



# Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2021

## English - Higher Level - Paper 2

**Total Marks: 140**

**Thursday, 10 June – Afternoon, 2.00 – 5.20**

Candidates must attempt the required number of questions in **any TWO** of the following sections:

- SECTION I – The Single Text
- SECTION II – The Comparative Study
- SECTION III – Poetry, Part A, Unseen Poem and Part B, Prescribed Poetry.
- All sections carry 70 marks.

**N.B.** Candidates are **NOT** required to answer on Shakespearean Drama.

### INDEX OF SINGLE TEXTS

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## SECTION I

## THE SINGLE TEXT

(70 marks)

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

### A THE HANDMAID'S TALE – Margaret Atwood

- (i) Discuss how your knowledge of Offred's life before Gilead, and the insights you gained from her memories and private thoughts, influenced your response to her character. Develop your answer with reference to Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*.

OR

- (ii) Discuss the reasons why, in your opinion, the dystopian aspects of the novel increase or diminish the narrative power of Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*. Develop your response with reference to the text.

### B DAYS WITHOUT END – Sebastian Barry

- (i) Discuss how your knowledge of the challenges Thomas McNulty faced before he met John Cole, and the insights you gained from his relationship with Winona, influenced your response to his character. Develop your answer with reference to Sebastian Barry's novel, *Days Without End*.

OR

- (ii) Discuss the reasons why, in your opinion, the historical aspects of the novel increase or diminish the narrative power of Sebastian Barry's novel, *Days Without End*. Develop your response with reference to the text.

### C WUTHERING HEIGHTS – Emily Brontë

- (i) Discuss how your knowledge of the difficulties Heathcliff experienced as a child, and the insights you gained from his obsessive behaviour throughout the novel, influenced your response to his character. Develop your answer with reference to Emily Brontë's novel, *Wuthering Heights*.

OR

- (ii) Discuss the reasons why, in your opinion, the gothic aspects of the novel increase or diminish the narrative power of Emily Brontë's novel, *Wuthering Heights*. Develop your response with reference to the text.

**D KING LEAR – William Shakespeare**

- (i) “Chaos and confusion are used to great effect throughout Shakespeare’s play, *King Lear*.”

Discuss the above statement, developing your response with reference to the text.

**OR**

- (ii) A production of Shakespeare’s play, *King Lear*, in which the characters of Kent and the Fool do not appear has been proposed. Discuss the reasons why, in your opinion, the removal of each of these characters would or would not diminish Shakespeare’s play, *King Lear*. Develop your response with reference to the text.

**E THE TEMPEST – William Shakespeare**

- (i) “Chaos and confusion are used to great effect throughout Shakespeare’s play, *The Tempest*.”

Discuss the above statement, developing your response with reference to the text.

**OR**

- (ii) A production of Shakespeare’s play, *The Tempest*, in which the characters of Caliban and Miranda do not appear has been proposed. Discuss the reasons why, in your opinion, the removal of each of these characters would or would not diminish Shakespeare’s play, *The Tempest*. Develop your response with reference to the text.

## SECTION II      THE COMPARATIVE STUDY      (70 marks)

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

Candidates who answer a question in **SECTION I** – The Single Text, may not refer to the same text in answer to questions in this section.

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.

### A      THEME OR ISSUE

1. (a) Identify a theme or issue you studied on your comparative course. Discuss the various reasons why you did or did not find the exploration of this theme or issue emotionally engaging in **one** text on your comparative course. Support your response with reference to the text. (30)  
  
(b) Compare the reasons why you found the exploration of the same theme or issue discussed above, more, less or equally emotionally engaging in each of **two other** texts you studied on your comparative course. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

OR

2. Compare the insights you gained into the same theme or issue through understanding what influences or motivates one central character, from each of **at least two** texts on your comparative course, when making one or more key decisions. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts.

The insight or insights you gain into the same theme or issue from different texts may be similar or different. (70)

## **B CULTURAL CONTEXT**

1. (a) Discuss the extent to which a significant relationship was influenced by at least one aspect of the cultural context in **one** text on your comparative course. Develop your response with reference to the text. (30)
- (b) Compare the extent to which one significant relationship was influenced by any aspect or aspects of the cultural context in each of **two other** texts on your comparative course. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

**OR**

2. Compare the reasons why significant social change does or does not occur within the cultural context established 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 the extent to which a character that you found inspiring in **one** text on your comparative course influenced your sense of the general vision and viewpoint of this text. Develop your response with reference to your chosen text. (30)
- (b) In relation to **two other** texts on your comparative course, compare the extent to which a character that you found inspiring influenced your sense of the general vision and viewpoint of each of these texts. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

**OR**

2. “The aspects of a text that we find unsettling or disturbing often influence our sense of the general vision and viewpoint.”

In relation to **at least two** texts on your comparative course, compare the extent to which an aspect or aspects of your chosen texts, that you found unsettling or disturbing, influenced your sense of the general vision and viewpoint of 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, in which the poet, Louise Greig, issues instructions for the construction of an Albatross, a seabird noted for its giant wingspan.

Answer **either** Question **1** or Question **2** which follow.

#### **How to Construct an Albatross**

Begin by setting the instructions aside.  
Instead tune the mind to flight.  
Attach the huge, clunking wings (treat like hangar doors)  
– do this by lantern light; now heave them wide.  
Next, place the heart inside – adjust to beating;  
You may witness a sudden upwards surge  
as the chest swells – this will be fleeting –  
resist the urge to release;  
now, embed the eyes (still asleep – this matters)  
and fasten the beak; carry the slumbering bird  
to someplace steep, repeating the word wake,  
and – this is key – just as the heart (yours) begins to break  
and the slow whales blow –  
let go

*Louise Greig*

1. (a) Do you find the language used by the poet in the above poem appealing?  
Explain your response with reference to the poem. (10)
- (b) The poet has not placed a punctuation mark at the end of the above poem. In your opinion, what is the effect of this decision on the poem? Explain your response with reference to the poem. (10)

**OR**

2. Based on your reading of the above poem, explain the reasons why you find it to be serious or amusing or both. Support your response with reference to the poet's use of language and the subject matter of the poem. (20)

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

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

**1.     Eavan Boland**

Discuss how successfully, in your opinion, Eavan Boland employs a range of narrative elements in her poetry to communicate a variety of thematic concerns. Develop your response with reference to the poems by Eavan Boland on your Leaving Certificate English course.

**2.     John Keats**

“Our enjoyment of the sensuous beauty of the poetry of John Keats may be diminished by our awareness of the fear or melancholy often evident in his work.”

Based on your experience of the poetry by John Keats you have studied for your Leaving Certificate, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the above statement? Develop your response with reference to the poems by John Keats on the Leaving Certificate English course.

**3.     Seamus Heaney**

“Seamus Heaney transforms the familiar and the mundane through his powerful use of language, thereby enabling us to learn a range of profound lessons from his poetry.”

Discuss the above statement, developing your response with reference to your experience of the poems by Seamus Heaney on your Leaving Certificate English course.

**4.     Sylvia Plath**

Discuss how successfully, in your opinion, Sylvia Plath uses stylistic features in an innovative way to convey both overwhelming wonder and unsettling menace in her work. Develop your response with reference to the poems by Sylvia Plath on your Leaving Certificate English course.

**5.     Paul Durcan**

“Durcan makes effective use of tone or mood to express his emotions, thereby amplifying his various thematic concerns.”

Discuss the above statement, developing your response with reference to your experience of the poetry by Paul Durcan on your Leaving Certificate English course.

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Leaving Certificate – Higher Level

**English**

Thursday 10 June

Afternoon 2.00 – 5.20