



LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

2001

ENGLISH

HIGHER LEVEL

CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The new syllabus for Leaving Certificate English was introduced into schools in 1999 and examined for the first time in 2001. This report will treat of candidate performance in the Higher Level examination of 2001. Exemplar materials, demonstrating the standard applied in the different sections of the examination paper, are appended to the end of this report. These should be read in conjunction with the 2001 Marking Scheme.

EXAMINATION

The examination consisted of two written papers.

Paper 1 (200 marks. Time allowed: 2 hours 50 minutes)

This paper was divided into two sections, Section I Comprehending and Section II Composing, both of which were to be attempted. Each section carried 100 marks.

Section I (Comprehending, 100 marks)

The paper contained four texts on the general theme of *IRISHNESS*. Candidates were instructed to familiarise themselves with each of the texts before beginning their answers. Two questions, A and B, followed each text. Question A tested the candidates' comprehension of the particular text and Question B required candidates to manage a short functional task that was purpose and audience specific. Candidates were required to answer a Question A on one text and a Question B on a different text. In this paper the Questions A and B carried an equal mark allocation of 50 marks.

Section II (Composing, 100 marks)

Candidates were required to write one composition from a choice of seven titles. 100 marks were allocated to the composition.

Paper II (200 marks. Time allowed: 3 hours 20 minutes)

This paper was divided into three sections, Section I The Single Text, Section II The Comparative Study, and Section III Poetry. Each of these sections was to be attempted. Candidates were required to answer on Shakespearean Drama, either as a Single Text or as an element in the Comparative Study.

Section I (The Single Text, 60 marks)

Six Single Texts were prescribed for study. Candidates were required to attempt a question on one of these Single Texts. Two questions were set on each of the texts.

Section II (The Comparative Study, 70 marks)

Candidates were required to answer one question from this section. Four questions were set, two on Theme or Issue and two on Literary Genre.

Section III (Poetry, 70 marks)

Candidates were required to answer the questions on the Unseen Poem. 20 marks were allocated here. Candidates were required to answer one question on Prescribed Poetry. One 50-mark question was set on each of four poets.

2. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

The following table shows the percentage breakdown of grades for the past three years:

Year	Total	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	C+	E-
1999	33,10 7	6.1	20.3	40.6	30.3	2.7	0.2	0.0	67.0	2.9
2000	31,92 7	6.7	19.9	38.8	31.5	2.8	0.2	0.0	65.4	3.0
2001	31,34 6	9.5	26.0	40.3	22.9	1.3	0.1	0.0	75.8	1.4

In the 2001 examination 75.8% of candidates scored a grade C or higher. This represents an increase of more than 10% over the corresponding span of grades in the examination of 2000. The number of candidates registering and E or lower was 1.4%, a decrease of 1.6% from the previous year.

3. ANALYSIS OF CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE

General Commentary on Candidate Performance

In general, examiners reported favourably on the nature and level of the candidates' answering. They noted a positive engagement with the texts and tasks set on Paper 1 and a freshness of response in approaches to composition work. Candidates displayed an easy familiarity with tasks linked to the language categories. The responses of the candidates to questions set on the literature paper (Paper 2) were characterised in the main by enthusiastic, personal engagement with the texts that had been chosen for study. This was particularly evident in the answering on prescribed poetry, which was cited by many examiners as a highlight of candidate performance.

PAPER 1 (200 marks)

SECTION I, COMPREHENDING (100 marks)

One of the primary aims of the Leaving Certificate English Syllabus is that students become more adept and thoughtful users of language and more critically aware of its power and significance in their lives. Students should be enabled "to interpret, compose, discriminate and evaluate a range of material so that they become independent learners who can operate in the world beyond the school in a range of contexts." (DES English Syllabus) It is of some importance, therefore, that candidates for examination feel free to challenge the authority of any text set for comprehension. They should feel quite free to agree or disagree with some or all of the views expressed in these text/s.

TEXT 1, BEING IRISH

QUESTION A

This was the most popular choice of Question A. Candidates found the text accessible and the set task very manageable.

(i) ***Aspects of Irishness...***

Candidates ranged widely over the extracts. 'Pride' and 'sense of tradition' emerged as the most important aspects of Irishness.

(ii) ***Which writer expresses the sense of Irishness best...?***

Jennifer Johnston and Patricia Harty were most favoured. Some responses were characterised by paraphrase with little accompanying analysis.

(iii) ***The kind of person you imagine him/her to be...***

This task presented candidates with most difficulty as it involved them in making an inferential link between what the contributor said and the personality behind the contribution.

QUESTION B

Short talk welcoming a group of foreign students to Ireland

This proved to be the second most popular choice of Question B. The genre of the semi-formal speech was well handled by most. Candidates who were most successful maintained a keen focus on giving advice that would be practical and helpful. Some merely recounted the fun that Irish people have and encouraged the foreign students to join in.

TEXT 2, A NEW IRELAND

QUESTION A

Comparatively few candidates attempted this Question A.

(i) ***Mary Robinson's role as President...***

This part was generally well handled although some candidates tended to offer too much in the way of summary or illustrative detail. Those who spent a little more time reading the speech with a view to extracting the relevant points fared somewhat better.

(ii) ***To what extent would you find yourself in agreement...?***

Engagement with the text of the speech was not problematic, but some candidates found the essence of this task to be quite challenging.

QUESTION B

A project or activity in the local community...

The standard of answering here was generally good. Many candidates appeared to have first-hand knowledge of the projects they wrote about, and there was a good sense of engagement and personal conviction in evidence. Some candidates, however, failed to grasp the central thrust of the task, that they focus on an aspect of community endeavour rather than simply write about an amenity in their local community.

TEXT 3, AN IRISH SENSE OF HUMOUR

QUESTION A

Although not a very popular option, examiners reported a wide variety of responses to this text. Despite appearing to enjoy the text not all candidates were at ease in their attempts to analyse its comic nature, largely because they lacked an appropriate vocabulary.

(i) ***Where did it first strike you that it was going to be a funny tale?***

Most candidates found this opening question very manageable and answered quite well.

(ii) ***What are the signals that it is intended to be humorous...?***

Attempts were generally quite good. Many answers were given added energy by virtue of the candidates' genuine engagement with the text. Clearly, those candidates who had the appropriate vocabulary fared much better when it came to analysis of the comic intention of the writing.

(iii) ***Comment on appropriateness of the title...***

Some candidates found it quite difficult to make a link between the nature of the material in the story and the general theme of the paper. Responses ranged from those in which candidates saw the aptness of the title as reflecting our willingness to laugh at ourselves, to those in which, equally justifiably, candidates took umbrage at a perceived 'stage-Irishness' in the story.

QUESTION B

A radio programme entitled COMIC MOMENTS, the text of your presentation...

This was the least popular Question B option. A small but enthusiastic minority chose to answer here.

TEXT 4, IMAGES OF IRELAND

QUESTION A

(i) ***What overall picture of Ireland is projected...?***

This was a popular option with the better responses focusing clearly on the 'overall' sense of Irishness portrayed in the images. Ireland's uniqueness and its ability to embrace the new while treasuring the traditional featured strongly. Some responses suffered from a tendency to give an account of each of the images in turn.

(ii) (a) ***Which image would you choose for a brochure...?***

Images 2 and 5 were generally favoured and candidates had little difficulty in justifying their choices.

(ii) (b) ***Which image would you reject...?***

Images 4 and 6 were generally deemed to be least suitable and, again, answering was focused and energetic.

QUESTION B

Choose one of the people in the images and write diary entries...

This was easily the most popular of the Question B options and clearly the one with which candidates appeared most comfortable. They displayed an easy familiarity with the diary format and clearly enjoyed the drama of the short narratives they constructed. On occasion, however, candidates struggled to achieve the sense of immediacy one might expect from a series of diary entries.

SECTION II, COMPOSING (100 marks)

In general, examiners reported favourably on the range of composing tasks set and on the variety of responses from the candidates. There was a notable

freshness and enthusiasm in much of the work presented. The text as stimulus for composition was seen as a welcome innovation and many candidates used the texts on the paper as catalysts for their own compositions.

1. *You are President of Ireland – write your first speech...*

Although not a very popular choice, this title encouraged candidates to explore the register of persuasion as well as engage in creative modelling on the original text. This gave rise to some very polished output.

2. *What it means to be Irish...*

This was the most popular title by far and it gave rise to the greatest variety in quality of response. At best, compositions were energetic and reflective. An over-reliance on the 'correctness' of the opinions expressed in the texts in Section I, however, lent a certain blandness to some of the output. Candidates were perfectly free to engage with, be critical of, and enter into debate with the texts on the examination paper.

3. *The value of sport in our lives...*

This was a popular choice and produced some very well informed and enthusiastic responses. Candidates were free to use the conventions of newspaper layout to give added shape to their compositions. It might be remembered that language teaching in the syllabus is structured around five language categories and, in the case of this task, the injunction to *persuade* an audience is the primary one.

4. *The place of music and/or song in your life...*

Although this was not a very popular title, examiners expressed warm welcome for the genuineness and enthusiasm of the responses here. The best compositions were characterised by well-informed analysis and, at times, passionate commitment.

5. *A letter to Martin Mansergh...*

Among the least popular options, it nonetheless produced some excellent and thoughtful attempts.

6. A comic narrative...

Chosen by a relative few, this task produced some interesting and brave responses.

7. Short story prompted by one or more of the images...

This title was very popular and produced a wide variety of output from personal anecdote to short story. Some candidates wrote very effective stories handling character and plot with style; others found the task of constructing an interesting narrative to be quite daunting.

PAPER 2 (200 marks)

SECTION I, THE SINGLE TEXT (60 marks)

The vast majority of candidates took either *King Lear* or *Hamlet* as their single text. This is a natural consequence of the fact that answering on Shakespeare is compulsory at Higher Level. Few candidates failed to answer on Shakespeare, either here in Section I or in Section II, The Comparative Study.

The questions set on the single texts were reported to have been fair and accessible. Some examiners reported that detailed textual knowledge was less evident than in previous years. Yet all examiners cited the familiar culprits among the common causes of difficulty for candidates – the lapse into unfocused narrative, the over-reliance on character sketch, the failure to argue a point of view cogently, the inability to express ideas clearly and accurately.

Uptake of the non-Shakespearean texts varied widely. *Great Expectations* and *Far from the Madding Crowd* were the texts on which the fewest answers were encountered.

A JANE EYRE – Charlotte Brontë

(i) ***Jane Eyre remains true to herself...***

It was generally well answered, with candidates displaying a close affinity with Jane's character and sympathy for her plight.

(ii) ***Injustice is a major feature of Jane's world...***

More popular than (i), candidates were well able to illustrate the manifold injustices against which the heroine must struggle.

B GREAT EXPECTATIONS – Charles Dickens

(i) ***Magwitch's generosity, its negative and positive effects...***

It was generally well handled; candidates encountered little difficulty with the swings and roundabouts of Pip's life story.

(ii) ***Memorable incidents, bizarre characters...***

Clearly this aspect of Dickens's novel appealed to those candidates who wrote memorable responses of their own. Some excelled while others lacked the necessary detail for a creditable answer.

C FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD – Thomas Hardy

(i) ***Bathsheba's decisions in affairs of the heart...***

Though attempted by very few, answers were reported to have been clear and coherent.

(ii) ***Male behaviour and values...***

The standard of answering here was very good with effective use made of textual knowledge.

D KING LEAR – William Shakespeare

(i) ***The most important changes in the character of Lear...***

Arguably the most popular option from all of the single text questions set, this produced some very thorough answering. Generally, however, candidates found it quite difficult to escape the power of this play's opening scene and some spent too much time 'setting up' the answer by describing the 'love test' and its consequences in excessive detail. A sharper focus on the precise nature and extent of Lear's altered world-view would have been more to the point, perhaps.

(ii) ***Scenes of great suffering and tenderness...***

It was well answered in the main, with candidates showing detailed knowledge and devoting appropriate attention to the key scenes.

E HAMLET – William Shakespeare

(i) ***The fascinating struggle between Hamlet and Claudius...***

By far the more popular of the options set here, candidates were well able to recount the detail of the struggle but were less at home with discussion of its fascinating nature. Those who attempted to deal explicitly with the aspects of the struggle that made it 'fascinating' were much more successful in avoiding the narrative trap.

(ii) ***The most dramatic scene...***

While this question was welcomed by examiners as being in keeping with the spirit of the syllabus (and with trends in junior cycle), it was rarely attempted and then not very well. Examiners suggest that when such questions, which address dramatic texts as performed rather than as read, become more the norm than the exception, the quality of answering will improve.

F ANTIGONE – Sophocles

(i) ***Ideas and dramatic action...***

Candidates frequently displayed excellent knowledge and wrote about the text with some enthusiasm. The Creon/Antigone conflict was the main point of discussion with comparatively little focus on 'ideas' per se.

(ii) ***The attitudes and behaviour of Antigone...***

Rarely attempted, the focus of discussion centred on the behaviour of Antigone with comparatively little attention given to judgement or evaluation on the part of the candidate.

SECTION II, THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 marks)

Examiners welcomed the wide range of text combinations in evidence in the candidates' answering. There was plenty of evidence, too, of engagement and involvement with the texts, if not always purposeful engagement with the questions set. Not surprisingly, this section of the paper posed the greatest

difficulties for candidates. Examiners observed that frequently candidates knew their texts well but did not focus on comparing, giving instead resumé of key moments and important themes. Some candidates opted for a linear approach to answering on texts, where the text was reviewed always in a chronological manner, leaving them with little flexibility when it came to comparing. The most telling difficulties arose when candidates failed to merge their treatment of two or more texts and attempted to compare them, as it were, at arm's length.

Many examiners, however, encountered work of a very high standard here. Answering displayed very good knowledge and insights into the chosen texts and the comparisons drawn were explicit and clear. Where that was so, examiners agreed that this section of the course was particularly satisfying to assess.

The questions set on **THEME OR ISSUE** were more popular choices for candidates than those on **LITERARY GENRE**. Questions divided into two parts were more frequently chosen than global (70 mark) questions; yet there was no evidence that candidates fared better or worse simply because of their choice of question format.

A THEME OR ISSUE

It should be borne in mind that this mode requires the study of a single theme that is common to two or more texts. Quite clearly, treatment of two different themes makes comparison under the heading of **THEME OR ISSUE** a virtual impossibility. A broad theme, such as 'Identity' or 'Relationships', can embody a number of sub-issues and the experience of the assessment would indicate that the student's study of his or her texts is most effective when it is guided by a varied exploration of a single theme or issue.

1. *Narratives can broaden our understanding of a theme or issue...*(70 marks)

Candidates who did well here were clear about their chosen theme and how it emerged from the texts under consideration. Their answers were focused and

comparison appeared to be a lived experience of these readers. On the other hand, attempts to deal with more than one theme caused significant difficulty for some candidates. Most significantly it led them into the type of answer that was characterised by separate treatments of texts.

2. ***A key moment can illustrate a theme or issue very powerfully...***

(a) ***An illustrative moment from one text...*** (30 marks)

This task proved straightforward and caused few problems for most.

(b) ***Comparative commentary from each of the other texts...***(40 marks)

Well handled by many, this part proved particularly problematic when candidates chose to discuss a different theme from that chosen in part (a). This effectively precluded them from discussion “in the light of your discussion in part (a) above” and the result was somewhat disjointed and lacking in comparative thrust.

B LITERARY GENRE

1. ***One or more aspects of literary genre you found interesting...*** (70 marks)

Although this was chosen relatively infrequently, it provided in many instances the clearest evidence of thoughtful and relevant discussion. Candidates seemed more at ease with the links between texts when their focus was on the manner in which each text told its story – rather than the story itself or the characters and themes encountered. On occasion candidates struggled here because of a somewhat sketchy understanding of the mode itself.

2. ***No two texts are exactly the same in telling their stories...***

(a) ***Compare two texts in the light of the above...*** (40 marks)

Candidates who displayed a clear understanding of the mode did well here. They focused on a variety of vehicles through which stories might be carried – plot-line, character groupings, imagery and symbol, setting, music, colour, dramatic techniques (flashbacks, the soliloquy, etc.), lighting, costume, and so on.

(b) ***Write a comparative commentary on a third text...*** (30 marks)

The best answers established a clear link between the material and techniques discussed in part (a) and the text under discussion in part (b).

SECTION III, POETRY (70 marks)

A UNSEEN POEM (20 marks)

Candidates, in the main, scored very well in this part of the examination. Examiners agreed that the poem chosen for this section was very accessible and posed little difficulty in terms of literal comprehension. On occasion, however, candidates read the poem in too literal a manner. As outlined in the Marking Scheme, engagement with the language, imagery and suggestiveness of the text is more appropriate here.

1. (a) ***What has made the princess sad...?***

It posed no difficulty for the vast majority of candidates.

(b) ***Choose two phrases that show how she is feeling and justify...***

Linking the chosen phrases with the emotion they conveyed proved slightly more problematic.

2. ***What kind of life the princess lives...***

It produced a good variety of responses. Most candidates focused on the gap between the princess's wealth and her personal misery.

B PRESCRIBED POETRY (50 marks)

Examiners noted a marked improvement in the quality of answering in this section of the course. The plentiful evidence of good personal engagement with the work of individual poets was very heartening and said to be in line with teachers' experience in the classroom. What characterised the best answers was the quality of textual support. While the poets studied quite clearly struck a chord with most students, the less successful responses to examination questions tended to rely too heavily on assertion. It should be borne in mind that the more open-ended examination questions still require demonstration of textual knowledge.

1. *Introducing Elizabeth Bishop...*

This was the second most popular option and was handled very well by most candidates. While it was not necessary to adopt a rhetorical delivery in response to the invitation to introduce Elizabeth Bishop to an audience, the idea of the introduction did give focus to many of the more successful answers.

2. *The feelings John Keats's poetry creates...*

Relatively few candidates chose this option. In the main the answering displayed good knowledge of the poems but there was confusion at times between the feelings Keats expresses in his poems and the feelings that the poetry generates in the reader.

3. *Liking or disliking the poetry of Philip Larkin...*

This was quite a popular choice and Philip Larkin appears to be quite a popular poet. Candidates enjoyed his wry view of things, his honesty and his detached voice. Once again, genuine engagement with the poems made a positive impact on the manner in which the candidates wrote.

4. *The impact of the poetry of Michael Longley...*

This was the most popular option and Longley's poems would appear to have made a very positive impact upon the candidates. Displaying good knowledge of the poetry, they wrote with enthusiasm of his compassionate outlook and the lyrical quality of the verse.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- Examiners reported favourably on the nature and level of candidates' answers throughout.
- They noted a positive engagement with the texts and tasks set on Paper 1 and a freshness of response in approaches to composition work.
- Candidates displayed an easy familiarity with tasks linked to the language categories.
- Examiners viewed the "text as stimulus for composition" approach as a welcome innovation. Many candidates used the texts on the paper as catalysts for their own compositions.
- Responses to questions on literature were characterised in the main by enthusiastic personal engagement with the texts chosen for study.
- The vast majority of candidates chose to answer on the Shakespearean tragedy as the Single Text option.
- The questions set on the Single Texts were reported to have been fair and accessible. However, some examiners reported that detailed textual knowledge was less evident than in previous years.
- The more common causes of difficulty for candidates in their responses to the Single Text questions were, as in previous years, the lapse into unfocussed narrative, the over-reliance on character sketch, the failure to argue a point of view cogently, and the inability to express ideas clearly and accurately.
- Although many examiners encountered work of a very high standard in the Comparative Study, the majority of candidates found it to be the most challenging element of the examination.
- Candidates performed well in response to the Unseen Poem, but examiners would have welcomed a more explicit engagement with the language and imagery of the poem.
- Answering on Prescribed Poetry was cited frequently as a highlight of candidate performance. What characterised the best answers was the quality of textual support.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- It will be of benefit to potential examination candidates if the criteria for assessment used in the examination are applied also to coursework over the two years of study leading to the examination. These criteria are available on the Marking Scheme for 2001 and on the Department's English CD-ROM.
- A wide variety of texts should be encountered as part of the ongoing process of language development. Students should be encouraged to write as frequently as possible in response to tasks that demand a clear sense of purpose and audience.
- Students should be encouraged more frequently to question the authority of texts they encounter in the course of their study and any text set for comprehension in the examination. Students should feel free to agree or disagree with some or all of the view expressed in these texts.
- The literary texts that have been chosen for study can become valuable resources for language learning.
- As a preparation for examination questions in the Comparative Study area, students should be given frequent opportunities to compose in response to tasks that look for explicit comparative links to be made between texts or parts of texts.
- Some attention might profitably be given to ensuring that candidates for examination are clear as to the meaning of each comparative mode and how it applies to the texts chosen for study. In particular, candidates should be aware that a single theme is required in relation to Theme or Issue.
- Clear, accurate textual illustration that avoids excessive narrative should be an integral part of the candidate's discussion of texts.
- A 'personal' response to a literary text can take many forms. It need not of necessity relate directly to the 'feelings' of the candidate but it should show evidence of engagement with the text.

Exemplar Material

N.B. Candidates' work is typed as written. [] indicates editing.

A brief commentary on the writing appears after each exemplar.

Exemplar 1

Paper I – Comprehending

Text 1 Being Irish... Question A

- (i) What aspects of Irishness emerge most strongly for you from the above extracts? (20 marks)

For me, to be Irish is to have great pride in oneself; one's family, one's country and one's heritage. To be Irish isn't just about being born in the country and living and dying there. One has to feel like they belong, to take pride in everything that is Irish. Above all to be proud of who you are. Jennifer Johnston: "I feel great pride when we do things right and a great anger when we get things horribly wrong."

There is a great sense of privilege. If one is born and Irishman/woman then he/she has been blessed. The country is considered unique and to be Irish one also has to hold within them this uniqueness. I believe that being Irish is to be very special. That's not to say Irish people are arrogant, but they are confident. Polly Devlin: "My nationality seemed more of a personal matter."

Within the Irish people there's a huge sense of achievement. At the moment the economy is experiencing the most rapid growth in all of Europe; this is expressed by Martin Mansergh: "An economy driven by technological innovation." There's huge sporting and academic achievement in Irish history, from our sporting greats like Roy Keane to our literary giants like Eavan Boland and Seamus Heaney.

Above all else, Irish people seem happy and fulfilled, and aren't afraid or in the least insecure about expressing themselves and their nationality. The Irish culture has spread throughout the world and being Irish is recognised, I feel, almost as a sign of greatness.

Patricia Harty: "There are more Irish seisiúns in New York than anywhere else."

Seán McCague: "Our rich cultural heritage has been protected while at the same time we welcome the world onto our shores."

Above all, to be Irish, is what you feel inside of you, your emotions and how you show them. The Irish are a very extrovert and outgoing race and aren't afraid to express their emotions and feelings. But as Brian Kennedy says, it's hard to explain what [it] is to be Irish. It's to be special – "like some strange hybrid".

Also the Irish welcome and sense of hospitality which permeates our community, the warmth and friendship towards others is another aspect of Irishness which appeals to me – "Welcome the world onto our shores."

Marks awarded ex 20:

17

- Candidate has a clear sense of the task, but chooses to write at unnecessary length. This is potentially self-penalising as the candidate may leave insufficient time to deal with other tasks.
- Although the illustration is plentiful, it is somewhat repetitive.
- There is some awkwardness in language. Note especially the confusion in number: *“One has to feel like they belong...”*

Exemplar 2

Paper I – Comprehending

Text 3 An Irish Sense of Humour... Question B

Imagine your local radio station is producing a programme entitled *COMIC MOMENTS...* write the text of the presentation.

“And you join us here live on Supreme 107.7 FM all over Dublin City and County for our top ten stories ‘Stories from the City’, and this is the moment you have all been waiting for, the number one comical story from Dublin City. It will be told now by the one and only, Mr Wanderly Wagon himself, the man who inspired generations of children to ruin all the clothing in their houses – it’s Forty Coats from TV!”

“Thank you. The story I will tell you has been changed many times but this is the version I was told and I believe it to be true. It seems there was a great character living in Dublin during the war called Cormac Murphy, but he was nicknamed ‘Herring’ after this story. He was well known as a character, all over the city. Anyway, one day he went into O’Rahilly’s pub on Parnell Street. The landlord in this pub was a notorious crank. Murphy walks into the pub at half nine at night. The pub is jammed with people. The barman working alone has worked up a fierce sweat. So, Murphy is asked by O’Rahilly what he will have to drink. Murphy replies, ‘Have you got any fish?’ ‘Of course not,’ replies O’Rahilly. ‘This is a pub. What do you want to drink?’ ‘Ah, nothing,’ says Murphy, ‘I want a herring.’ O’Rahilly now infuriated exclaims ‘Will you stop wasting my time, get out of my pub.’

The next day Murphy went back to the pub at the same time. O’Rahilly, now feeling some remorse for the previous night when he shouted at Murphy, makes it his business to go over to him as soon as he walks in. ‘Murphy, there you are, listen I’m sorry I yelled last night. Tell you what, have a drink on the house, what’ll it be?’ Murphy, startled at this uncharacteristic change in O’Rahilly says the first thing that pops into his head – ‘I’ll have a herring if you please.’ O’Rahilly now gets into a fit of temper and strikes Murphy exclaiming ‘If you ever come in here again asking for a herring I’ll nail you ears to the wall.’

The next day Murphy comes in. O’Rahilly was now sure he wouldn’t cross him again. Murphy goes up to the bar with three shillings in his hand and says ‘Have you got any nails?’ Why, no we don’t,’ says O’Rahilly, to which Murphy replied, ‘Then have you got any herring?’

Thank you, good night.”

P (Purpose)	15
C (Coherence)	15
L (Language)	11
M (Mechanics)	05

Marks awarded ex 50: 46

- Candidate includes the presenter's introduction and the guest's narrative.
- Has a very good sense of the dramatic, e.g., a very effective use of the Present Tense.

Exemplar 3

Paper I - Composing

1. You have been elected President of Ireland. Write the first speech you would make to the Irish people.

Citizens and children of Ireland, mná agus fir na hÉireann, I am grateful, and extraordinarily humbled by your decision to allow me represent you, our country.

The Ireland I serve is a changing, dynamic, open and increasingly powerful place. For the first time in our history our economy ranks among the most successful in Europe and indeed, the world. We are the leaders in many fields, not least in the areas of technology and the internet. The people of Ireland are now experiencing the benefits of years of grassroots development, and our new found wealth is becoming an increasingly significant factor in our national consciousness. We are an Ireland of inclusiveness, one which welcomes those from other cultures; cultures from which we can learn a great deal. There has been talk recently that Ireland is slowly becoming a less welcoming place, but that remains to be seen. Yes, there are problems of integration, but those problems can, and under my leadership, will be resolved.

It is my duty to represent this state, both as a symbol and [an] active member of our national community. I will strive to include the views of the people of Ireland in every venture and your interests are my primary concern. Each member of our nation is as important as the other, regardless of colour, religion or status. In choosing me as your president you have signalled your wish for Ireland to become a more just and fair country. Rest assured that in a developing world, a country undergoing major changes in its physical and intangible landscape, I will be representational of every community, of every new Irish citizen, of every local and regional democracy and of every person who remains Irish in a foreign land. I am proud to call myself Irish and I hope that under my leadership the national pride, which we all feel, can be maintained and even strengthened.

One could say that the idea of the local community is out-dated and unnecessary in this new Ireland. We think globally, events in other countries have impacts here and our links to Europe are increasingly evident. While these facts are true, it is my belief that the importance of a local or regional community is growing. More and more people are arriving on our shores seeking the often elusive Celtic tiger. It is our duty, therefore, to welcome these people, to integrate them into our society, and to avoid a two-tier system. If we look at examples set by other countries it is clearly evident that a multi-cultural society benefits greatly, not just economically, but socially and culturally. There are opportunities in Ireland to experience new and interesting cultures every day. In fact, while campaigning in Dublin City last week I ate breakfast in a Polish restaurant, spoke and laughed with children in a day centre enrolling children from 30 different countries and held a debate on immigration in the Irish-African Association. Encouragement of diversity and multi-culturalism has always been a factor in my manifesto and the fact that you have voted for me proves that this is a wish for the majority of people in Ireland.

There is no denying that for many of us the modern Ireland has improved our quality of life. But there is also evidence that many people are being excluded from our newfound wealth. There are still some people in our country without basic services, there are more homeless people and, in some urban areas, our children are not receiving as many advantages as they should be. It is my plan to ensure that this sort of decline stops, so as President I will, to the best of my abilities promote the introduction of services to aid those in financial difficulties. The only way we can truly advance and grow is to ensure that every citizen enjoys the fruits of our national wealth. Equality and fairness should be the ideal of this modern Ireland.

As part of a growing, changing Ireland, the importance of our national heritage and culture is growing. We have many strengths in the world of the arts, our playwrights, musicians, artists and creative minds are playing vital roles in the promotion and development of our cultural resources. Being proud of our Irishness will make us stronger and more confident of our position in a global economy, an economy built on foreign investment, but currently driven by indigenous business. I add my total support to the drive to promote, establish and aid the growing sector of new Irish companies.

People of Ireland, in electing me you have shown your support for a welcoming, inclusive and dynamic Ireland, an Ireland which is proud of its achievements and which looks confidently into the future. I am truly proud to preside over a country which can remember, learn and grow from its past, while forging new and exciting paths for its children. Let us, as a nation, embrace this changing face of Irishness.

P 30
C 28
L 28
M 09

Mark awarded ex 100: 95

- Candidate displays a perfect sense of the task and a very good ear for language.
- The speech is modelled very effectively on the original from **Text 1**.

Exemplar 4

Paper I – Composing

4. Write an article for your school or local magazine about the place of music and/or songs in your life.

“Songs are a safe place to visit how you really feel.”

Songs are a great mixture of feeling and a great way to explore your feelings. Songs bring me through a rollercoaster of emotions which are real and heart felt. They have had a great influence in my life from a very young age and are still one of the best ways in which I explore how I really feel. For me, songs have a deep meaning and most of them I try to adopted [adapt] to my own personall circumstances or feelings.

Nothing can beat that great feeling in your stomach, when you hear your favourite song, its such a quick rush of emotion which cannot be describe[d]. This shows the great power songs hold. They can bring us to tears, or they can overcome us with joy. Songs can bring me to a total state of relaxation even in the most hectic times of my life, this is why I have such a great respect for song and music and I am much in its awe. There is no place I would rather be than listing [listening] to my favourite song because of the level of emotion contained in the song.

Songs are also a great way of bonding. Throughout my life I have great memories of singing with freinds , this brings great joy and hapiness to me and these memories would be some of the best in my life. Music seems to bring people together in great harmony. This may be in concert were [where] thousands of people are joined together in the love for music or in the pub singing ballads and getting that great feeling of pride in your heart. The bonding that music and song creates can be seen everywhere, at football match, in feilds where under age drinkers come together to sing “The Feilds of Athenry”! It is an amazing virtue which music beholds, where it can bring people together in such a way.

The power of song and music, is also with the genius artists who make it. In this day and age, it is wonderfull to see how these exceptional people are using their talents in a good way. A great example of this is ‘Bono’ who is trying to iradicate third world debt. This shows how the power of song and music is much greater than just personal feelings but it is world altering. This is a great insperation to young people like me, that it is possible to change the world by expressing yourself createfully.

Although it is true that song and music and the artists have the power to alter the world, they also have the power to alter and influence the young. It is easily seen in todays society how music has developed and shaped the young people of today. Many young people have blonde hair cop[y]ing their

favourite rapper or others dress in all black and wear makeup, just like their idols. Music sets us apart and almost divides us into different social groups. Is this a good thing or a bad thing? I feel that is a matter of opinion. True, music does have a power to influence the young, in many cases it is just for a short period until the new big thing is released on the market. This I feel ruins the music industry. I cannot believe how a pop group with no talent and no intellagenic [intelligence] can be more successful than a great rock band who are writing their own music and playing their own music! This is the great injustice of the industry, but it must be accepted. It may also be said that as tastes change these pop groups are left behind, and this could be the irnoic justice.

Overall I feel that music and songs have a great role in my life and although I am not blessed with the gift of being able to create or sing great music I feel I enjoy it on great levels. It is a great outlet for when things aren't the best or when you are stressed out! It is also a very powerful weapon which is used to divide society and develop young people's minds. It has the ability to show a nation's culture which is truly a magical thing. So when I think of song, it is a great exploration of the mind, body and soul, and this, I feel, is the major impact which music and song have on my life.

P 19
C 16
L 11
M 04

Marks awarded ex 100: 50

- The candidate displays significant shortcomings in language and mechanics.
- The composition makes a good attempt to stay with the task in hand; this is particularly evident in the manner in which the closing paragraph draws the various points together.

Exemplar 5

Paper 2 – The Single Text

E HAMLET

- (i) The struggle between Hamlet and Claudius is a fascinating one.

Hamlet and Claudius's struggle is a fascinating one to say the least. It in some ways on a basic level represents the time old battle between good and evil. In this play Shakespeare deals with the theme of revenge in strong and to the point terms and at the same time introduces many themes on various levels.

In the first couple of scenes of Act I the only argument between Hamlet and Claudius is that of succession to the throne and Claudius's hasty marriage to Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. It is Hamlet's visitation from the Ghost who perhaps is his dead father old King Hamlet, that adds real fire to hostilities between Hamlet and Claudius. This after the ghost informs Hamlet that his death was at the hands of Claudius.

It is then that the real struggle between Hamlet and Claudius begins with Hamlet representing modern man, the new Denmark, an educated thinker as opposed to Claudius who represents a medieval type, a representation of all that is 'corrupt in the state of Denmark'.

Their fude excelerates from that point on and is portrayed as an intricate sword fight of sorts, each toying with the other, testing their nerve until given the opportunity to strike. This is evident throughout the play. A part of this would be the 'antic disposition' Hamlet adopts to give himself more room to manoeuvre. A more blatant attempt to goad Claudius into action would be the play Hamlet puts on which has circumstances not too far from the truth of what Claudius has done within it.

The two characters swap roles throughout the course of the play and most often Hamlet is the thinker trying to gather evidence with which to expose Claudius who plays for the most part the man of action who simply wants Hamlet out of the way. At times these roles are reversed and this backwards and forwards dance of death if you like, is the most fascinating part of all, though in their capacity to involve so many people in their battle not in terms of Denmark as a country but more closely the royal court and essentially causing the deaths of eight high-born members of the court.

With Hamlet winning out in the end but at what cost? Was Hamlet's revenge worth the life of some [so] many people, and is Hamlet, Claudius or some other force to blame for the tragedy? And it's that struggle for power and

righteousness that makes Hamlet as powerful, true to life and indeed fascinating as it undoubtedly is.

P 12

C 08

L 06

M 03

Marks awarded ex 60: 29

- The principal strength in the answer is that the candidate maintains a focus on the Hamlet/Claudius struggle.
- Yet, the material is rather generalised and assertive with very little development and close engagement with the text. The expression is cumbersome and rather limited.

Exemplar 6

Paper II – The Comparative Study

THEME OR ISSUE

2. “A key moment in a narrative text can illustrate a theme or issue very powerfully.”
 - (a) Choose one of the texts you studied as part of your comparative course and show how an important moment from it illustrates a theme or issue. (30)

Cinema Paradiso has many warm and tender scenes that deal effectively with the theme of relationships. I find this a very moving film and agree with the critic who said, in Empire magazine, that “if at some time during this film you do not have a lump in your throat, then you have no heart.”

A key moment that illustrates the theme of relationships would be when Alfredo tells the young Salvatore to leave the island and never return, on the platform. I think it perfectly displays how their relationship has developed over the years. From those initial forays into the projectionist’s booth by the cheeky urchin Toto to the fire in the Cinema, to the building of the new Paradiso and Toto employed as the new projectionist.

Alfredo, who became even more enlightened after he lost his sight, became mentor and surrogate father. With extremely wise proclamations he advised and guided the young Salvatore through the tricky years of adolescence. I think we all wish we had a father figure like Alfredo for those turbulent years. I know I do.

The relationship is an interesting one, because despite all the old man's wisdom and his Zen like state of unnatural calm, he's still just a blind elderly man. So an interesting interdependence develops between them. The juvenile Salvatore acts as eyes for the wise Alfredo, while Alfredo doles out nuggets of wisdom.

I found it impossible not to be dumbstruck by the raw emotion displayed by Alfredo as he clutches Salvatore's face and tells him to never return. Alfredo loves the young boy like his own son. He has shared in every trial and tribulation in ways that no parent ever could. I know mine couldn't, however they might have wished otherwise.

Despite all this, he tells the young Salvatore that if he returns to Sicily, Alfredo will not allow Salvatore to see him. And he will not be permitted to enter the house.

This shows how deep their relationship is, that Alfredo would sacrifice it so that Salvatore may [might] have a better future.

Salvatore gazes at Alfredo with a heartbreaking look of understanding, knowing he will never see him again. While the video played in my class there was the usual messing occurring in the back rows of the classroom. Interestingly enough, when that scene was playing, not one person moved. This moment captured the depths and influence the relationship had on the two characters. As we know, because of Alfredo's influence and his time at the Paradiso, Salvatore grows up to become a great director. This moment shaped the rest of his life.

Mark awarded ex 30: 30

- Not required to make any comparison here, the candidate establishes clearly the supportive nature of the relationship between Toto and Alfredo.
- The relevance of the material, the cogency of the argument, and the occasional personal links impressed many examiners.

(c) Write a short comparative commentary on one key moment from each of the other texts you have studied in the light of your discussion in part (a) above.

(40)

One key moment in King Lear, related to the one previous[ly] mentioned, would be the scene where Goneril and Regan – Lear's ungrateful daughters - whittle his company of knights to nothingness and allow Lear to head out into the storm.

In contrast with Alfredo and Salvatore's warm relationship, Lear's relationship with his eldest daughters is a cold one.

Where the two in Cinema Paradiso show nothing but a heartwarming mutual love and respect, Goneril and Regan display nothing but sickening ingratitude and a devious nature.

This instant their father hands them control of the land they set about humiliating and torturing Lear in a way that makes the old king one of the most pitiful figures in Shakespeare's canon of works. His heart-rending cries as his daughters laughingly take what little remains to him – including his final shreds of sanity – are saddening.

Compare this monstrous treatment to Alfredo's blinding in the fire. Not only does Toto save his life, but he doesn't let the handicap of Alfredo's blindness interfere with their friendship, in fact it enriches it.

Goneril and Regan take the opportunity of their father's reduced circumstances – self-inflicted ones no doubt – to further reduce the man and do untold damage to his psyche. I just couldn't quite imagine Toto taking advantage of Alfredo in such a manner. The daughters treat their father as less than they. [^?] Though his status may be lower than theirs he is still their father and if anyone had doubts about how bad they were, this scene would surely resolve their doubts.

Despite Alfredo's blindness, Toto never treats him as a lesser being. He appreciates the man for who he is and treats him accordingly. Unlike the treacherous daughters who so readily poured praise on Lear when they wanted his kingdom, then stripped him of his last vestiges of dignity when they felt he had no more to offer.

A key moment from The Grass Is Singing related to this theme of relationships, is when Marsden sees Moses dressing Mary. To the reader of this novel – if they haven't burned the book at this stage – it clearly demonstrates how Mary has lost all control and how Moses holds the balance of power. It's the great irony of this book that in white dominated Rhodesia a black man rules the Turner household.

This relationship was always a slightly perverse one. From the day she struck him with a whip, to him dressing her, one thing became clear. As Moses and she struggled, Moses was gaining more control and she was losing more of her marbles.

Compare this wrangling with the calm understanding existing between Alfredo and Salvatore. This relationship was about caring and sacrifice.

Moses and Mary's relationship was based on his gaining control over her and then killing her at his leisure.

Unfortunately the poor reader has to wait an interminable amount of pages before Moses puts Mary out of our misery. The best part of the novel is the first chapter where Mary is dead.

There is no real romance, warmth or tenderness in Lessing's novel, as there is in Cinema Paradiso. The only strong emotion is loathing. The only tenderness is in the subtle but dominating way Moses drives Mary mad. And the only warmth comes from the murderous African sun.

Mark awarded ex 40: 40

- The discussion centres very well on the qualitative differences between central relationships in the three texts chosen. The candidate meets the

requirement that he/she discuss the second and third texts “in the light of” the discussion of the first text.

- The personal voice of the candidate and the obvious engagement with the texts emerges clearly from the writing.

Exemplar 7

Paper II – Unseen Poem

1. (a) What, in your opinion, has made the princess sad?

In my opinion, the princess is sad because she feels that her status and position isolate her from the ordinary people around her. She wants to relate to them but is unable to do so. She is unable to show her emotions and this gives people the impression that she is hard and unfeeling. Her position prevents her from showing her true feelings towards the groom “we spoke and turned away” and

*“fall down, my tears. I wish that you might fall
On the road by the lake.”*

She cannot cry until she is alone in her bed. She feels sad because she cannot express herself openly or let her true feelings be known.

Mark awarded ex 4: 4

1. (b) Choose two phrases from the poem that show best how she is feeling... and say, in each case, why you have chosen it.

I think that the phrase

“Upon the lonely letters

Of my long name” best describe how she is feeling. While she may have a high rank and wealth and power, she cannot get close to anybody as these same things separate her from them. The ‘long name’ is a symbol of her status and its ‘lonely letters’ are a symbol of the isolation it brings her.

The phrase

“Hard is my pillow

Of down from the duck’s breast” also sums up how she is feeling. Although she has the best quality of pillow, made from soft feathers, it is useless to her as she is discontented and can’t sleep. Her frustration makes the pillow seem hard. Again, the pillow symbolises her position as a princess, but its hardness is the isolation of that power.

Mark awarded ex 6: 6

2. What kind of life do you imagine the princess lives? Explain your view by referring to words or phrases from the poem.

I think that the princess leads a lonely and also a miserable life. She has the best of all material possessions, the down pillow, the linen cover, the fine hem, but no emotional fulfilment. She is not free to experience the simple pleasures of speaking openly to the person she loves:

*“We stood by the lake
And we neither kissed nor spoke.”*

*She understands that even the waves are more contented than she is,
because they are free, “We heard how the small waves
Lurched and broke
And chuckled in the rock.”*

Mark awarded ex 10: 10

- All the candidate’s answers are clearly linked to the language of the poem.
- Candidate displays a keen awareness of the way detail works to suggest the felt life of the poem’s central figure.

Exemplar 8

Paper II – Prescribed Poetry

3. Write an essay in which you outline your reasons for liking and/or not liking the poetry of Philip Larkin.

I like the poetry of Philip Larkin. The theme that he write about most is death but I think he is able to turn the fears of death into eloquent poetry. He shows us that death is not something to by afraid.

One of my favourite poems by Larkin is ‘The Explosion’. This poem starts off with men on their way to work in the coal mine. They are all whistling rather than have a silence lapse between them. One lad runs after a rabbit and comes back with a “nest of larks eggs”. I think this is a symbol of how fragile the day is. It then goes on to describe the men reaching the “golden gates”. The golden gates to me suggest the golden gates of heaven. It also suggests to me that when the gates are shut they will never again be opened. The explosion is dealt with obliquely. All he said was “for a second the ground shook”. We never find out the extent of the damage that the explosion does. In the next verse he describes the funeral. “And for a second wives say their husbands.” Here he is describing the men appearing to their wife’s like angels with a ray of light behind them. “And one man holding an egg.” I think the egg is there to show us that life goes unbroken from one world into the next. It’s showing us that when you die your life is not ended its just continued somewhere else. One of the things I like most about this poem is that it makes death out to be something that is beautiful and not something that should be feared.

His poem ‘Ambulances’ also deals with death. This time he gives us a totally dark dim view of death. He starts off the poem by saying ambulances are like “closed dark confessionals”. The minute you read this you think of a confession box and how dark and cold they are. He then talks about being put on the stretcher and “stowed” in the ambulance. I think stowed is a very cold and impersonal word to use. He then says “it stops at any kerb all streets in time are visited.” Here he is saying that death will eventually catch up with you. There is no escaping death sooner or later it comes to everyone. He then goes on to describe how you feel when you see an ambulance and he is right

for one split second everything stops. But then you carry on doing what you would normally do. Next he describes how the family must feel. When you see someone from your family being taken away it's like part of you goes missing. I like this poem because it tells us the truth about death. He is telling us there is no point in being afraid and running away from it because sooner or later it will catch up with you.

The other poem that I like is 'Wedding Winds'. This is wrote in a monologue as seen through the eyes of a woman. This poem starts off with a couple enjoying their first night of being married. "Some of the doors were banging." The doors of the barn outside were banging in the wind and her new husband had to go out and close them. This made her very angry. She describes herself as being "stupid in candlelight". Here she is describing how happy she is to be married to this man. When he comes back he says some of the horses are upset and she can't understand why everybody isn't as happy as she is. Then the poem moves on to the next morning and she goes about doing her usual chores of hanging the clothes out and feeding the chickens but she is still as happy as she was the night before. Then she says "can it last – this perpetual joy". He[re] she is wondering can she be this happy everyday – will it last or will it eventually run out.

She then moves on to talk about happiness being like "beeds on a string". This suggests the fragility of it and how at any moment it could break and that would be the end of it. Then she goes on to say that if you have found happiness like her's you should be down on your knees thanking god for it. I like this poem because it gives us a true picture of what you feel just after you get married. It shows us the joy and the hapiness by yet the uncertainty and the fear that it won't last. I think the reason why I like Larkin's poetry is that he write about things that effect us and that are relevent to our everyday life.

P 10

C 06

L 08

M 02

Total marks awarded ex 50: 26

- While the candidate makes a valiant attempt to respond to the question set, the absence of clear, accurate illustration from the texts militates against higher marks.
- The candidate has read, and clearly enjoyed, the poems but is unable to quote with any degree of accuracy. This undermines the attempts at analysis and commentary.
- There are significant lapses in expression and mechanics.