



# Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

## LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

# English - Higher Level - Paper 2

**Total Marks: 200**

**Duration 3 hours 20 minutes**

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 are required to 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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## SECTION I

## THE SINGLE TEXT

(60 marks)

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

### A ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE – Anthony Doerr

- (i) Identify what you believe to be the three most important choices or decisions Werner Pfennig makes. Discuss why you believe these choices or decisions are important and the insights you gain into various aspects of Werner's character from them. You may refer to any combination of choices or decisions. Develop your discussion with reference to Anthony Doerr's novel, *All the Light We Cannot See*.

OR

- (ii) Discuss the reasons why, in your opinion, Doerr's portrayal of Nazi characters does or does not undermine the credibility of the narrative in his novel, *All the Light We Cannot See*. Develop your discussion with reference to the text.

### B A DOLL'S HOUSE – Henrik Ibsen

- (i) Identify what you believe to be the three most important choices or decisions Nora Helmer makes. Discuss why you believe these choices or decisions are important and the insights you gain into various aspects of Nora's character from them. You may refer to any combination of choices or decisions Nora makes prior to or during Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House*. Develop your discussion with reference to the text.

OR

- (ii) Identify aspects of Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House*, that, in your opinion, lead us to draw disturbing conclusions about marriage. Discuss the disturbing conclusions that may be drawn about this subject from the aspects of the play you have identified. Support your answer with reference to the text.

**C MACBETH – William Shakespeare**

- (i) Identify what you believe to be the three most important choices or decisions Macbeth makes. Discuss why you believe these choices or decisions are important and the insights you gain into various aspects of Macbeth’s character from them. You may refer to any combination of choices or decisions. Develop your discussion with reference to Shakespeare’s play, *Macbeth*.

**OR**

- (ii) Identify aspects of Shakespeare’s play, *Macbeth*, that, in your opinion, lead us to draw disturbing conclusions about evil. Discuss the disturbing conclusions that may be drawn about this subject from the aspects of the play you have identified. Support your answer with reference to the text.

**D FRANKENSTEIN – Mary Shelley**

- (i) Identify what you believe to be the three most important choices or decisions Victor Frankenstein makes. Discuss why you believe these choices or decisions are important and the insights you gain into various aspects of Frankenstein’s character from them. You may refer to any combination of choices or decisions. Develop your discussion with reference to Mary Shelley’s novel, *Frankenstein*.

**OR**

- (ii) Discuss the reasons why, in your opinion, Mary Shelley’s portrayal of the monster does or does not undermine the credibility of the narrative in her novel, *Frankenstein*. Develop your discussion with reference to the text.

**E THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY – Oscar Wilde**

- (i) Identify what you believe to be the three most important choices or decisions Dorian Gray makes. Discuss why you believe these choices or decisions are important and the insights you gain into various aspects of Dorian’s character from them. You may refer to any combination of choices or decisions. Develop your discussion with reference to Oscar Wilde’s novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

**OR**

- (ii) Discuss the reasons why, in your opinion, Oscar Wilde’s inclusion of the supernatural does or does not undermine the credibility of the narrative in his novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Develop your discussion with reference to the text.

## SECTION II THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** question from **either A** – Literary Genre **or B** – Theme or Issue **or C** – General Vision and Viewpoint

In your answer you may not use the text you answered on in **SECTION I** – The Single Text. All texts used in this section must be prescribed for comparative study for this year's examination.

Candidates may refer to only one film in the course of their answers.

Please note:

- Questions in this section use the word **text** to refer to all the different kinds of texts available for study on this course.
- When used, the word **reader** includes viewers of films and theatre audiences.
- When used, the term **technique** is understood to include techniques employed by all writers and directors of films.
- When used, the word **author** is understood to include all writers and directors of films.
- When used, the word **character** is understood to refer to both real people and fictional characters in texts.
- When used, the word **narrative** or the word **story** is understood to refer to both fictional and non-fictional texts.

### A LITERARY GENRE

1. (a) Discuss how effectively two techniques are used to focus our attention on a central character in **one** text on your comparative course. Develop your response with reference to the text. (30)  
  
(b) Compare how effectively at least one technique is used to focus our attention on a central character in each of **two other** comparative texts. You may refer to the same technique or different techniques in each text. You may refer to the same or different techniques than those you discussed in answer to part (a) of this question. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)
- OR**
2. Compare how the authors of **at least two** texts on your comparative course create a compelling narrative in each of these texts. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (70)

## **B**    **THEME OR ISSUE**

1. (a) Identify a theme or issue you studied on your comparative course. Discuss what your study of this theme or issue in **one** text on your comparative course revealed to you about yourself. Develop your response with reference to the text. (30)
- (b) With reference to the same theme or issue discussed above, compare what your study of this theme or issue in each of **two other** comparative texts revealed to you about yourself. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

**OR**

2. Compare the extent to which tension or conflict is used to explore or develop the same theme or issue in each of **at least two** texts on your comparative course. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (70)

## **C**    **GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT**

1. (a) Discuss how the portrayal of any kind of love helped to shape your perception of the general vision and viewpoint of **one** text on your comparative course. Develop your response with reference to the text. (30)
- (b) Compare how the portrayal of any kind of love helped to shape your perception of the general vision and viewpoint of each of **two other** comparative texts. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

**OR**

2. Compare the extent to which the level of idealism evident in each of **at least two** texts on your comparative course influenced your sense of the general vision and viewpoint in these texts. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (70)

## SECTION III

## POETRY

(70 marks)

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

### **A UNSEEN POEM** (20 marks)

Read the following poem, by Moya Cannon, and answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2 which follow.

#### **A SONG AT IMBOLC\***

*Now at spring's awakening, short days are lengthening  
And after St. Bridget's Day, I'll raise my sail.  
Antoine Ó Raifteirí\**

A blind man, on a stone bridge in Galway  
or the road to Loughrea, felt the sun's rays  
in his bones again and praised the sycamore and oak,  
crops still drowsy in the seed, wheat, flax and oats.  
His song rising, he praised Achill's eagle, Erne's hawk  
and in beloved Mayo, young lambs, kids, foals,  
and little babies turning towards birth.

Blind Raftery invoked Bridget, Ceres\* of the North,  
born into slavery at Faughert, near Dundalk  
to an Irish chieftain and a foreign slave.  
Why, of all small girls in so distant a century born  
is she honoured, still, in place-names, constant wells,  
new rushes plaited to protect hearth, home and herd?

Bridget, goddess, druidess of oak, or saint – a girl  
who gifted her father's sword to a beggar for bread,  
we, who have wounded the engendering seas and earth,  
beg you to teach us again, before it grows too late,  
your neglected, painstaking arts of nurture and care. *Moya Cannon*

*\*Imbolc – a feast associated with the pagan goddess Brigid (also spelled, Bridget)  
now celebrated as the national holiday, St Brigid's Day.*

*\*Antoine Ó Raifteirí – a famous blind Irish poet, born in Mayo in 1779.*

*\*Ceres – a Roman Goddess of agriculture and fertility.*

1. (a) What impression of Bridget does Moya Cannon convey in the above poem?  
Support your response with reference to the poem. (10)
- (b) With reference to its poetic merits, explain the reasons why you do or do not  
agree that the above poem should be included in a collection of poems to mark  
St Brigid's Day. (10)

**OR**

2. Discuss how the poet imbues this poem with both a timeless quality and a universal  
relevance. Develop your discussion with reference to both the content and language of  
the poem. (20)

## **B PRESCRIBED POETRY (50 marks)**

Candidates must answer **one** of the following questions (1 – 5).

**1. Elizabeth Bishop**

“Elizabeth Bishop’s use of an attractive observational style enhances her ability to communicate various revelations and reflections in her work.”

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the above statement. Develop your discussion with reference to the poems by Elizabeth Bishop on your Leaving Certificate English course.

**2. John Donne**

“John Donne effectively employs complex thought and language to explore a variety of deeply personal relationships in his poetry.”

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the above statement. Develop your discussion with reference to the poems by John Donne on your Leaving Certificate English course.

**3. Patrick Kavanagh**

“Patrick Kavanagh articulates a range of powerful emotions in his work, often expressed through lyrical language and real-life references.”

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the above statement. Develop your discussion with reference to the poems by Patrick Kavanagh on your Leaving Certificate English course.

**4. Paula Meehan**

“Paula Meehan crafts vivid poetry, holding up a mirror to life that can be revealing or moving or both.”

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the above statement. Develop your discussion with reference to the poems by Paula Meehan on your Leaving Certificate English course.

**5. Emily Dickinson**

“Emily Dickinson’s work is fascinating due to the various challenges presented by her poetic style and the many moments of private intensity that she shares.”

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the above statement. Develop your discussion with reference to the poems by Emily Dickinson on your Leaving Certificate English course.

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Leaving Certificate – Higher Level

**English**

Duration 3 hours and 20 minutes