your school’s website** in which you explain your choice of poetry, your ideas for its display and the impact you hope this project will have on the school community. (50)



TEXT 2 – A CONNECTED WORLD

This text is based on edited extracts from *Free Speech – Ten Principles for a Connected World* by Oxford Professor, Timothy Garton Ash. Professor Garton Ash writes about free speech, also termed “freedom of expression”, in the digital global city or “virtual cosmopolis” which we all now inhabit.

We are all neighbours now. There are more phones than there are human beings and close to half of humankind has access to the internet. In our cities, we rub shoulders with strangers from every country, culture and faith. The world is a global city, a virtual cosmopolis. We can post our thoughts and photos online, where in theory any one of billions of other people might encounter them. Never in human history was there such a chance for freedom of expression as this. And never have the evils of unlimited free expression – death threats, paedophile images, sewage-tides of abuse – flowed so easily across frontiers.

As of 2015, there are already somewhere around three billion internet users. The digital age brings both acceleration and convergence of two previously distinct lines of communication: one-to-one and one-to-many. Key advances in the history of one individual communicating with another include the development of postal services, the telegraph, the telephone, the mobile phone, email and the smartphone. The smartphone has given access to the ‘mobile internet’, where one-to-one converges with one-to-many and all other variants, including many-to-many and many-to-one.

The internet subverts the traditional unities of time and space. It telescopes space, making us virtual neighbours, but it also concertinas time. Once something is up there online, it is usually there forever. Whether an ill-advised remark was made this morning or twenty years ago if it comes up on an online search it is still part of the here and now.

The transformed context in which the question of free speech is posed today is the result of more recent developments in communication. New technologies afford possibilities that were not there before, or not in the same degree. If someone gives you a wheel, you can lay the wheel on its side and sit on it, but the new

Source: si.wsj.net



possibility it affords is the ability to travel further, faster and carrying a heavier load than you could before. What are the most characteristic “affordances” of the internet? Put most simply, it is easier to make things public and more difficult to keep things private. The first affordance has a great liberating potential; the second harbours an oppressive potential, including a threat to free speech.

Free speech has never meant unlimited speech – everyone spouting whatever comes into his or her head. It entails discussing where the limits to freedom of expression and information should lie in important areas such as privacy, religion, national security and the ways we talk about human difference. I contend that the way to live together well in this world-as-city is to have more and better free speech.

An English judge wrote in a late twentieth-century judgement that ‘freedom of speech is the lifeblood of democracy’. A right to say something does not mean that it is right to say it. A right to offend does not entail a duty to offend. What social, journalistic, artistic, educational and other ways are there of making free speech fruitful, enabling creative provocation without tearing lives and societies apart? How can we treat each other like grown-ups, exploring and navigating our difficulties with the aid of this defining human gift of self-expression?

The ancient philosopher, Philodemus, argued that the use of free speech should be taught as a skill like medicine or navigation. This seems to me to be a vital thought for our time. In this crowded world, we must learn to navigate by speech, as ancient mariners taught themselves to sail across the Aegean Sea. The goal of this journey is not to eliminate conflict between human aspirations, values and ideologies. This is not just unachievable but also undesirable, for it would result in a sterile world, monotonous, uncreative and unfree. Rather, we should work towards a framework of civilised and peaceful conflict, suited to and sustainable in this world of neighbours.

Over the last half century, human enterprise and innovation from the jet plane to the smartphone have created a world in which we are all becoming neighbours, but nowhere is it written that we will become good neighbours. That requires a transcultural effort of reason and imagination. Central to this endeavour is free speech. Only with freedom of expression can I understand what it is to be you. Only with freedom of information can we control both public and private powers. Only by articulating our differences can we see clearly what they are and why they are what they are. We will never all agree, nor should we. But we must strive to create conditions in which we agree on how we disagree.

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**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) Based on your reading of TEXT 2, what do you learn about the impact of developments in technology on modern communication? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) In your opinion, what should schools do to promote the appropriate use of free speech in society? Give reasons for your answer. (15)
- (iii) "Professor Garton Ash makes effective use of the languages of argument and persuasion to convince readers that today's society needs more and better free speech."

Do you agree with the above statement? Support your answer with reference to Professor Garton Ash's use of the languages of argument and persuasion in the above text to convince readers that today's society needs more and better free speech. (20)

QUESTION B

The views people hold today are often influenced by the news and information they receive from the online world of the internet and social media. Write **an opinion piece**, for publication in a national newspaper, in which you give your views on the extent to which people today rely on the online world as a source of news and information, the reliability of these sources and the impact of this development on society. (50)



TEXT 3 – THE WORLD OF CHILDHOOD

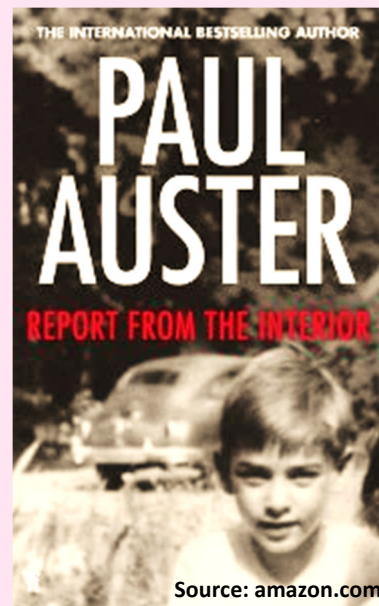
This edited text is adapted from a memoir entitled *Report from the Interior* by American writer Paul Auster. In this extract he focuses on the world of childhood.

In the beginning everything was alive. The smallest objects were endowed with beating hearts, and even the clouds had names. Scissors could walk, telephones and teapots were first cousins, eyes and eyeglasses were brothers. The face of the clock was a human face, each pea in your bowl had a different personality, and the grille on the front of your parents' car was a grinning mouth with many teeth. Pens were airships. Coins were flying saucers.

Your earliest thoughts, remnants of how you lived inside yourself as a small boy. You can remember only some of it, brief flashes of recognition that surge up in you unexpectedly at random moments – brought on by the smell of something, or the touch of something, or the way the light falls on something in the here and now of adulthood. You still occasionally fall into old ways of thinking. Each summer as you lie on your back in the grass, you look up at the drifting clouds and watch them turn into faces, into birds and animals, into states and countries and imaginary kingdoms.

The world was of course flat. When someone tried to explain to you that the earth was a sphere, a planet orbiting the sun with eight other planets in something called a solar system, you couldn't grasp what the older boy was saying. If the earth was round, then everyone below the equator would fall off, since it was inconceivable that a person could live his life upside down. The older boy tried to explain the concept of gravity to you, but that was beyond your grasp as well. You imagined millions of people plunging headlong through the darkness of an infinite, all-devouring night. If the earth was indeed round, you said to yourself, then the only safe place to be was the North Pole.

Stars, on the other hand, were inexplicable. Not holes in the sky, not candles, not electric lights, not anything that resembled what you knew. The immensity of the black air overhead, the vastness of the space that stood between you and those small luminosities, was something that resisted all understanding. Benign and beautiful presences



hovering in the night, there because they were there and for no other reason.

You were five and a half when your family left the cramped garden apartment in Union and installed itself in the old white house on Irving Avenue in South Orange. Not a big house, but the first house your parents had ever lived in, which made it your first house as well. Even though the interior was not spacious, the yard behind the house seemed vast to you. In fact it was two yards, the first one a small grassy area directly behind the house, bordered by your mother's crescent-shaped flower garden, and the back yard which was wilder and bigger, a secluded realm in which you conducted your most intense investigations into the flora and fauna of your new kingdom.

Robins, finches, blue jays, scarlet tanagers, crows, sparrows, wrens, cardinals, blackbirds and an occasional bluebird. Birds were no less strange to you than stars, and because their true home was in the air, you felt that birds and stars belonged to the same family. The incomprehensible gift of being able to fly, a fit subject for study and observation. What intrigued you most about them were the sounds they made, a different language spoken by each kind of bird, whether tuneful songs or harsh, abrasive cries, and early on you were convinced they were talking to one another.

Six years old. Standing in your room one Saturday morning, having just dressed yourself and tied your shoes, all ready for action, about to go downstairs and begin the day, and as you stood there in the light of the early spring morning, you were engulfed by a feeling of happiness, an ecstatic, unbridled sense of well-being and joy, and an instant later you said to yourself: There is nothing better than being six years old, six is far and away the best age anyone can be. What had happened to cause such an overpowering feeling? Impossible to know, but you suspect it had something to do with the birth of self-consciousness, that thing that happens to children around the age of six, when the inner voice awakens and the ability to think a thought and tell yourself you are thinking that thought begins. Our lives enter a new dimension at that point. Until that morning, you just were. Now you knew that you were.

At some point during the year you turned six, you were taken by someone to a film that was shown at night. You remember the immensity of the crowded theatre, the spookiness of sitting in the dark when the lights went out, a feeling of anticipation and unease. The film was *The War of the Worlds*, based on the novel by H. G. Wells. Stone-round metal spaceships landed out of the night sky, one by one the lids of these flying machines would open, and slowly a Martian would emerge from within, an unnaturally tall insect-like figure with stick arms and eerily long fingers. The Martian would fix his gaze on an earthling, zero in on him with his grotesque, bulbous eyes, and an instant later there would be a flash of light. Seconds after that, the earthling would be gone. Transfixed is probably the word that best captures what was happening to you.

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**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 characteristics of a child's world does Paul Auster convey in the above extract? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) In the extract above Paul Auster states that "six is far and away the best age anyone can be". In your opinion, is there a "best age" to be? Give reasons for your answer. (15)
- (iii) "Paul Auster makes effective use of aesthetic language to create a charming and reflective memoir."

Based on your reading of the above extract, do you agree with this statement? Support your answer with reference to Paul Auster's use of aesthetic language in the above text to create a charming and reflective memoir. (20)

QUESTION B

You have been asked to participate in a radio programme entitled *Reflections on the World of Childhood*. Write **the text to be broadcast on radio**, in which you reflect on the world of your childhood, discuss what captured your childish imagination, and recall a selection of the songs or sounds or stories that live on in your memory. (50)



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. Robert Montgomery, whose work features in TEXT 1, sometimes uses advertising billboards to display his work.

Write a discursive essay in which you explore the positive and negative aspects of different types of advertising.

2. In TEXT 3, Paul Auster describes the stars as, “benign and beautiful presences hovering in the night.”

Write a descriptive essay entitled *Night Scene*.

3. In TEXT 2, Timothy Garton Ash quotes an English judge, “freedom of speech is the lifeblood of democracy”.

Write a speech, to be delivered to a World Youth Conference, in which you give your views on how democracy can be supported in the world today.

4. We learn in Text 1 that fans have been tattooed with Robert Montgomery’s poetic words.

Write a short story in which a tattoo plays an important part in the narrative.

5. Timothy Garton Ash alludes to the invention of the wheel in TEXT 2.

Imagine it is the Stone Age and you have just invented the wheel. Write a dialogue in dramatic form, in which you introduce and promote your new invention to your sceptical friends and neighbours. Your drama may be humorous or serious or both.

6. In TEXT 3, Paul Auster describes a moment of revelation he experienced one Saturday morning when he was six years old.

Write a personal essay in which you reflect on moments of insight and revelation you have experienced.

7. TEXT 1 and TEXT 3 feature the work of a poet and a novelist.

Write an article for a serious publication in which you consider whether scientists or writers and artists have made, and continue to make, the greater contribution to society.

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