



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2014

English - Higher Level - Paper 2

Total Marks: 200

Thursday, 5th June – Afternoon, 2.00 – 5.20

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 (*Macbeth*) or in SECTION II, The Comparative Study (*Macbeth, Othello*).

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

A PRIDE AND PREJUDICE – Jane Austen

- (i) “Readers can both admire Elizabeth Bennet’s character and learn a variety of lessons from her experiences.”

To what extent do you agree with this view? Support your answer with suitable reference to the novel, *Pride and Prejudice*.

OR

- (ii) “Throughout the novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen uses a variety of techniques to entertain her readers and provide commentary on the society of her day.”

Discuss this view of the novel, supporting your answer with suitable reference to the text.

B EMPIRE OF THE SUN – J. G. Ballard

- (i) “Despite his experiences throughout the story, in many ways Jim’s character remains unchanged.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this view of the character of Jim Graham? Support your answer with suitable reference to Ballard’s novel, *Empire of the Sun*.

OR

- (ii) “In the novel, *Empire of the Sun*, Ballard presents readers with both horror and humanity to create a compelling account of war.”

Discuss this view of the novel, supporting your answer with suitable reference to the text.

C TRANSLATIONS – Brian Friel

- (i) “Many of the main characters experience conflicting loyalties and learn bitter lessons during the course of the play, *Translations*.”

Discuss this view, supporting your answer with suitable reference to at least two main characters in the play.

OR

- (ii) “Friel gives language a central role in *Translations* both as a theme and as a dramatic technique.”

Discuss this view, supporting your answer with suitable reference to the play.

D NEVER LET ME GO – Kazuo Ishiguro

- (i) “Readers of *Never Let Me Go* can have difficulty sympathising with Kathy, Ruth and Tommy because they are too passive and accept their fate without question.”

Discuss this view, supporting your answer with suitable reference to at least two of the above characters in the novel.

OR

- (ii) “Ishiguro’s novel, *Never Let Me Go*, shocks readers with a relentlessly bleak vision of a morally bankrupt world.”

To what extent has this been your experience of reading *Never Let Me Go*? Explain your answer with suitable reference to the text.

E MACBETH – William Shakespeare

- (i) “Macbeth’s relationships with other characters can be seen primarily as power struggles which prove crucial to the outcome of the play.”

Discuss the above statement in relation to at least two of Macbeth’s relationships with other characters. Support your answer with suitable reference to the play, *Macbeth*.

OR

- (ii) “Throughout the play, *Macbeth*, Shakespeare makes effective use of a variety of dramatic techniques that evoke a wide range of responses from the audience.”

Discuss this view with reference to at least two dramatic techniques used by Shakespeare in the play. Support your answer with suitable reference to the text.

Candidates must answer **one** question from **either A – The Cultural Context or B – The General Vision and Viewpoint**.

In your answer you may not use the text you have answered on in **SECTION I – The Single Text**.

N.B. The questions use the word **text** to refer to all the different kinds of texts available for study on this course, i.e. novel, play, short story, autobiography, biography, travel writing, and film. The questions use the word **reader** to include viewers of films and theatre audiences.

A THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

1. “Various social groups, both large and small, (such as family, friends, organisations or community) reflect the cultural context in texts.”

Compare the extent to which one or more social groups reflect the cultural context in **at least two texts** on your comparative course. (70)

OR

2. “The cultural context within a text often dictates the crises or difficulties faced by characters and their responses to these difficulties.”

(a) Discuss to what extent this statement applies to at least one central character in **one** of the texts you have studied for your comparative course. (30)

(b) Compare the extent to which the above statement is applicable to at least one central character in each of **two other texts** you have studied on your comparative course. (40)

B THE GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT

1. (a) “The extent to which a reader can relate an aspect of a text to his or her experience of life, helps to shape an understanding of the general vision and viewpoint of that text.”

Discuss this view in relation to your study of **one** text on your comparative course. (30)

- (b) With reference to the text you referred to in 1. (a) above and **at least one other text** from your comparative course, compare how two other aspects of the texts (excluding the aspect discussed in 1. (a) above) influenced your understanding of the general vision and viewpoint of those texts. (40)

OR

2. “Significant events in texts and the impact they have on readers often help to clarify the general vision and viewpoint of those texts.”

With reference to **three texts** on your comparative course, compare the ways in which at least one significant event in each text, and its impact on you, helped to clarify the general vision and viewpoint of these texts. (70)

Candidates must answer **A** – Unseen Poem **and B** – Prescribed Poetry.

A UNSEEN POEM (20 marks)

Read the following poem by Seamus Heaney from his collection, *Door into the Dark*, and answer **either** Question **1** **or** Question **2** which follow.

The Peninsula

When you have nothing more to say, just drive
For a day all round the peninsula.
The sky is tall as over a runway,
The land without marks, so you will not arrive

But pass through, though always skirting landfall.
At dusk, horizons drink down sea and hill,
The ploughed field swallows the whitewashed gable
And you're in the dark again. Now recall

The glazed foreshore and silhouetted log,
That rock where breakers shredded into rags,
The leggy birds stilted on their own legs,
Islands riding themselves out into the fog,

And drive back home, still with nothing to say
Except that now you will uncode all landscapes
By this: things founded clean on their own shapes,
Water and ground in their extremity.

Seamus Heaney

1. (a) In the above poem Seamus Heaney recommends driving “all round the peninsula”. Based on your reading of the poem, explain why you think the poet recommends undertaking such a journey. (10)
- (b) Choose two images from the poem that appeal to you and explain your choice. (10)

OR

2. Discuss the effectiveness of the poet’s use of language throughout this poem. Your answer should refer closely to the text. (20)

B PRESCRIBED POETRY (50 marks)

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

1. William Butler Yeats

“Yeats uses evocative language to create poetry that includes both personal reflection and public commentary.”

Discuss this statement, supporting your answer with reference to both the themes and language found in the poetry of W. B. Yeats on your course.

2. Emily Dickinson

“The dramatic aspects of Dickinson’s poetry can both disturb and delight readers.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above statement? Support your answer with reference to both the themes and language found in the poetry of Emily Dickinson on your course.

3. Philip Larkin

“Larkin is a perceptive observer of the realities of ordinary life in poems that are sometimes illuminated by images of lyrical beauty.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above statement? Support your answer with reference to both the themes and language found in the poetry of Philip Larkin on your course.

4. Sylvia Plath

“Plath makes effective use of language to explore her personal experiences of suffering and to provide occasional glimpses of the redemptive power of love.”

Discuss this statement, supporting your answer with reference to both the themes and language found in the poetry of Sylvia Plath on your course.

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