



# Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2009

## English – Higher Level – Paper I

Total Marks: 200

Wednesday, 3 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 DECISIONS.
- 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

#### Decisions for Society

This text is taken from *Head to Head*, a series of public debates, published in April 2008 in *The Irish Times*; it consists of two extracts in response to the question:

### Should Zoos be Closed?

**NO**, according to Veronica Chrisp (Head of Marketing at Dublin Zoo) who believes zoos connect us to the natural world.



If anybody could witness the look of amazement and wonder on the face of a six-year-old child as he, or she, sees an elephant, a snake or a gorilla for the very first time, it is unlikely that zoos would ever again be put on the defensive.

Of course, in our culture, the very word *zoo* has negative connotations – often evoking ideas of bored animals kept in Victorian menageries for the benefit of an unappreciative audience. Nothing could be further from the truth. Animals in zoos live enriched lives: they are fit and healthy, able to breed and raise their young. They can be observed in naturalistic spaces with vegetation and water features that reflect their native habitat and are designed with the animals' physical, psychological and social needs in mind. The designers of Dublin Zoo's Kaziranga forest trail, for example, sought inspiration from the wild before ever setting pen to paper. Two healthy elephant calves later, the habitat is proving a delight for elephants and their visitors alike.

The ethical and well-managed zoo has a vital role in our society: as a living classroom,  
(continued on page 3)

**YES**, according to Bernie Wright (Press Officer of the Alliance for Animal Rights) who believes zoos will always be prisons for animals.



A zoo is simply a collection of animals. It makes money by attracting paying visitors. The quality of life for the animals varies from totally inadequate to barely adequate.

In 2008, Dublin Zoo sits on roughly 60 acres. It boasts such habitats as African plains, fringes of the Arctic, rainforests, the Kaziranga forest trail, and shops and restaurants. All of this, and 600 animals ranging from tigers, elephants and chimps to red pandas, hardly seems like a natural environment. To quote the zoo, it invites visitors to “go wild in the heart of the city”. It's a pity the animals cannot do the same. Indeed, it is well documented that elephants can roam more than 40 miles in a day in their natural surroundings.

Most animals on display in zoos are not threatened by extinction, yet captive breeding programmes which endeavour to save species are one of the most common reasons that zoos use to justify their existence. When asked how many animals have been reintroduced back into the wild by Dublin Zoo since the 1800s, the answer was “we have none in the records but

(continued on page 3)

### NO (continued)

conservation centre, animal sanctuary, centre of excellence in animal husbandry, science and research, and a major visitor attraction. And in order to remind people of the joy of the natural world, and to encourage and inspire visitors to understand wildlife, the zoo offers a really great day out for all.

Modern zoos are managed by caring professionals who devote their lives to the welfare of animals and to understanding their needs; they adhere to strict codes of practice in animal welfare laid down by European and global associations.

More than 900,000 people visited Dublin Zoo in 2007. All age groups, nationalities and different walks of life were represented – 50,000 of them were schoolchildren who visited as part of their formal education.

Imagine the void left if the zoo was closed. Who would tell children about how elephants communicate, why monkeys hang by their tails or why flamingos are pink? How wonderful that they can see a real elephant or a zebra, or even a meerkat, without even having to switch on the television.

### YES (continued)

possibly a golden lion tamarin”. Strangely, there are no statistics for released animals.

The focus of zoos is on human entertainment rather than education. They tend to be home to crowd-pleasers – animals that are cute, or massive, or funny, or ferocious. The Alliance for Animal Rights’ observations show that even if learning material is available, most zoo-goers disregard it. Children, especially, rush from one exhibit to another, pausing only if animals are being fed or performing cute tricks. Good wildlife television programmes today can show normal behaviour of animals in their natural surrounds. Alternatively, there are safari jobs or holidays. We do not need to confine animals in zoos to learn.

Some animals might live longer in zoos, but at what price? Elephants in captivity display chronic health problems. Other animals just go mad. Unnaturally housed or insane animals cannot be representative of their species. It is morally unacceptable to keep any being in an environment where natural instincts are continuously frustrated – the enclosure becomes a prison. I urge anyone who visits a zoo to really look into an animal’s eyes. Do they deserve life imprisonment without ever committing a crime?

**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 the above text, outline the views of Veronica Chrisp and Bernie Wright on **animal welfare in zoos**. (15)
- (ii) Join the debate.  
Having considered the views expressed in the text, do **you** think zoos should be closed? Give reasons for your decision. (15)
- (iii) Select **four features** of argumentative and/or persuasive writing evident in the text and comment on their effectiveness. Refer to the text in support of your answer. (20)

#### QUESTION B

“Go wild in the heart of the city”.

Imagine you are making a cartoon film (featuring animals as characters) **either** to promote **or** oppose zoos. Write the **script of a scene (in dialogue form)** between two of the animal characters. (50)

## TEXT 2

### Personal Decisions

**This text is taken from a short story by Australian writer David Malouf entitled *The Valley of Lagoons*. In this extract, a bookish young teenager longs to join his mates on a hunting trip to the mysterious Valley of Lagoons. The story is set in Brisbane, Australia.**



My father was not a hunting man. When he and my mother first came here in the late nineteen thirties, he'd been invited out, when August came round, on a hunting party to the Lagoons. It was a courtesy, an act of neighbourliness extended to a newcomer, if only to see how he might fit in. "Thanks Gerry," I imagine him saying in his easy way. "Not this time I reckon. Ask me again next year, eh?" And he had said that again the following year, and the year after, until they stopped asking. My father wasn't being stand-offish or condescending. It was simply that hunting, and the grand rigmarole, as he saw it, of gun talk and game talk and dog talk, was not his style.

He had been a soldier in New Guinea and had seen enough perhaps, for one lifetime, of killing. It was an oddness in him that was accepted like any other, humorously, and was perhaps not entirely unexpected in a man who had more books in his house than could be found in the county library.

As the town's only solicitor, he was a respected figure. He was liked. My mother too was an outsider and, despite heavy hints, had not joined the sewing circle and jam-and-chutney-makers.

After more than twenty years in the district, my father had never been to the Lagoons, and till I was sixteen I had not been there either, except in the dreamtime of my own imaginings. When I was in third grade at primary school, it was the magic of the name itself that drew me. But it was not marked on the wall-map in our classroom and I could not find it in any atlas which gave it the status of a secret place. It had a history but only in the telling: in stories I heard from fellows in the playground at school, or from their older brothers at the barbershop.

Just five hours south off a good dirt highway, it was where all the river systems in our quarter of the state have their rising: the big rain-swollen streams that begin in a thousand thread-like runnels and falls in the rainforests, then plunge and gather and flow wide-banked and muddy-watered to the coast. It was the place where the leisurely watercourses make their way inland across plains stacked with anthills and break up and lose themselves in the mudflats and swamps.

Each year in the first week of August, my friend Braden's father, Wes McGowan, got up a hunting party. I was always invited. My father after a good deal of humming and hawing and using my mother as an excuse, would tell me I was too young and decline to let me go. But I knew he was uneasy about it, and all through the last weeks of July, as talk in the town grew, I waited in the hope he might relent.

When the day of the hunt came I would get up early, pull on a sweater against the cold and, in the misty half-light just before dawn, jog down the deserted main street, past the last service station at the edge of town, to the river park where the McGowans' truck would be waiting, piled high with tarpaulins, bedrolls, cook-pots, and Braden settled among them with two Labrador retrievers at his feet.

Old Wes McGowan and Henry Denkler, who was also the town mayor, would be out stretching their legs, stamping their boots on the frosty ground or bending to inspect the tyres. The older McGowan boys, Stuart and Glen, would be squatting on their heels over a smoke. When the second vehicle drew up with Matt Riley and his nephew, Jem, a second inspection would be made of the tyres and the load and then with all the rituals of meeting done, they would climb into the cabin of the truck, and I would be left standing to wave them off; and then jog slowly back home.

The break came in the year after I turned sixteen. When I went for the third or fourth year running to tell my father that the McGowans had offered to take me out to the Lagoons and to ask if I could go, he surprised me by looking up over the top of his glasses and saying, “That’s up to you, son. You’re old enough, I reckon, to make your own decisions”. It was to be Braden’s last trip before he went to university. “So,” said my father quietly, though he already

knew the answer, “what’s it to be?”  
“I’d really like to go,” I told him.

“Good,” he said, not sounding regretful. “I want you to look out and be careful, that’s all. Braden’s a sensible enough young fellow. But your mother will worry her soul case out till you’re home again.”  
What he meant was, *he* would.

Just before sun-up, the McGowans’ truck swung uphill to where I was waiting with my duffel bag and bedroll on our front veranda. Behind me, the lights were on in our front room and my mother was there in her dressing gown, with a mug of tea to warm her hands, just inside the screen door. I was glad the others could not see her, and hoped she would not come out at the last moment to kiss me or tuck my scarf into my windcheater. But in fact, “Look after Braden,” was all she said as I waved and shouted “See you” over my shoulder and took three leaps down to the front gate.

**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) David Malouf evokes a strong sense of place in this extract from his short story. What impression do you get of the Australian town and its people? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) Do you think the boy has a good relationship with his parents? Give reasons for your answer. (15)
- (iii) Identify and comment on **four** features of narrative and/or descriptive writing evident in this text. Support your answer by illustration from the text. (20)

### **QUESTION B**

“You’re old enough, I reckon, to make your own decisions.”

Write a short **speech** in which you attempt to persuade a group of parents that older teenagers should be trusted to make their own decisions. (50)

## TEXT 3

### The Decisive Moment

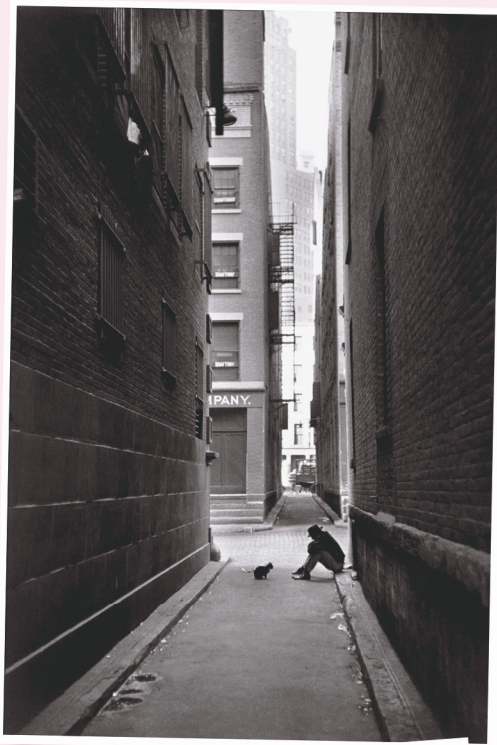
The following text consists of a visual and written element. The visual part is a selection of photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson. The written element is an extract from an essay entitled “Creating the Decisive Moment” by Frank Van Riper.



① Man jumping a puddle, Paris. 1932



② Friendship, New Jersey. 1947



③ Solitude, Downtown, New York. 1947



④ The Unemployed read the Want Ads, Los Angeles. 1947

## Creating the Decisive Moment

Henri Cartier-Bresson, (1908-2004), the legendary photographer, coined the term “the decisive moment” to refer to photography’s unique ability to freeze time, to capture moments in an instant, be it a fleeting emotion between two lovers, peak sports action or tragedy amid war and upheaval. He believed that there was nothing in the world that did not have a decisive moment and there was just a creative fraction of a second for a photographer to know when to click the camera.

Part of being able to capture the decisive moment is practice and, just as in fishing, it requires great patience and flawless reflexes. I’ve learned that sometimes the best moments happen after or before an actual event. The first instance that comes to mind is trying to make a telling picture of a child blowing out birthday candles. You wait for the child to perform and most often you’ll get a passable photo of a kid with billowing cheeks blowing out candles. But with more experience you wait for the instant just after the candles go out, when the child looks up from the cake, his or her face flush with excitement and achievement amid a wreath of candle smoke.

One of my favourite shots during my time as a children’s photographer was of twin toddler boys sitting side by side on a couch in their parents’ living room. During the shoot I asked the mother to place her older son’s electric guitar – something they were never allowed to touch – in their lap. The ecstatic looks on the boys’ faces – the decisive moment, to be sure – was the best picture of the session. The smallest thing, the little human detail, can be a great subject and when you capture it and everything else falls together, it is a wonderful feeling.

Photography is unique among the visual arts, not only because a photograph cannot be created from memory, but because the subject of the photograph – and not really the photographer – determines absolutely what the depiction will be. “Photography shows us things that lie beyond our imagination and compel our amazement because they really happened,” said writer David Jenkins. That’s why I cringe to hear people dismissing the idea of the decisive moment as outmoded and irrelevant today because a picture or photograph can now be patched together from different digital elements. Sure it can. Just don’t call it photography.

**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) From your reading of this text what do you understand by the term “the decisive moment”? Refer to both the **written and visual text** in support of your answer. (15)
- (ii) Select **three** features of the author’s style in the **written** element of the text and comment on their effectiveness. Support your answer with reference to the **written** text. (15)
- (iii) Write a personal response to the visual image in Text 3 that makes the greatest impact on you.  
[You might consider the subject matter, setting, mood, caption, relevancy, photographic qualities/technique, etc.] (20)

### QUESTION B

“...photography’s unique ability to freeze time...”

Imagine your art teacher is compiling a photographic exhibition to reflect the lives of young people today. She has asked students to suggest images they would like included. Write a **letter** to your art teacher proposing **five** images that you believe should be included and give reasons for your decision in each case. (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. “...a living classroom...” (TEXT 1)

**Write an article (serious and/or light-hearted) for a school magazine about your experience of education over the last number of years.**

2. “...a good deal of humming and ha-ing...” (TEXT 2)

**Write an opinion piece for a popular magazine entitled “Indecision – my own and other people’s”.**

3. “...the decisive moment...” (TEXT 3)

**Write a short story in which the central character is faced with making an important decision.**

4. “...science and research...” (TEXT 1)

**Write a persuasive speech in praise of science and technology.**

5. “...a respected figure.” (TEXT 2)

**Write a newspaper article on some of today’s respected public figures, exploring the qualities that make them worthy of respect.**

6. “...the dreamtime of my own imaginings.” (TEXT 2)

**Write a personal essay on the topic of daydreams.**

7. **Write a short story in which a photograph, or a set of photographs, plays a part in the plot. Your story may be prompted by one or more of the photographs in TEXT 3.**



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