



# Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2011

## English - Higher Level - Paper 2

Total Marks: 200

Thursday, 9th 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 (*Hamlet*) or in SECTION II, The Comparative Study (*Hamlet, The Tempest*).

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

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

**A WUTHERING HEIGHTS – Emily Brontë**

- (i) “Catherine Earnshaw is a character readers can both like and dislike.”

Discuss this statement, supporting your answer with suitable reference to *Wuthering Heights*.

**OR**

- (ii) “Brontë makes effective use of two contrasting worlds, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange.”

Write a response to this statement, supporting your answer with suitable reference to *Wuthering Heights*.

**B A DOLL’S HOUSE – Henrik Ibsen**

- (i) “Nora is a character who earns our respect but not our affection.”

Discuss this view, supporting your answer with suitable reference to *A Doll’s House*.

**OR**

- (ii) “Ibsen’s play, *A Doll’s House*, can be viewed as an exploration of power within relationships.”

Discuss this statement with suitable reference to the text.

**C A WHISTLE IN THE DARK – Tom Murphy**

- (i) “Many characters in *A Whistle in the Dark* see brutality and violence as an expression of honour and heroism.”

Discuss this view, supporting your answer by reference to at least two characters in the text.

**OR**

- (ii) “In *A Whistle in the Dark*, Michael Carney is a pathetic character caught between conflicting forces.”

Write a response to this statement, supporting your answer with suitable reference to the text.

**D HAMLET – William Shakespeare**

- (i) “Revenge and justice are finely balanced themes in the play, *Hamlet*.”

Discuss this statement, supporting your answer with suitable reference to the text.

**OR**

- (ii) “Claudius can be seen as both a heartless villain and a character with some redeeming qualities in the play, *Hamlet*.”

Discuss both aspects of this statement, supporting your answer with suitable reference to the text.

**E THE GRAPES OF WRATH – John Steinbeck**

- (i) “Steinbeck uses Jim Casy as an effective spokesman for some of his beliefs and ideas in *The Grapes of Wrath*.”

Discuss this statement. Support your answer with suitable reference to the text.

**OR**

- (ii) “Readers encounter graphic moments of human misery contrasted with glimpses of hope in *The Grapes of Wrath*.”

Do you agree with this view? Support your answer with suitable reference to the text.

## 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 **reader** to include viewers of films and theatre audiences.

#### A THEME OR ISSUE

1. “A reader’s view of a theme or issue can be either changed or reinforced through interaction with texts.”

Compare the extent to which your understanding of a theme or issue was changed or reinforced through your interaction with **at least two texts** on your comparative course. (70)

**OR**

2. “The study of a theme or issue can offer a reader valuable lessons and insights.”

(a) Identify and discuss at least one valuable lesson or insight that you gained through the study of a theme or issue in **one** text on your comparative course. (30)

(b) Compare at least one valuable lesson or insight that you gained, from studying the **same theme or issue** (as discussed in (a) above), in **two other texts** on your comparative course.  
The valuable lesson or insight may be the same, or different, to the one discussed in (a) above. (40)

## **B THE CULTURAL CONTEXT**

1. “A reader can feel uncomfortable with the values and attitudes presented in texts.”

Compare the extent to which the values and attitudes that you encountered, in **at least two texts** on your comparative course, made you feel uncomfortable. (70)

**OR**

2. “The roles and status allocated to males or females can be central to understanding the cultural context of a text.”

(a) Show how this statement might apply to **one** text on your comparative course. In your answer you may refer to the roles and status allocated to either males or females, or both. (30)

(b) Compare how the roles and status allocated to males or females, or both, aided your understanding of the cultural context in **two other texts** on your comparative course. (40)

## SECTION III

### POETRY (70 marks)

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

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

In the following poem, entitled *Poetry*, Leanne O’Sullivan addresses the mysterious source of her inspiration and considers her experience of writing poetry.

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

#### **Poetry**

I can never find a pen when you come,  
when you snap me up on your lizard tongue,  
and wrap yourself around me as if I were a spool.  
Vague as metaphors you tease, trawling  
your shadows as feathering clouds do,  
shedding infant vowels in your vaporous image.  
You will never be perfected,  
and while you are half-born I will never sleep.

In pickling ink I preserve all your fruits;  
perhaps you are a prophecy,  
a mouthing of the boundless,  
or some God or other Minerva\* festering  
like secrets in empty lines.  
Years gone now, labouring to drain  
the reddest blood from your throat,  
and I am none the wiser.

*Leanne O’Sullivan*

\*Minerva: Goddess associated with artistic creativity.

1. (a) Comment on **one** emotion expressed by the poet in this poem. Refer to the text in your answer. (10)
- (b) Choose a line or phrase from the poem that impressed you. Explain your choice. (10)

**OR**

2. Write a personal response to this poem. Your answer should make close reference to the text. (20)

**B PRESCRIBED POETRY (50 marks)**

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

**1. Emily Dickinson**

“Emily Dickinson’s original approach to poetry results in startling and thought-provoking moments in her work.”

Give your response to the poetry of Emily Dickinson in the light of this statement. Support your points with suitable reference to the poems on your course.

**2. William Butler Yeats**

“Yeats can be a challenging poet to read, both in terms of style and subject matter.”

To what extent do you agree with this statement? Support your answer with suitable reference to the poetry on your course.

**3. Robert Frost**

“Frost’s simple style is deceptive and a thoughtful reader will see layers of meaning in his poetry.”

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

**4. Eavan Boland**

“Boland’s reflective insights are expressed through her precise use of language.”

Write your response to this statement, supporting your answer with suitable reference to the poetry on your course.

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