



# Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2006

## English – Higher Level – Paper I

Total Marks: 200

Wednesday, 7 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 PRETENCE.
- 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 I

“WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM, LADY SARAH?”

*In this extract (adapted from A Border Station, by Shane Connaughton) a father and son are cutting down a tree. The father, a garda sergeant, has been given permission by Lady Sarah, a member of the landed gentry, to cut down a small tree on her lands. However, he decides to ignore her wishes and cut down a magnificent beech tree on the avenue leading to the Great House. We join the story as the tree falls...*

“She’s going,” said his father. Branches quaking, the huge tree tilted, twisted and, fighting to stay upright, grabbed at a neighbouring tree but, bowing to its fate, keeled over and with a creaking goodbye-sigh rushed to the earth with a thunderous hurricane crash. The boy felt the shock waves in his feet and saw the light flood in to the space where the tree had stood. It was mad, he thought. Ridiculous. Lady Sarah was bound to find out. His father grinned.

“It’ll see us in firewood for the winter, thank God.”

Tired out he sat on the tree-stump beside his father and had alternate swigs at the bottle of cold tea.

Hearing a noise he turned his head and instantly his body and blood went cold. Approaching along at the wheel of her antiquated Rolls Royce was Lady Sarah. Time stopped dead. His father gave a strangled groan and his face iced over in hatred. They were caught like rats in a trap.

The car crunched to a halt. He was terrified in case his father did something desperate and was all the more amazed when he saw him smiling and in high good nature waving to Lady Sarah as she, horror-stricken, stepped onto the drive. Wearing a peculiar 1920s hat and a flapping plastic mack she dismissed his father’s greeting and staggered towards the tree.

“What have you done, Sergeant, what have you done!” she wailed. “You have killed one of my beauties!”

Grabbing and clutching the stricken branches she buried herself in the copper coloured leaves.

“Oh Beatrice, Beatrice, my beauty, how has this occurred?”

His father winked.

“What’s wrong, what seems to be the problem, Lady Sarah?”



“The problem,” she replied, stepping from the tree, “is that you have murdered the wrong tree.” Behind the thick lenses of her spectacles her eyes were tiny red dots of dismay.

“Oh no, we haven’t, have we?” howled his father, his face a dancing mask of pantomime surprise. “Good Lord, I can’t believe it. Are you sure Lady Sarah?”

“Oh yes I’m sure alright. I gave you a weakling ash, not this!”

Suddenly he turned on the boy and made as if to strike him.

“Didn’t I tell you it wasn’t this one? I told you all along.”

The boy hung his head in shame and didn’t dare look at Lady Sarah because he knew she knew his father lied.

“I’ll do anything I can by way of reparation, anything. I remember you saying the tree’s name is Andy. I think that’s what confused me. That and the boy. Beech wood is no good to me anyway. It’s a poor burner. A weakling ash is just what I wanted, Lady Sarah.”

Once more he blamed the boy and made a run at him as if to hit him. Darting out of his way he went close to Lady Sarah and looked into her eyes.

She knew.

Turning away she faced the dead Beatrice and with her frail hand plucked a copper leaf.

Resting on her fingers like a clot of blood, she held it to her mouth and nose and sighed as if kissing goodbye to a loved one. Tears welled in the boy's eyes. Lady Sarah looked very old, very sad, and a little frightened. She owned the great demesne, employed many people, but up against his father she knew the truth. He was the Garda Sergeant and she was just a lonely

spinster, powerless to command. She needed him to protect her property. The law was hers but it was on his word that it was carried out.

Getting into her car, she spoke softly, her pride hurt, her spirit shocked.

"You may as well finish what you so cruelly started."

"Well that's the only damn thing we can do now, Lady Sarah."

Hours later as they drove home, though his body ached, the boy's soul raged rampant at the conquering smirk on his father's face.

**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) Do you consider the first paragraph to be an example of good descriptive writing? Explain your view. (15)
- (ii) How do the boy's feelings towards Lady Sarah change as the narrative progresses? Support your answer by reference to the text. (15)
- (iii) A reader of the passage has commented: "Both Lady Sarah and the father are powerful, but in different ways." What, in your opinion, would have led the reader to this conclusion? (20)

### QUESTION B

**"Hours later...the boy's soul raged..."**

Imagine that, in an attempt to control his feelings, the boy writes into his diary an account of the incident and his reactions to it.

Write out his diary entry. (50)



## TEXT 2

### GHOST WRITING



*Jan Stevens is a ghost writer; that is, someone who writes books that are published as the work of someone else.*

#### On Ghost Writing

I am a ghost writer. I write books that other people take credit for – people more famous than me, or busier, or who simply can't be trusted with a pen.

I have written for well-known authors, celebrities, and even for other ghost writers who found themselves over-worked. I have written legal thrillers, historical non-fiction, mysteries, and even ghost stories. However, my name doesn't appear on the covers of any of these books, or on their copyright page. My anonymity is complete. Sometimes, even the publishers don't know I exist. My name, of course, does appear on my contracts. To prevent confusion, the language of these contracts calls me the *ghost writer* and the other party is referred to as the *author*. Under the terms of my contracts, I'm forbidden from revealing the identity of my authors. Ghost writers have to keep their secrets, or face lawsuits.

Ghost writing can be challenging. For one thing, ghost writers have to write very quickly. We are often given work that has a looming deadline. I once wrote a 120,000-word novel in twelve weeks. That's 2,000 words every day

for five days a week. Maintaining this sprinter's pace at marathon length was painful, requiring much solitude and coffee. However, I made my 2,000-word count every single day without fail. One of the advantages of ghost writing is that the *almost* right word will serve as well as the *right* word.

Some ghost writers I know are haunted by the loss of recognition and go to great lengths to put secret codes into their ghost novels. They concoct sentence-length acronyms or give minor characters anagrams of their own names, so that future historians will decipher the work's true author. Others enjoy private jokes: inserting the names of cats, roommates, or favourite restaurants into their ghosted books as a kind of petty claim to ownership.

A common question asked of ghost writers is, "So, what do the *authors* actually do?" The answer covers a considerable range. I once wrote a novel from a fifty-page outline that provided specific adjectives and images for each chapter. Other authors provide only a paragraph or two. Some offer little guidance, but attack the finished work in minute detail. This ghost writer cares little because, by then, I'm busy haunting somewhere else.

As a rule, the most "prolific" authors are the most detached. I've written five books for one man whom I've never met or spoken to, or even e-mailed. His editors, however, assure me that he has actually *read* the books, and that he rather enjoyed them.

A good ghost writer is expected to pick up an author's style by reading the author's other books. I often wonder if these were, in fact, written by yet another ghost writer. Am I a copy of a copy?

So, what of the ethics of ghost writing? Is ghost writing a case of false advertising? Is it simply bad manners? It can be argued that a book is simply a product; you either enjoy it or you don't, and the author's name is no more a personal signature than the

Nike logo or any other well-known trademark. Moreover, publishing is a business like any other. As in every business in a market economy, the aim is to make profit from someone else's labour. I don't object to this. Indeed, someday I hope to come up with a get-rich idea, a detective or adventure series that will be hugely successful with the reading public. I'll write the first few books in the series, and then let some other poor ghost writer follow *my* instructions for a while.

After all, I've got to know quite a few ghost writers in the last decade. Between us, I could author twenty books a year without too much effort. Indeed, when I mentioned I was going to write this essay, one of them volunteered to write it for me!

(And how do you know she didn't?)

**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) On the evidence of this passage, what is the attitude of Jan Stevens to ghost writing?  
(15)
- (ii) In your view, what is lost **and** gained by the 'author' in a ghost writing arrangement? Support your answer by reference to the text.  
(15)
- (iii) Jan Stevens sets out to inform the reader on the topic of ghost writing. What features make this an interesting piece of informative writing?  
(20)

### QUESTION B

Write a letter to a famous writer **or** celebrity **or** sports personality of your choice offering your services as a ghost writer for a future book. In your letter you should outline the reasons why you believe you would make a successful *ghost writer* for your chosen *author*.

(50)

### TEXT 3 PRETENCE

*The following text consists of a visual and a written element.*



Masters of pretence



Diving?!

Make-believe

## **PRETENCE – Everybody’s doing it!**

Psychologists tell us that the habit of pretending is unique to the human species and begins in very early childhood. From about two years of age children engage in imaginary conversations with make-believe characters (talking to a doll, inventing an imaginary companion) or pretending to engage in a variety of adult activities (talking into a banana as if it were a telephone, pretending to cook and eat mud pies, pretending to be a teacher, a soldier, a Garda). The young of no other creature on earth behave like this.

It seems that this childhood role-playing is just training for later life where pretence is widespread. From the actor on stage shedding tears as he plays a tragic role for the hundredth time, to Ronaldo diving in the penalty area (again!), we are the masters of pretence.

Indeed, pretence often soothes the friction between people and promotes smoother relationships. Without it our world would be a crueller place.

Can you imagine if everyone said, “Let’s stop all this pretence! Let’s tell each other the unvarnished truth for a change!”

Imagine it’s St. Valentine’s Day and the young not so gallant lover comes to his tender lady’s door. She twirls in her new dress and utters the invitation to praise. “Well? How do I look?” And he replies truthfully, “Well, let me see, dear. Hm... You know... I’d prefer you in something else!” In this case the absence of pretence might lead to a shorter than expected lifespan!

So why do we have this fascination with pretence?

Well, it is an expression of the two great gifts which make human beings unique: the gift of imagination and the ability to make one another happy.

**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) In your opinion which of the visual images best expresses the theme of pretence? Explain your choice. (15)
- (ii) Taking the images as a group, do you think they go well with the written passage? Explain your answer. (15)
- (iii) Do you think the writer is justified in the conclusions drawn in the final paragraph? Explain your view. (20)

### **QUESTION B**

**Advertising and young people – You report to the Advertising Standards Authority.**

There is much discussion as to whether or not young people are being exploited by advertisers. Write a short report to the Advertising Standards Authority outlining your views on the matter.

(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. “Let’s stop all this pretence! Let’s tell each other the unvarnished truth for a change!”  
(TEXT 3)

**Write a personal essay in response to the above statement.**

2. “Maintaining this sprinter’s pace at marathon length was painful...” (TEXT 2)

**Write an article for a magazine for young adult readers in which you give them advice about how to cope with the pressures of modern living.**

3. “It was mad...Ridiculous.” (TEXT 1)

**Write a short story suggested by the above title.**

4. “...Someday I hope to come up with a get-rich idea...” (TEXT 2)

**Write a magazine article (serious or light-hearted) in which you outline a get-rich idea of your own.**

5. “What seems to be the problem...?” (TEXT 1)

**Write the speech you would deliver to a group of world leaders in which you persuade them to deal with one or more of the world’s problems.**

6. “Imagine it’s St. Valentine’s Day...” (TEXT 3)

**Write an article for a popular magazine on the importance of romance in our lives.**

7. **Write a short story prompted by one or more of the images in TEXT 3.**



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