

ENGLISH

LEAVING CERTIFICATE
HIGHER LEVEL

THE SPEECH / DEBATE



**THE DUBLIN
ACADEMY OF
EDUCATION**

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THE SPEECH

OVERVIEW

Speeches and talks are a common feature of Paper 1, and potentially come up in three areas on the paper - as a text you need to analyse, as a Question B task, or as a Composition (essay) option. There are frequently two options in the Composing section – a talk and a debate speech, and there is a distinction between them. Talks on a topic tend to be more discursive and are often less formal and more conversational. Debate speeches, on the other hand are always formal and follow a stricter set of conventions (rules). They also rely heavily on the Language of Argument and must focus on promoting one side of an issue.

In previous years, students were even asked to write a speech on a prescribed poet on Paper 2. This has not happened in recent years, but it is a possibility, and you should apply the same principles of good speechwriting as you do for a Paper 1 task.

PURPOSE - THE MISSION OF THE SPEECH

One of the most common problems in the Leaving Cert is getting the purpose of speech/talk wrong. It is important to plan and analyse the style of speech/talk you will be writing.

Is the question asking you:

- To argue?
- To persuade?
- To advise?
- To explain?
- To inform?
- To describe?

It is most likely one of the first three. Once you have identified the purpose, write in an appropriate language style.

Audience – To whom am I speaking?

Once the purpose has been established, you need to consider who the speech or talk is aimed at, as this will have a bearing on both what you say and how you say it.

Ask yourself:

- Is the occasion of the speech/talk formal or informal? Will the audience be expecting a relaxed or more serious tone?
- What type of language will appeal to them?
- What will interest them or make them listen?

Register/tone/style – How will I deliver the speech?

Depending on the audience you are delivering your speech to, and the content of that speech, you need to consider what style to adopt and how best to deliver the speech.

Ask yourself:

- Should the tone be more formal or more informal?
- How will I structure my speech? How will I arrange my points/ideas?
- What speech techniques will I use? Will I be informative, persuasive, logical etc.?
- What examples, anecdotes, opinions will be relevant?

Most importantly...

Always talk to the audience, not just at the beginning and end but all the way through.

Demonstrate that you are constantly aware that you are speaking directly to a group by clearly directing your points to them

Use inclusive language, i.e. “we” “our” “us”, “you” and “your” throughout.

FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTIC (Rhetorical Devices/Techniques)

- **Audience awareness** - greet and thank the audience, talk directly to them all the time, appeal to the audience and what they will listen to.
- A consideration of the values and interests of your audience
- Appropriate tone
- A clearly stated point of view or purpose
- A logical step-by-step development- planned progression of paragraphs
- An awareness of key words
- Use of reason and emotional appeal
- Proper use of **rhetorical techniques** (see below)

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN WRITING A FEATURE ARTICLE

- ⇒ Identify the type of speech – a talk or a debate speech?
- ⇒ Decide what your purpose is and plan accordingly - PARS
- ⇒ Brainstorm ideas
- ⇒ List rhetorical/speech techniques you will use
- ⇒ Plan your paragraphs
- ⇒ Grab the reader's attention at the start
- ⇒ Keep that attention – keep it interesting and fresh
- ⇒ Maintain a consistent tone – serious or light-hearted
- ⇒ Leave an impression – strong conclusion

STRUCTURE

Introduction / Opening Paragraph

Before beginning to write, ask yourself if it is better to play safe and simply state your purpose without trying to be too clever or gimmicky, or should you take chances and show off your range of writing skills with a more startling or engaging opening?

You should be guided by the context of the writing:

- 1) What is the purpose?
- 2) Who is the audience?

An effective opening should:

- Engage the audience's interest immediately (the clever reasoning and evidence can come later)
 - If the audience is not interested in the first few sentences, it will all go to waste anyway!
 - Use a hook, e.g. and interesting fact/anecdote/statement etc.
- Address the audience directly and thank them for their attention
- State your central thesis/opinion

Main body

- One persuasive point per paragraph.
- Elaborate on this point.
- In debating, address the opposing argument(s) in at least one paragraph
- Use lots of rhetorical devices when writing
- Address each point to the audience – keep talking to them

Conclusion

- Your final paragraph should round off your speech in a satisfying way. It should do more than simply repeat what you have said in your earlier paragraphs
- You should not introduce a whole new argument/idea but should restate your view in a convincing way
- The focus and force of it will also depend on the purpose of your writing
- It may include a call to action or a thought-provoking final thought

LANGUAGE OF SPEECHES

When writing a speech/talk, most people spend too much time worrying about the content and not enough time thinking about the style of speech and the control of language they need to demonstrate. As you are planning and writing concentrate on:

- Tone
- Pace
- Ideas
- Rhetorical devices

Tone (emotion)

The tone will be the sound of your speech. It is controlled by the emotion behind it. Before you write, be clear about the purpose, audience and aim of your speech. This will help you determine the tone.

Consider the following:

- The use of personal pronouns (I, we, you)
- Using emotive vocabulary
- How you directly address your audience
- Using modal verbs (might, ought, could)

Pace (punctuation and sentence structure)

When you are writing a speech, it is important to imagine the sound of it. In a spoken piece the pace/speed often changes. You need to demonstrate that you can control the pace of your speech too (even though it is written down).

How can you do this?

- Vary the sentence length and use punctuation effectively
 - ⇒ Short sentence = main/important point
 - ⇒ Long sentence = explanation/enthusiasm
 - ⇒ Discourse markers (Signpost words and phrases / linking phrases)
- Use alliteration, rhythm, onomatopoeia, etc.

Managing ideas/content

Before you begin writing, it is important to be clear on the points you have to make. You are building a speech. All the points need to ensure you meet the purpose of the speech.

Think about including some or all of the following:

- Strong statements of opinion
- Facts
- Contrasts
- Anecdotes
- Questions to provoke thought
- Expert opinion
- Figurative language (metaphor, simile, personification)

<i>To compare different ideas</i>	<i>To link similar ideas</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On the other hand• However	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similarly• Not only...but also

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whereas • In contrast • Although • Alternatively • Despite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthermore • Likewise
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<i>To illustrate ideas</i>	<i>To show cause and effect</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example • Such as • As shown by • For instance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because • Consequently • As a result

<i>To summarise ideas</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall • Generally • In short 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therefore • In conclusion

Rhetorical Devices

There are clear ways that you can use language to influence the reader or listener. You should be able to integrate some of these techniques into your speechwriting.

Technique	Effect
<p>Repetition</p> <p>The technique of repeating the same word or phrase</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highlights key messages• Reinforces important points• Repeat important phrases or at moments when you want to create drama
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Let there be justice for all, Let there be peace for all, Let there be work, break, water, and salt for all.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>from Glory and Hope by Nelson Mandela</i></p>	

<p>Rhetorical question</p> <p>A question where the answer is obvious and is used to highlight your point. No answer is expected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draws the reader/listener into the text• Introduces ideas / topics• Makes the reader think
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>How many more children do we want to die from poverty?</i></p>	

<p>Alliteration</p> <p>Within a sentence, a series of words will begin with the same sound</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws attention to the key words • Can be used to reinforce ideas / concepts • May be used for humorous effect
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Politics is pointless and passionless.</i></p>	

<p>Triadic Phrasing</p> <p>Three nouns, adjectives or verbs will be used in a list within a sentence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “magic three” fixes itself in the reader’s mind • Highlights important ideas • Creates rhythm in the speech
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>The school uniform is uncomfortable, unattractive and unfashionable.</i></p>	

<p>Personal involvement / Anecdote</p> <p>The writer incorporates aspects of their personal experience into the text</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals to the reader – makes the writer seem more human or involved • Can be used for humour / pathos- audience feels sympathy etc.
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>“I was walking down O’Connell Street at the weekend and I saw...”</i></p>	

<p>Inclusive Language / Direct Address</p> <p>The writer involves the reader by relating the subject to their lives</p> <p>Look for 'you' / 'we' / 'us' / 'our'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes the reader care about the subject • Establishes a relationship between the reader and writer • The writing is less intimidating
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>We all know how addictive social media can be!</i></p>	

<p>Facts and Statistics</p> <p>Information and data that can be proven to be true</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a range of specific effects, including to shock, surprise, support the writer's view etc. • Most effective way of proving your point
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>60% of the world's population lives in poverty</i></p>	

<p>Expert opinion / quotations</p> <p>The knowledge of an expert is referred to by the writer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can show an alternative point of view • The reader trusts what the writer is saying • Quotations are very persuasive
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Dr Martin, child psychologist in lecturer in UCD, believes that more needs to be done to improve the health of young people</i></p>	

Imagery: Metaphor and Simile

Types of imagery

- Metaphor – one object is said to be the same as another
- Simile – objects are compared to each other – look for ‘like’ or ‘as’

- Makes the writing more interesting and imaginative for the reader

Example:

The wind of change is blowing through this continent and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it.

Harold Macmillan, British PM, speech in 1960 to South African politicians

Hyperbole (Over-exaggeration)

The writer uses superlatives and adjectives to make a situation seem much worse / better than it really is

- Helps show strong feelings
- Can be used in humorous or ironic ways

Example:

Many schools have become like learning factories.

<p>Emotive language</p> <p>Language that is used to create a particular emotional response in the reader</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can create strong feelings such as anger, guilt, joy, concern, empathy, hope etc. • Involves the reader in the text
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>This disastrous situation will only get worse unless we do something about it.</i></p>	

<p>Humour: Irony / Sarcasm</p> <p>Ideas are presented in a way that seems opposite to what is really meant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates humour • Can over-exaggerate a situation • Engages the reader on a personal level
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>With Ireland being renowned for its glorious weather, one wonders why the numbers travelling abroad each summer are on the rise.</i></p>	

<p>Parenthesis (brackets, dashes, colons)</p> <p>Punctuation marks used to separate phrases from the main sentence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows the writer's personal views • Can be used to create irony or humour
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Most teenagers in the survey said they didn't like homework (what a surprise!)</i></p>	

<p>Parallelism</p> <p>Uses similar grammatical constructions to express ideas that are related or equal in importance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a rhythm
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>We cannot, we must not, refuse to protect the right of everyone American to vote in every election... And we ought not, and we cannot, and we must not wait another eight months before we get a bill.</i> - <i>We Shall Overcome</i> by L. B. Johnson</p>	

Persuasive Language

The most powerful tool of the speechwriter is persuasive language. Below are some useful persuasive phrases:

<i>Giving persuasive reasons</i>	<i>Linking Paragraphs</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is vital that... • We feel this is an important area of improvement because... • There has been a real need for... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A further idea for improvement might be... • Likewise... • Furthermore... • Similarly... • As you can see from the comments above...

<i>Providing answers to probable questions</i>	<i>Polite but persuasive</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People may well feel... • In an ideal world... • However... • On the other hand... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm sure you will agree that... • We all have the best interests of... • Please consider

30-MINUTE SESSION: SPEECH (2015)

SECTION II

COMPOSING

(100 marks)

Write a composition on **any one** of the assignments that appear in **bold print** below.

Each composition carries 100 marks.

The composition assignments are intended to reflect language study in the areas of information, argument persuasion, narration, and the aesthetic use of language.

1. TEXTS 1, 2 and 3 deal with the theme of challenges.

Write a short story in which the main character is transformed when faced with a daunting challenge.

2. In TEXT 3, Penelope Lively remembers falling in love.

Write a feature article for a magazine, about the importance of romance in our lives. The article may be light-hearted or serious.

3. In TEXT 1, Bono talks about some of the defining struggles faced by people through the ages.

Write a thought-provoking speech, to be delivered at a United Nations Youth Conference, in which you consider some of the causes and possible solutions to what you see as the defining struggles of our age.

4. In TEXT 2, Joanna Briscoe, writing about fiction, tells us that “Endings can be a problem.”

Write a personal essay about your response to an ending, or endings, in your life that you consider significant.

5. In TEXT 3, Penelope Lively writes that she sometimes feels like an “observant time-traveller”.

Write a descriptive essay which captures life in Ireland in 2015 from the point of view of an observant time-traveller. The time-traveller may be from the past or from the future.

6. Bono refers to “... telling the secrets of the age ...” in TEXT 1.

Write a short story in which a closely guarded secret is gradually revealed.

7. The writer alludes to “... the digital recording of much of our lives” in TEXT 2.

Write a discursive essay, in which you discuss the importance of privacy in people’s lives and the challenges to privacy in the modern age.

30-MINUTE SESSION

One of the best ways to study for the Composing question is to do 30 Minute Sessions. It makes studying for the question a lot more manageable. It's simple:

- ⇒ Plan for 10 Minutes
- ⇒ Write for 20 Minutes

Option 3 - 2015

Q. Write a thought-provoking speech, to be delivered at a UNYC, in which you consider some of the causes and solutions to what you see as the defining struggles of our age.

Plan (10 Mins)

- 3 – Pick Question and scan text
- 1 – Free Write
- 6 – Brainstorm and Paragraph Structure

Plan - PARS

Purpose – Thought-provoking speech: Causes and Solutions – defining struggles

Audience – International, young people

Register - Quite formal, opinionated, informative, persuasive,

Structure – “Hook”, address audience, facts, stats, information, persuasive tone, etc.

Free Writing / Brainstorm

- Environment – Global Warming – Greta – Pollution – Fumes – Industry – Carbon neutral – electric cars... (4)
- Pandemics – Covid 19 – Vaccine (5)
- Prejudice – Racism – Equality (3)
- Gender inequality – Women in sport – Pay scales / wage equality (2)
- Mental Health (6)
- Modern Technology
- Introduction (1)
- Conclusion (7)

Introduction

- Begin with something interesting! (quote, statistic, fact, anecdote, RQ, dialogue...)
- Official introduction: Greet audience / introduce yourself / introduce topic
- Establish our argument and main points
- Persuasive and Rhetorical Devices – Use Three

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.” Mahatma Gandhi

Fellow activists, young people of the world, members of the United Nations Youth Forum, my name is John Doe and I am standing here before you today to discuss the defining struggles of our age and how, like Gandhi’s quote suggests, we can bring about change. I hope to highlight three pressing areas that are causing friction and unhappiness amongst human beings. Apart from highlighting these issues and their causes, I want to be able to offer some solutions to these struggles. We are still struggling with gender inequality in the 21st century; another restricting prejudice evident in our world is the bitterness of racism; the final issue, and probably the most defining issue of our age is Climate Change. It is my aim to focus on these three topics in the hope that we can engage in some productive dialogue later today.

In the 21st Century, I am ashamed to say that gender inequality is still one of the defining struggles and injustices of the world. We are still plagued by the inequality of gender prejudice. It infects all parts of our lives: work, education, sport, family... should I go on? The World Statistical Forum recently announced that in 2020, 86% of the televised sport in the world was focused on male events. This is a startling figure that highlights the inequality in sport. Having actively played my own national sports as an amateur at home in Ireland, I can see how this is true. I remember Saturday mornings as a young boy playing matches in the local club. The boys were always given preference in terms of the best pitches, equipment and jerseys. While we played our games on the finest greens with state of the art goals, our female equivalents played matches on the back pitch, usually water-logged, using sports bags as goal posts. Although this seemed fairly harmless in those days and nobody ever complained, the culture was sowing the seeds of inequality. Now, when I read statistics like this, I am not surprised that

professional sports are rife with imbalance and unfairness. When will this change? I suppose we need to tap in to Gandhi's famous phrase and be the change – we cannot stand for this anymore...

(This is the end of the 30 Minute Session. In the exam, you would have another 50 mins.)



2019 EXAM PAPER

SECTION II

COMPOSING

(100 marks)

Write a composition on **any one** of the assignments that appear in **bold print** below.

Each composition carries 100 marks.

The composition assignments are intended to reflect language study in the areas of information, argument persuasion, narration, and the aesthetic use of language.

1. In TEXT 2, Tom expresses the view that people favour photographs that feature sunsets.
Write a descriptive essay which captures a sense of the difference between dawn and dusk and celebrates both the beginning and the end of the day.
2. In TEXT 3, Caitlin Moran describes herself like a time bandit or spy in her local library.
Write a short story, suitable for publication in a collection of spy stories, in which a librarian, a photograph and a chair are central to the narrative.
3. The theme of TEXTS 1, 2 and 3 is “Feeding Our Imaginations”.
Write a personal essay in which you reflect on what feeds your imagination.
4. TEXT 2 is based on a series of edited extracts from the novel, *Travelling in a Strange Land*.
Write a short story which captures the evolving relationship between two characters – one young and one old – as they travel in a strange land.
5. In TEXT 1, we are told that “Art is a different value system”.
Write a discursive essay about some of the items you think symbolise the values held by people of your age in Ireland in 2019.
6. In TEXT 3, Caitlin Moran writes about a place that helped to shape and define her.
Write a personal essay in which you reflect on some of the places that have helped to shape and define you, and the significance of these places in your life.
7. Tom, the character in David Park’s novel featured in TEXT 2, is critical of selfies.
Write a speech, to be broadcast online, for or against the motion: *We are a self-obsessed generation.*

Speech Sample: 2019 (Question 7)

It is the generation of the self-obsessed. There is no doubt about it, the modern world has been swallowed whole by self-absorption.

Let me ask you a question: How many selfies are taken in the world every day? I'll give you a second to think about that... 327 million selfies are posted online across the globe every 24 hours. At first you might interpret this statistic as shocking, but think about it – When was the last time you went a day without seeing someone indulge themselves in a self-portrait? This is our new world, our new culture, our new normal.

I have to admit something to you: last week I created the dream Instagram story. I used the perfect caption, camera angle, emojis, and most importantly, the right amount of filters. Once I had crafted this masterpiece, I sat back and skimmed through it several times admiring my little movie. By the end of the day I had tapped through my story over a hundred times indulging my ego. While this confession of mine may sound absurd to some people, to many young adults, this scenario of insane vanity is perfectly acceptable. Our social media profiles are starting to shape our identity – who we are and who we want to be. While we don't mean anything by it, we haven't realised what exactly social media has done to us. It may be hard to admit, but we are living in an era where posting superficial versions of ourselves are at the core of our values. We are constantly trying to portray an idealised, false version of ourself – followed by the time consuming process of monitoring how our posts have been accepted.

Let me remind you of the figure I alluded to earlier: 327 million selfies are posted online every day across the globe. You may think it's just a harmless pastime that the youth of today are engaging with, but I would argue that the manipulation of these images to create the perfect snap is extremely worrying and demonstrates our self-obsession. What is most worrying is that something that started as a popular, cool new trend, has become more than a photo for people. It has become how you are viewed in the social world – a dangerous world. The selfie phenomenon is now part of culture – it has been accepted as the norm. The manipulation of images to present a false impression of our appearance or life is acceptable.

Major advances in the world of technology have made us a bunch of self-obsessed beings desperate for validation and recognition. I'm sure we can relate to the image of ourselves scrolling aimlessly through the quagmire of social media sites countless times throughout the day. Research shows that adolescents spend 32% of their conscious life on their phone or laptop. This is a scary figure which may be an underestimate for some people. What is the first thing you do in the morning? What is the last thing you do at night? Enough said...

So, is it our fault? Yes and No. Yes, we buy the phones and download the apps; we take the selfies and obsess over them. At the end of the day, we consume, but our appetites are wetted by influencers and celebrities – the role models of the 21st century. Insta celebrities, the worst kind of human being, are a part of the modern world and they are definitely culpable for the new, self-obsessed, incapable young person. They have taught us that being in love with our alter-egos can bring us fame and fortune through social media platforms. Here's another startling figure for you, one in three people who have plastic surgery in America say it's to improve their physical online appearance. That is one third of all face lifts, boob jobs, tummy tucks – the list goes on. Some modern celebrities earned their fame purely from a superficial online presence. For many people, it has made them crave this attention and they ultimately do this by obsessing over themselves. Even more worrying is that this goes unnoticed because it's so common and socially acceptable. Online influencers and so called “celebrities” fuel the unquenchable inferno of self-obsession. How can we reverse this egotistical trend?

Of course, vanity itself is nothing new in humanity. However, today, in this modern world, it is something we are proud of. Most of us have some sort of social media presence. We have become dependent on apps such as Instagram and Snapchat to create a fictitious social media presence to indulge our self-obsession. We get a soothing and stabilising feeling when we receive the appropriate and sufficient kudos from our followers. Like the narcissistic King Lear in Shakespeare's epic tragedy – “which of you shall we say doth love us most?”, we need our ego massaged like a dog needs his belly rubbed. We post the version of ourselves we want others to see – not the real one.

The modern generation's version of success has been skewed. Success is judged by the number of likes on a choreographed post or the number of followers on your carefully

maintained profile. Perhaps my generation need to absorb some of what Einstein had to offer: “Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value.” Now that’s an amiable idea.

(883 words)

Grade this composition:

P 30	
C 30	
L 30	
M 10	
100	

Justify the grade...

What was done well and what could be improved upon?

