



# Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2009

## English - Higher Level - Paper 2

Total Marks: 200

Time: 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 must answer on Shakespearean Drama.

They may do so in SECTION I, The Single Text (*Macbeth*)

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

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**SECTION I**  
**THE SINGLE TEXT (60 marks)**

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

**A CAT’S EYE – Margaret Atwood**

- (i) “There are no villains in *Cat’s Eye*, only vulnerable human beings.”

Write a response to this statement, referring to **one or more** of the characters from the novel.

**OR**

- (ii) “*Cat’s Eye* is concerned with the struggle of human beings for survival.”

Discuss this view, supporting your answer by reference to the text.

**B REGENERATION – Pat Barker**

- (i) “Rivers is changed utterly by his contact with his patients.”

Write a response to this statement. Support your answer with the aid of suitable reference to the text.

**OR**

- (ii) Write the text of a talk you would give to your class outlining the factors that made *Regeneration* an interesting novel for you to read.

Your talk should include detailed reference to the text.

**C JANE EYRE – Charlotte Brontë**

- (i) “Jane Eyre’s experiences throughout the novel expose the divisions in her society.” Discuss this statement, supporting your answer with the aid of suitable reference to the text.

**OR**

- (ii) “The effectiveness of Brontë’s imagery and symbolism heightens the impact of *Jane Eyre*.” Write a response to this statement. Support your views by reference to the text.

**D THE CRUCIBLE – Arthur Miller**

- (i) To what extent is John Proctor a heroic character in *The Crucible*? Support the points you make by reference to the text.

**OR**

- (ii) A Leaving Certificate student once asked: “How relevant is *The Crucible* to the modern reader?” Write the text of a talk you would give in answer to the question. Your talk should include detailed reference to the play.

**E MACBETH – William Shakespeare**

- (i) “Macbeth’s murder of Duncan has horrible consequences both for Macbeth himself and for Scotland.” Write a response to this statement. You should refer to the play in your answer.

**OR**

- (ii) “*Macbeth* has all the ingredients of compelling drama.” Write a response to this statement, commenting on **one or more** of the ingredients which, in your opinion, make *Macbeth* a compelling drama.



## SECTION II

### THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** question from **either A – Theme or Issue or B – The Cultural Context**.

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 **author** to refer to novelists, playwrights, writers in all genres, and film-directors.

#### A **THEME OR ISSUE**

1. “Important themes are often expressed in key moments in texts.”

Compare how the authors of the comparative texts studied by you used key moments to heighten your awareness of an important theme. (70)

#### OR

2. (a) Choose a theme from **one** text you have studied as part of your comparative course and say how it helped maintain your interest in the text. (30)

(b) Compare how the theme you have dealt with in part (a) is treated by the authors of **two other texts** from your comparative course to maintain the reader’s interest. (40)

## B THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

1. “The main characters in texts are often in conflict with the world or culture they inhabit.”

In the light of the above statement, compare how the main characters interact with the cultural contexts of the texts you have studied for your comparative course.

(70)

OR

2. “Understanding the cultural context of a text allows you to see how values and attitudes are shaped.”

(a) Show how this statement applies to **one** of the texts on your comparative course.

(30)

(b) Compare the way in which values and attitudes are shaped in **two other texts** on your comparative course. Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts.

(40)



## SECTION III

### POETRY (70 marks)

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

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

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

*In this poem, Anne Carson recalls her father and, in particular, his final illness during which he goes back to being like a child again.*

#### **FATHER'S OLD BLUE CARDIGAN**

Now it hangs on the back of the kitchen chair  
where I always sit, as it did  
on the back of the kitchen chair where he always sat.

I put it on whenever I come in,  
as he did, stamping  
the snow from his boots.

I put it on and sit in the dark.  
He would not have done this.  
Coldness comes paring down from the moonbone in the sky.

His laws were a secret.  
But I remember the moment at which I knew  
he was going mad inside his laws.

He was standing at the turn of the driveway when I arrived.  
He had on the blue cardigan with the buttons done up all the way to the top.  
Not only because it was a hot July afternoon

but the look on his face –  
as a small child who has been dressed by some aunt early in the morning  
for a long trip

on cold trains and windy platforms  
will sit very straight at the edge of his seat  
while the shadows like long fingers

over the haystacks that sweep past  
keep shocking him  
because he is riding backwards.

1. Write a response to the above poem, highlighting the impact it makes on you. (20)

**OR**

2. (a) What impression of Anne Carson's father do you get from reading this poem?  
Support your view by reference to the poem. (10)
- (b) Briefly describe the mood or feeling you get from reading this poem and  
illustrate your answer from the text. (10)

## B PRESCRIBED POETRY (50 marks)

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

1. “**Derek Walcott** explores tensions and conflicts in an inventive fashion.”

Do you agree with this assessment of his poetry? Write a response, supporting your points with the aid of suitable reference to the poems you have studied.

2. “**John Keats** presents abstract ideas in a style that is clear and direct.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this assessment of his poetry? Support your points with reference to the poetry on your course.

3. “**John Montague** expresses his themes in a clear and precise fashion.”

You have been asked by your local radio station to give a talk on the poetry of John Montague. Write out the text of the talk you would deliver in response to the above title. You should refer to both style and subject matter. Support the points you make by reference to the poetry on your course.

4. “**Elizabeth Bishop** poses interesting questions delivered by means of a unique style.”

Do you agree with this assessment of her poetry? Your answer should focus on both themes and stylistic features. Support your points with the aid of suitable reference to the poems you have studied.

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