

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA
LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2001

English – Higher Level – Paper I

Total Marks: 200

Wednesday, 6th June — Morning, 9.30 – 12.20

- This paper is divided into two sections, Section I COMPREHENDING and Section II COMPOSING.
- The paper contains **four** texts on the general theme of IRISHNESS.
- 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 I

COMPREHENDING (100 marks)

TEXT 1

BEING IRISH

The following extracts are adapted from the book, *Being Irish*, in which a number of contributors give their responses to the question ‘What does it mean to be Irish today?’ The book was published in 2000, and its editor is Paddy Logue.



Jennifer Johnston, is a writer and was born in Dublin in 1930.

I have never found another country in which I would rather live and die. I feel great pride when we do things right and a great anger when we get things horribly wrong. All my bondings have happened in

this country, with my family and the past, my city, and the whole landscape of the island, to the language we use and the way we have moulded it and made it different and vital, the stories we tell and the songs we sing and all the people with whom I have learned and worked and played. I feel comfortable here; the shoes of Irishness fit me well. What more can I say?



Polly Devlin, is a writer, broadcaster and conservationist. She lives in London.

When I went to London at age nineteen my Irishness became something new in my life — something much less local but not quite real. My being Irish was used as an explanatory sort of fond

shorthand among my English peers. The way “she’s Irish” or “that’s very Irish” was said seemed different from how “she’s French” was said. It seemed to me that there was a lot less baggage to being French in England. My nationality seemed more of a personal matter, as though it would account for any unpredictability in my nature. I was both flattered and resentful and, perhaps, being young and isolated, played up to it.



Seán McCague, is President of the Gaelic Athletic Association.

The modern Ireland is a thriving economic entity that has still managed to treasure most of its traditions. Our rich cultural heritage has

been protected while at the same time we welcome the world onto our shores. There is a unity of mind in being Irish. Our games, our heritage, our music, dance and our built and green heritage are all part of what we are.



Brian Kennedy, is a singer from Belfast.

Songs are a safe place to visit how you really feel, regardless of the intensity. In trying to explain being Irish, I would say it’s like taking a picture of the word “sadness” and then

taking another picture of the word “joy”. When the film comes back from the chemist, it has been double-exposed and the two words have become superimposed like some strange hybrid. Someone told me they could hear this in my voice, especially when I sang an old Irish song.



Patricia Harty, a native of Tipperary, is Editor-in-Chief of Irish America magazine.

My heart lights up when I see another Irish person. I love Irish music, and there are more Irish *seisiúns* in New York than anywhere else. I believe I can tell an Irishman from the way he walks, the way he holds his head. With Irish

people so much is left unsaid, or is said with a nod or a wink or an unspoken gesture. Like all people who have faced danger together, the Irish have a highly developed intuitive sense of each other.



Martin Mansergh is special adviser to the Taoiseach on Northern Ireland, Economic and Social Matters.

To be Irish today is something to be proud of. It is to be part of a stunningly beautiful country that is a success story on many fronts, the peace process, an economy driven by technological innovation,

as well as much cultural and sporting achievement. The resources exist at last to tackle outstanding social problems. Our young people look outwards.

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 aspects of Irishness emerge most strongly for you from the above extracts? (20)
- (ii) In your opinion, which one of the writers expresses his or her sense of Irishness best? Give reasons for your answer supporting it by reference to your chosen extract. (15)
- (iii) Choose **one** of the people in the above text and, based on the views he or she has expressed, write a short account of the kind of person you imagine him or her to be. (15)

Question B

Imagine your job is to welcome a group of foreign students to Ireland. Write out the text of a short talk (150 – 200 words) in which you advise them how best to get along with the Irish people they will meet. (50)



TEXT 2 A NEW IRELAND

The following text is adapted from the inauguration speech of President Mary Robinson, the first woman to hold the office of President of Ireland. The speech was delivered on December 3rd, 1990.



Citizens of Ireland, mná na hÉireann agus fir na hÉireann, you have chosen me to represent you and I am humbled by and grateful for your trust.

The Ireland I will be representing is a new Ireland, open, tolerant, inclusive. Many of you who voted for me did so without sharing all my views. This, I believe, is a significant signal of change, a sign, however modest, that we have already passed the threshold to a new, pluralist Ireland. The recent revival of an old concept of the Fifth Province expresses this emerging Ireland of tolerance and empathy. The Fifth Province is not anywhere here or there, north or south, east or west. It is a place within each of us – that place that is open to the other, that swinging door which allows us to venture out and others to venture in. If I am a symbol of anything, I would like to be a symbol of this reconciling and healing Fifth Province.

My primary role as President will be to represent this state. But the state is not the only model of community with which Irish people can and do

identify. Beyond our state there is a vast community of Irish emigrants extending not only across our neighbouring island but also throughout the continents of North America, Australia, and of course Europe itself. There are over seventy million people living on this globe who claim Irish descent. I will be proud to represent them.

There is another level of community which I will represent. Not just the national, not just the global, but the local community. Within our state there are a growing number of local and regional communities determined to express their own creativity, identity, heritage and initiative in new and exciting ways. In my travels around Ireland I have found local community groups thriving on a new sense of self-confidence and self-empowerment. Whether it was groups concerned with adult education, employment initiative, women's support, local history and heritage, environmental concern or community culture, one of the most enriching discoveries was to witness the extent of this local empowerment at work. As President I will seek to the best of my abilities to promote this growing sense of local participatory democracy, this emerging movement of self-development and self-expression which is surfacing more and more at grassroots level. This is the face of modern Ireland.

The best way we can contribute to a new and integrated Europe is by having a confident sense of our Irishness. Here again we must play to our strengths – take full advantage of our vibrant cultural resources in music, art, drama, literature, and film; value the role of our educators, promote and preserve our unique environmental and geographical resources of relatively pollution-free lakes, rivers, landscapes and seas; encourage, and publicly support local initiative projects in aquaculture, forestry, fishing, alternative energy and small-scale technology.

I want this Presidency to promote the telling of stories – stories of celebration through the arts and stories of conscience and of social justice. As a woman, I want women who have felt themselves outside history to be written back into history. May I have the fortune to preside over an Ireland at a time of exciting transformation, when we can enter a new Europe where old wounds can be healed, a time when, in the words of Seamus Heaney, “hope and history rhyme”.

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) Basing your answer on the text of the above speech, how do you think Mary Robinson views her role as President of Ireland? Outline your views in 150 to 200 words, supporting your points by reference to the text. (30)
- (ii) To what extent would you find yourself in agreement or disagreement with her view of the role of President? Support your point of view by reference to the text. (20)

Question B

In the above text, Mary Robinson refers to the importance of “the local community”. Write a short article (150 – 200 words) about a project or activity in your local community, which you admire or condemn. (50)



TEXT 3

AN IRISH SENSE OF HUMOUR

The following text is a narrative (in abridged form) taken from the poet Ciaran Carson's book *The Star Factory* which tells the story of Ulster and its people. The author tells us he received this story from his father. The book was first published in 1997.



Johnny McQueen and Agnes Reed were married during the war. Times were hard for them and they wished for nothing better than a home of their own. One morning Johnny spotted a little cottage that was up for rent in Mullaghbawn, with half an acre attached. The pair wasted no time, and the next day they were installed in their own little house.

One night, as he was sitting by the fire contentedly smoking his pipe, Johnny announced that he would go to Newry to buy a spade or a shovel to 'do something with that half-acre out there'.

Next day Johnny went into Newry town and brought back what he needed. He was no sooner home than he went out the back and started to dig. A couple of hours went by and when Agnes looked out she couldn't see Johnny at all, he was down in this great hole, digging for all he was worth. So out she goes, and says:

'What in God's name are you at, at all?'

Johnny emerges from the hole and stands looking at it proudly.

'By God,' says he, 'isn't that a beautiful hole?'

'What use is it? What can you do with it?' says Agnes.

'I know what I can do with it,' says Johnny, 'I can put it in the paper and sell it, that's what I'll do'.

The next day Paddy Murphy was eating his breakfast and reading the *Frontier Sentinel* in his house in Newry town.

'Listen to this, Kathleen,' he says to his wife, 'here's the most peculiar ad I've seen in a long while: SUPERLATIVE HOLE FOR SALE; ALL ENQUIRIES TO "FOUR WINDS", MULLAGHBAWN, CO.

ARMAGH. I think I'll take a run over there right now and see what it's all about.'

It wasn't long till Paddy stood outside McQueen's. He knocked on the door and Johnny came out.

'Are you the man that has the hole?' says Paddy.

'I am,' says McQueen, 'are you interested?'

He took Paddy out and showed him the hole.

'By God,' says Paddy, 'I never saw such a hole in my life. She must be thirty foot deep.'

'She is,' says Johnny, 'and maybe more. Are you for buying?'

'I am, surely,' says Paddy, 'how much are you looking?'

'Well, she's worth twenty pound, for she took me the guts of a whole day digging her, but seeing I'm a Newry man myself, I'll let her go for ten.'

'Fair enough,' says Murphy, 'it's a deal. But how will I get her home to Newry?'

'Well,' says Johnny, 'there's always the Ulster Transport Authority.'

So Paddy landed at the UTA depot in Newry and he said to the clerk: 'I'm just after buying this hole beyond in Mullaghbawn, and I'd like to hire a lorry and six men to bring her back to Newry.'

'That's all in order,' says the clerk, 'I'll have a lorry and a gang of men out there in no time, and you should have the hole some time tomorrow afternoon.'

Next day Paddy spent the whole afternoon pacing the floor waiting for the hole to arrive. Night came and there was no word of the hole. So, next morning he went to the UTA office and demanded to speak to the manager.

'It's like this,' says Paddy, 'I bought a hole beyond in Mullaghbawn, and I was looking forward to having her

installed in the front garden, and I hired a lorry and six men in this very office for the job, and damn the hole I've seen yet. What kind of service do you call that?'

'You're right,' says the manager, 'this won't do at all.' And he called over to the clerk for an explanation.

'Oh,' says the clerk, 'are you the man that bought the hole? Well, I sent out a lorry and a gang of men, and after struggling with the hole for seven hours, they

eventually succeeded in placing her on the back of the vehicle; but there's a wild steep incline between Mullaghbawn and Newry, and the hole fell off the back of the lorry. The men were trying their level best to get the hole back on, when the lorry fell into the hole. The men then tried to haul the lorry out of the hole, but fell in themselves, and we haven't seen sight nor hair of them since!'

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) Where in this story, did it first strike you that it was going to be a funny tale? Account for your answer. (10)
- (ii) In the remainder of the story, what are the signals that let you know it is intended to be a humorous story? (20)
- (iii) Write a paragraph (100 – 150 words) in which you comment on the appropriateness of the title, "An Irish Sense of Humour". (20)

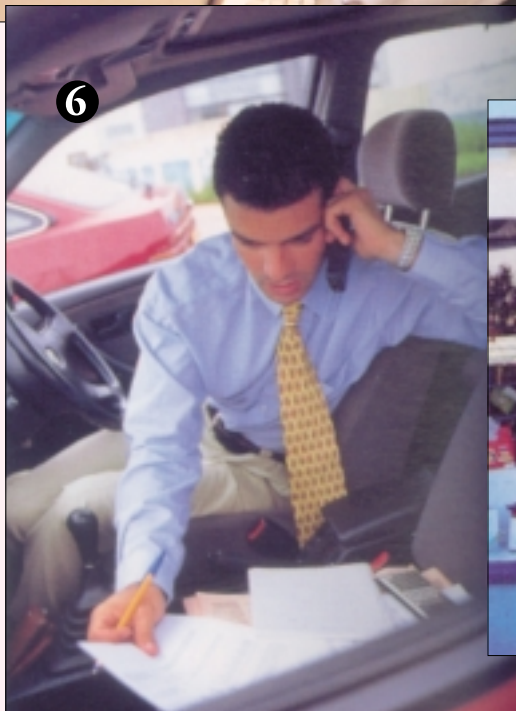
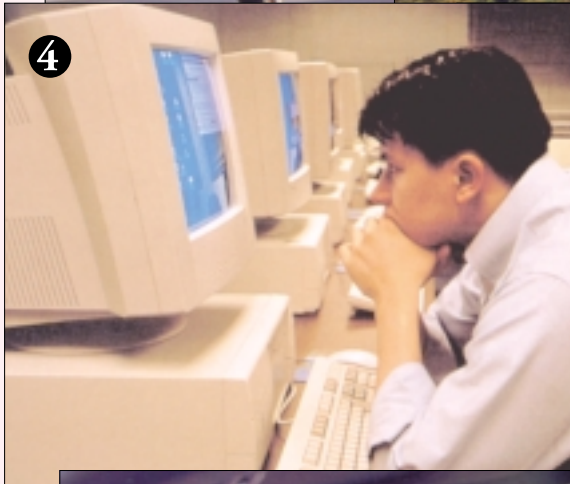
Question B

Imagine your local radio station is producing a programme entitled *COMIC MOMENTS* in which a person from the community introduces his/her favourite comic moment from the world of radio, television, or live performance. Write the text (150 – 200 words) of the presentation you would like to make. (50)



TEXT 4

IMAGES OF IRELAND



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) Taking all of the above images into account, in your opinion what overall picture of Ireland is projected in this visual text? Outline your views in 150 – 200 words, supporting your points by reference to the images. (20)
- (ii) (a) Imagine this series of images is to be used in a brochure whose objective it is to promote Ireland abroad. Which one of the images would you choose for its front cover? Justify your choice. (15)
- (b) You are the editor of the brochure mentioned in part (a). Which one of the images would you judge to be **least representative** of the Ireland you wish to promote? Justify your choice. (15)

Question B

A Day in the Life

Choose **one** of the people pictured in TEXT 4 and write **four** short diary entries that your chosen person might write on **one important day** in his/her life. You should indicate clearly the person you have chosen and you should write the diary entries as though you were that person. (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. “Citizens of Ireland...you have chosen me to represent you...” (TEXT 2)

You have been elected President of Ireland. Write the first speech you would make to the Irish people.

2. “The shoes of Irishness fit me well.” (Jennifer Johnston, TEXT 1)

Write a personal essay in which you explore your sense of what it means to be Irish.

3. “Our games are...part of what we are.” (Seán McCague, TEXT 1)

Write an article intended for inclusion in the sports pages of a newspaper in which you attempt to persuade your readers of the value of sport in our lives.

4. “Songs are a safe place to visit how you really feel.” (Brian Kennedy, TEXT 1)

Write an article for your school or local magazine in which you explore your feelings about the place of music and/or songs in your life.

5. “Our young people look outwards.” (Martin Mansergh, TEXT 1)

Write a letter to Martin Mansergh in which you outline your response to his view of young Irish people.

6. “An Irish Sense of Humour.” (TEXT 3)

Write a narrative similar in style to the story told in TEXT 3.

7. **Write a short story prompted by one or more of the images in TEXT 4.**

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