



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2020

English - Higher Level - Paper 2

Total Marks: 200

Duration: 3 hours 20 minutes

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 (*Hamlet, The Tempest*) or in SECTION II, The Comparative Study (*Hamlet, The Tempest*).

INDEX OF SINGLE TEXTS

<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	Page - 2
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<i>The Tempest</i>	Page - 3

SECTION I

THE SINGLE TEXT

(60 marks)

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

A THE HANDMAID'S TALE – Margaret Atwood

- (i) “Margaret Atwood promotes a feminist message at the expense of constructing a gripping narrative in her novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale*.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Develop your response with reference to the text.

OR

- (ii) Identify and discuss the various ways in which Margaret Atwood develops the character of Offred throughout her novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Develop your response with reference to both the style and content of the text.

B PERSUASION – Jane Austen

- (i) “Jane Austen indulges in trivial social comedy at the expense of exploring substantial social issues in her novel, *Persuasion*.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Develop your response with reference to the text.

OR

- (ii) Identify and discuss the various ways in which Jane Austen develops the character of Anne Elliot throughout her novel, *Persuasion*. Develop your response with reference to both the style and content of the text.

C DAYS WITHOUT END – Sebastian Barry

- (i) “Sebastian Barry sacrifices realism for a romanticised view of history in his novel, *Days Without End*.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Develop your response with reference to the text.

OR

- (ii) Identify and discuss the various ways in which Sebastian Barry develops the character of Thomas McNulty throughout his novel, *Days Without End*. Develop your response with reference to both the style and content of the text.

D HAMLET – William Shakespeare

- (i) “Uncertainty, which features constantly in Shakespeare’s play, *Hamlet*, adds significantly to the dramatic impact of the play.”

Discuss the above statement, developing your response with reference to the text.

OR

- (ii) Discuss how Shakespeare makes effective use, for a variety of purposes, of the contradictions and inconsistencies evident in Hamlet’s character. Develop your discussion with reference to Shakespeare’s play, *Hamlet*.

E THE TEMPEST – William Shakespeare

- (i) “The various magical and fantastical elements that feature throughout Shakespeare’s play, *The Tempest*, add significantly to the dramatic impact of the play.”

Discuss the above statement, developing your response with reference to the text.

OR

- (ii) Discuss how Shakespeare makes effective use, for a variety of purposes, of Prospero’s less attractive traits and also of his admirable qualities. Develop your discussion with reference to Shakespeare’s play, *The Tempest*.

SECTION II THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** question from **either A** – Cultural Context **or B** – Literary Genre.

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.
- When used, the words **narrative** or **story** are understood to refer to both real life and fictional texts.

A CULTURAL CONTEXT

1. (a) Identify and discuss two aspects of cultural context which you believe make a significant contribution to the level of social division or the level of social unity evident in **one** text on your comparative course. Develop your response with reference to the text. (30)
- (b) Compare the extent to which social division is evident in each of **two other** comparative texts you have studied. Develop your response with reference to the aspect or aspects of cultural context that you believe contribute(s) to the level of social division evident in these texts.

In your answer you may refer to the same aspect or different aspects of cultural context in each of the texts that you have studied. (40)

OR

2. Choose one central character from each of **three** texts on your comparative course. Compare the factors, related to cultural context, that affect the extent to which these characters are accepted or rejected as members of their societies. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts.

In your answer you should refer to at least one relevant factor related to cultural context in each of your three comparative texts. You may refer to the same factor or different factors in each of your chosen texts. (70)

B LITERARY GENRE

1. (a) Discuss how effectively the author employs imagery to convey or enhance the narrative in **one** text on your comparative course. Develop your answer with reference to the text. (30)
- (b) Compare how effectively the authors of **two other** texts on your comparative course employ imagery to convey or enhance the narrative in these texts. Develop your answer with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

OR

2. Compare the extent to which the authors of **three** texts on your comparative course use setting or aspects of setting to help define and develop characters. Develop your answer with reference to at least one character in each of 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 Maurice Riordan and answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2 which follow.

Badb*

I was walking where the woods begin
with an almost sheer drop to the river
– so that I was eye level with the tops
of nearby trees and higher than the branch
when I came upon the crow sitting there,
so close I could have touched her with a stick.
She was creaturely and unwary, as the wind
bore her away and brought her back.
We shared the same tangy woodland smells,
the same malt-pale October sunlight.
Then I must have made a sound,
for she came alert and looked at me.
And, in that interval before the legs
could lift her weight from the branch,
as the beak sprang open to deliver
its single rough vowel, she held me off
with a look, with a sudden realignment
of the eyes above the gorging mouth.
It is the look known to legend and folk belief
– though also an attribute useful for a bird
without talons or guile to defend it.
Then she was gone, in a few wing beats
indistinguishable from her fellows wheeling
above the trees, carrying on their business,
neighbourly and otherworldly.

Maurice Riordan

Badb* - is the name of a Celtic war goddess, known for taking the form of a crow.

1. (a) Based on your reading of the above poem, discuss the impact and suitability of its title. Develop your response with reference to the poem. (10)
- (b) Discuss how the poet brings the above poem to life by appealing to the senses. Develop your response with reference to the poem. (10)

OR

2. Discuss the poet's use of language in the above poem to convey various aspects of his experience with the crow. Develop your response with reference to the poem. (20)

B PRESCRIBED POETRY (50 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** of the following questions (**1 – 4**).

1. Eavan Boland

Based on your reading of Boland's poetry, to what extent is your emotional response to her work heightened by her use of both provocative and evocative imagery? Develop your response with reference to the poems by Eavan Boland on your course.

2. Emily Dickinson

Discuss how Dickinson's unique approach to language, and the balance between beauty and horror in her imagery, help to relieve some of the darker aspects of her poetry. Develop your response with reference to the poems by Emily Dickinson on your course.

3. Adrienne Rich

Discuss how Rich makes effective use of a variety of characters, often in dramatic settings, to probe both personal issues and wider social concerns in her poems. Develop your response with reference to the poetry by Adrienne Rich on your course.

4. William Wordsworth

Discuss Wordsworth's use of natural imagery, often in specific settings, to convey insights into the power of memory and the value of reflection. Develop your response with reference to the poetry by William Wordsworth on your course.

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Leaving Certificate – Higher Level

English

3 hours 20 minutes