



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2007

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 **three** texts on the general theme of CHANGE.
- 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 FILMS TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

The following text is based on extracts from the recent publication, “1000 Films to Change your Life”, edited by Simon Cropper.



I never went to the cinema as a child. As a bookish teenager I loved reading and going to the theatre. I felt film could not rival the blood-and-sweat physicality of live drama. It seemed impossible that film could ever give voice to the idealism and tangled passions that raged in my teenage heart.

And then, luckily, I happened to see Vittorio De Sica’s “Bicycle Thieves”. A simple story at heart, it charts the struggles of proud but unemployed father, Antonio Ricci, to find a job in post-war Italy that will let him feed his wife and child. He is finally offered work – pasting film posters across the city – but he has to lie and pretend he has a bicycle. His wife pawns their bed sheets so he can get one, but it is stolen almost immediately. For the rest of the film he wanders up and down the city, often with his young son in tow, trying to track down the thief. The anger he reveals, both in the words that he yells as well as in every eloquent close-up of his

face, underlines his frustration. Ricci’s defiance demonstrates that this is not the way society should be. That simple idea is the first and most important stage in encouraging viewers to imagine what a better society would look like.

Documentaries can achieve the same effect. Among the most well known are those of journalist-turned-film-maker Michael Moore. Whether taking on the chairman of General Motors in “Roger and Me”, the powerful gun industry in “Bowling for Columbine”, or the Bush administration in “Fahrenheit 9/11”, he concocts an old-fashioned tale of good versus evil and casts himself as the underdog yapping away at the heels of political and corporate giants.

Political films also set out to make us see the world in a new and clearer light. Without explicit commentary they dramatise issues like the oil-industry drama, “Syriana”, or “Erin Brokovich” the true story of a single mother’s exposé of an industry water poisoning case. These films make an impact because you reflect on the issues raised and this strengthens your own views and understanding.

But cinema doesn’t just make us think. It makes us laugh too. Humour is impossible to define but it’s about something that’s in us all. It’s about the mistakes we make and the craziness of the world we live in. Ben Stiller’s fashion spoof, “Zoolander”, is a wonderful satire on the vanity and corruption of the fashion industry. Comedy has always been best at mocking pretensions and can say quite as much as drama and documentary while reaching a bigger audience. Group laughter in a darkened

movie-theatre is also a comforting, confidence-building mode of social bonding.

Then there are, of course, the great positive movie moments that can and do take you out of yourself, lift your mood, crack a smile, raise your spirits. Classic Hollywood films continue to exert a glamorous spell over our imaginations. Taking the regular television schedules as an indicator of our taste in cinema, we see “The Wizard of Oz”, “It’s a Wonderful Life”, “The Sound of Music”, to name only the most obvious titles. All underline our need for the guaranteed joy that these endlessly repeatable movies provide.

Nothing entertains us like the movies but they also have the power to ignite strong passions. A film can make us laugh, make us sad, frighten or reassure us, make us angry – and even sometimes make us want to change the world.



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 what way, according to the author of this text, do films change the way we think and/or feel about life? Support your answer by reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) As a teenager the writer found reading books more rewarding and appealing than watching films. Has this been your experience? Explain your answer. (15)
- (iii) What features of the writer’s style help to make this an interesting piece to read? Support your answer by reference to the text. (20)

QUESTION B

Imagine you are running for the position of Student Council President in your school. Compose an informative election leaflet encouraging students to vote for you. It should outline your own leadership qualities and the changes you would like to introduce into your school. (50)



TEXT 2

LONDON, PAST AND PRESENT

In 1930, wandering through London for a series of magazine articles, Virginia Woolf found a city alive with bustling activity and excitement. Here, novelist Monica Ali takes a 21st century stroll in Woolf's footsteps – and seventy-five years later finds London humming to a different tune.



Following in Virginia Woolf's footsteps, I begin at the Thames on a hot, cloudless day. I sit on a bench and read from her article about the city of London in 1930:

“As we come closer to the Tower Bridge the domes swell and church spires, white with age, mingle with the tapering, pencil-shaped chimneys of factories”.

I look at the London before me today and see no factory chimneys. The spires and domes are overshadowed by the glass towers, smoky, clear and pallid green. Red buses splash across London Bridge. Cranes, one white, one blue, make their majestic swings at distant building sites. Only the river refuses to sparkle in the sun. It is resolutely, doggedly brown.

The hustle and bustle of the docks described by Woolf –

“the ships lying captive beneath the warehouses, the hoisting of barrels, sacks and crates, the lorries jostling in the narrow lanes to shift the wool that the cart horses struggle to distribute”

– have vanished. The immense, plain and unornamented warehouses through which

Woolf meandered so many years ago, nowadays contain a mix of luxury apartments, offices, restaurants and shops. Air-conditioning units chant and hum but there is no “roar” here now. I wonder at this new, noiseless commerce, at how it works unseen and wrapped around in shrouds of glass.

I tune in to conversations around me. Office workers hold meetings in the open air with cappuccinos and almond-laden croissants. “Spreadsheet” I hear, and “gameplan” and “yeah we should talk about that sometime”. These fake meetings with folders offered like excuses reflect today's world of mighty commerce.

Modern London is a thirsty, ravenous city, ready at every moment to eat and drink. Woolf passed from east to west of the city without giving meals a thought, but today, at every step, we are encouraged to sit down at once and eat. I wander up and down, counting cafés and restaurants: Chop House, Pizza Express, Starbucks, cafés without names. For all that it is chic and smart there is something dispiriting about

these cobbled streets. I do not like this Starbucks world. And yet what romance existed in the old cloth-capped world of 1930 where dockers waited at warehouse gates in hope of work?

I join other tourists queuing for the “Tower Bridge Experience” – a series of audio-visual presentations, with robotic characters to guide you through the story of this world-famous London landmark. It saves you the bother of imagining, by providing special effects, including sounds and smells. I am dispirited again and not because I mourn for a lost London but because it is so difficult to see the London that is there for myself. We must now buy “The Experience”.

Woolf turned her attention to churches and now I too seek out St Paul’s Cathedral. Here we are invited first of all to contemplate, not God, but our stomachs. Before you can skip up the steps to the broad porch, you stumble over a sandwich board announcing “The Place Below”, the café that is installed in the crypt. The cathedral no longer dominates the London

skyline as it did in the past but it still retains the “*splendour*” and “*architectural grandeur*” of which Woolf wrote. It is the sense of mystery and serenity that is missing. We are greeted by a voice which speaks in warm and friendly tones, the kind of customer-centred “care” that we have come to expect. “St Paul’s audio tour. Try me! Thank you for visiting us. We hope that you leave the cathedral inspired and refreshed”.

When Woolf passed through what she described as “*the excitement and gaudiness*” of Oxford Street, she saw shopkeepers competing vigorously to meet the needs and desires of customers with “*windows lit up by night and banners flaunting by day*”. Now as I stand here I realize there is still a liveliness that will not be tamed. The discount stores brag of bargains; the souvenir shops are proudly tacky; the smell of fast food is everywhere and the music unapologetically loud. London is truly here, in all its ethnic mix. Despite the push-and-pull of commerce the heart of this place is unchanged.

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) Virginia Woolf described London in 1930 as a “*city alive*”. In your own words, outline the aspects of the city that impressed her most. (15)
- (ii) Monica Ali uses a number of vivid images to portray the modern city of London. Select **three** that you consider particularly effective and explain why. (15)
- (iii) If given the choice, in which of the two Londons, (the one described by Virginia Woolf in 1930 or the modern city experienced by Monica Ali) would you choose to live? Give reasons for your choice with reference to the text. (20)

QUESTION B

Imagine your local radio station is producing a series of programmes entitled “Changing Times”, in which teenagers are asked to give their views on **the changes they welcome** in the world around them. You have been invited to contribute. Write out the text of the presentation you would make. (50)

TEXT 3 FORCES FOR CHANGE?



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) Select **one** of the visual images in this collection for the front cover of a book entitled “Forces for Change in our World”. Give reasons why you consider your chosen image to be the most effective and/or suitable. (15)
- (ii) Does this set of images represent a balanced view of our changing world? Support your view by reference to the images. (15)
- (iii) If asked to select another image to expand this group of images depicting forces for change, what image would you suggest? Give reasons for your choice. (20)

QUESTION B

Imagine you have a friend in another country which is considering the introduction of a ban on smoking in public places.

Write a letter to your friend advising him/her **either** to support **or** not to support the proposed ban. In giving your advice you may wish to draw on the recent experience of the smoking ban in Ireland. (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. “... the idealism and tangled passions that raged in my teenage heart.” (TEXT 1)

Write a personal essay on the idealism and passions of youth.

2. “And yet what romance existed in the old cloth-capped world ...” (TEXT 2)

Write a speech in which you attempt to persuade an audience that the past should not be glorified.

3. “I tune in to conversations around me.” (TEXT 2)

Write a short story suggested by the above sentence.

4. “...the needs and desires of customers...” (TEXT 2)

Write a magazine article (serious or light-hearted) entitled: “The Modern Shopping Centre”.

5. “...make us want to change the world.” (TEXT 1)

Write the text of a talk, serious or humorous, to be given to your peers, entitled: “How I intend to change the world!”

6. “...the first and most important stage in encouraging viewers to imagine...” (TEXT 1)

Write an article for a popular magazine on the importance of the imagination.

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

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