



# Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2011

## English - Ordinary Level - Paper 1

Total Marks: 200

Wednesday, June 8 – Morning, 9.30 – 12.20

- This paper is divided into two sections, Section I COMPREHENDING and Section II COMPOSING.
- The paper contains **three** texts on the general theme of INCREDIBLE JOURNEYS.
- Candidates should familiarise themselves with each of the texts before beginning their answers.

- Both sections of this paper (COMPREHENDING and COMPOSING) must be attempted.
- Each section carries 100 marks.

### SECTION I – COMPREHENDING

- Two Questions, A and B, follow each text.
- Candidates must answer a Question A on one text and a Question B on a different text. Candidates must answer only one Question A and only one Question B.
- **N.B.** Candidates may NOT answer a Question A and a Question B on the same text.

### SECTION II – COMPOSING

- Candidates must write on **one** of the compositions 1 – 7.

# SECTION I

## COMPREHENDING (100 marks)

### TEXT 1

#### OUT OF THIS WORLD

The following text is based on edited extracts from American astronaut Buzz Aldrin's memoir *Magnificent Desolation*. In this passage he describes the build-up to the historic launch of the Apollo 11 space rocket that would carry the first human beings to the moon in 1969.

1. The sun had not yet come up and was barely peeking above the horizon as I stood and peered through the clear bubble helmet that I wore. The only sound I could hear came from my ventilation unit. Looking up and down the coastline, my eyes scanned the beaches for miles along the causeway near Cape Canaveral, where more than a million people had started gathering the night before. They came in cars, pickup trucks, campers and on motorcycles, inching their way through bumper-to-bumper traffic as they sought the perfect launch viewing location.

2. Already people were filling in every available spot of dry ground, and thousands of boats were anchored on the Indian and Banana rivers near the Cape. Without a good set of binoculars, most of the spectators could not see me, and from where I stood, I could barely see them. However I could see the evidence of them in the flickering campfires that dotted the beaches in the pre-dawn darkness. Everyone knew that something big was about to happen. In less than three and a half hours, if all went well, the enormous rocket would release an engulfing fireball and lumber off the launch-pad with the power of an atomic bomb. It should slowly gather speed as it rose majestically into the sky, launching the spacecraft and America's first attempt to land human beings on the moon.

3. Because of the danger of explosion, the area immediately near the rocket was empty,

except for technicians making their final pre-launch checks. Even if the launch was perfect, no human could stay within several miles of it. The hot gases and thunderous noise meant that the VIP spectator area was a full three miles away. Even there, the vibrations would be felt and the roar from the engines would be almost deafening. The astronauts' families, politicians, celebrities and others with the sought-after special pass would come to watch history being made.



4. I looked to the south, where some of the older launch-pads were located. I couldn't help letting my eyes linger on Launch Pad 34. In January 1967 three of my fellow astronauts – Gus Grissom, Roger Chaffee, and Ed White – had lost their lives when they were trapped inside their space capsule in a torrid burst of flames during a pre-launch test for the

Apollo 1 rocket. For fifteen minutes I stood on that walkway and enjoyed the peace and solitude as I contemplated the journey ahead. I recalled just how wonderful my life had been to get me to this point. We had trained, simulated and tested nearly every element of the mission. But there were no guarantees. Even with all the preparation, so many things could go wrong. As astronauts, we were trained to accept such risks, even the risk of not returning. But I had to put these concerns aside and climb aboard the spacecraft.

5. “Two, One ... Zero ...” The normally calm voice of Public Affairs Officer Jack King cracked with emotion from the Control Room. “All engines running!” In front of us what looked like hundreds of tiny amber lights blinked on the instrument panels.

Inside the spacecraft we could hear the mighty rumble as the controlled but excited voice cried, “Liftoff! We have liftoff!” The rumbling sound grew louder and the huge rocket felt as though it swayed slightly as it smoothly inched off the pad.

6. Large shards of frost fell from the sleek metal sides as the blue sky seemed to move past the hatch window directly above me. Below us an inferno of flames, steam and gases blazed all around the launch-pad. With 7.6 million pounds of thrust pushing all 3,240 tons of rocket and spacecraft, we cleared the tower and rapidly accelerated, the g-forces dramatically building up and pressing against us. We were on our way to the moon!

**N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.**

**Questions A and B carry 50 marks each.**

### **Question A**

- (i) What impression of Buzz Aldrin do you form from reading this text?  
Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) From what you have read in the above passage, explain why you would or would not like to have joined Buzz Aldrin on his way to the moon. Give reasons for your answer. (15)
- (iii) (a) Suggest three words or phrases, of your own or from the passage, that you think capture the atmosphere before the launch of the Apollo 11 rocket. Explain your choices.  
(b) Describe an image (photo, painting, drawing, etc.) that could be used to illustrate this extract, which would capture the atmosphere you described in (a) above. (20)

### **Question B**

Imagine NASA (The National Aeronautics and Space Administration) has advertised looking for a young person to be part of their next moon mission. Write a **letter of application** emphasising your suitability for a position on the team. (50)



## TEXT 2

### DISCOVERING INDIA ON A BICYCLE!

The following edited extract is adapted from Dervla Murphy's book *Full Tilt, Ireland to India with a Bicycle*. In this diary entry she is travelling in Afghanistan on her bicycle and undertakes a very adventurous bus journey.

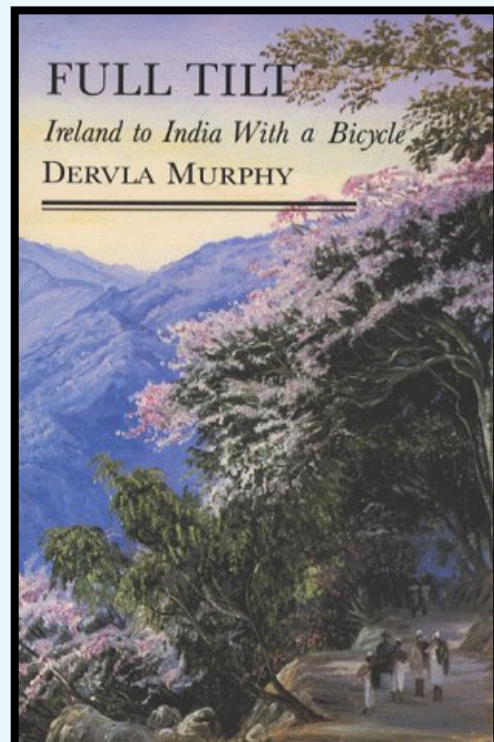
#### 1. Bamian, 22 April

It was at the end of a gorge that disaster hit my bicycle; she suffered two vicious rips in the back tyre and I doubted if they could be patched. I've got used to the feeling of being dislocated in every joint at one bump and relocated at the next. However, it's different for my poor bike and today's drama was my fault. I let her go too fast down the pass. The alternative to cycling was walking and when you've walked up to 10,300 feet you don't feel much like walking down. At this stage it was 5.15 p.m. and we were some twenty miles from Bamian. I asked about a bus and one was pointed out as going there in 'a few minutes'. So my bike was loaded up and I sat in.

2. The floor was covered in sheep and goat droppings and the steering wheel was held together with sticking plaster. I was frozen stiff – it had been raining hard and there was no glass in the windows. I sat patiently watching huge piles of animal skins being roped together and tied to the roof until the whole rickety contraption looked frighteningly top-heavy. Just before our departure nine men had climbed up and settled down on top of the bus, wrapping themselves in their huge rugs. Finally, we set off at 6.20 p.m.

3. About two miles on the engine broke down. It was now dark and raining and the repairs took nearly an hour, during which the headlights were put out of order. At 7.30 p.m. we resumed our journey up and over a 10,000 foot pass on a corkscrew road, barely wide enough for one vehicle, with sheer drops which I could imagine but happily

could not see as there was no light. Then quite soon there was light – lots of it – when the daily spring thunderstorms began. For several minutes lightning was continuous, not flashes as we know them, but glaring sheets of blue light revealing desolate mountain peaks on one side and sickening ravines on the other. Yet it was all so beautiful that I forgot to be afraid. With all this came gusts of gale-force wind carrying enormous hailstones which took the skin off my nose as I sat next to the window-that-wasn't.



4. The conditions were so bad that the bus had to stop to allow the nine Afghan men on the roof to come below. Inside, the bus was already overcrowded beyond belief. This meant that I had three children on my lap for the rest of the journey.

5. Soon after we restarted, excitement of a different kind began. The system on these privately owned buses is that the owner-driver's assistant, usually a teenager known as a *bacha*, collects the fares during the journey. The *bacha* now asked for twelve afghanis\* from everyone and a number of the passengers protested that ten had been agreed at the start. All hell broke loose and while I was bundling the children under the seat an infuriated tribesman, waving his rifle around, climbed over me, trying to get at the driver. The *bacha* pushed him and he fell backwards, giving me a blow on the ribs with the rifle butt. I looked around to see a terrifying forest of rifle barrels behind me, terrifying because in a jolting bus I imagined them going off by accident. But of course these men knew exactly what they were doing with their triggers and nothing of that sort happened.

6. The unarmed *bacha* continued his heroic defence of the driver. Then the bus stopped yet again. The driver got out and stood grasping his gun and refusing to go any further until everyone had paid their twelve afghanis. I quickly produced mine, hoping to set a good example. But I was completely ignored while the war of words raged. The angry shouts almost drowned both the thunder and the hiss of the hail slashing down. Then a compromise of eleven afghanis was accepted, the driver resumed his seat and off we went again. This time we actually kept going until reaching Bamian where my bike and I were dropped off in total darkness.

\*afghani – local money

**N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.**

**Questions A and B carry 50 marks each.**

### Question A

- (i) What impression of Dervla Murphy do you form from reading this text? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) From what you have read in the above passage, explain why you would or would not like to have joined Dervla Murphy on her adventure in Afghanistan. Give reasons for your answer. (15)
- (iii) (a) What sort of atmosphere does the writer describe aboard the bus, in the above passage?
- (b) Describe an image (photo, painting, drawing, etc.) that could be used to illustrate this extract, which would capture the atmosphere you described in (a) above. (20)

### Question B

Write **the talk** you would give to a group of students from different countries visiting your school, in which you explain to them what it is like to live in Ireland today. (50)





## TEXT 3

### THE CONTINUING VOYAGES ...

The following text is adapted from the introduction to *Constellations*, a collection of short stories edited by Marco Palmieri and written to celebrate forty years of the television series, *Star Trek*. In this extract Palmieri considers the contribution *Star Trek* has made to humanity's journey to the future.



1. In 1966 the world was a lot simpler. It was an age of innocence and promise. By today's standards, we had barely begun to climb the ladder of possibility. We didn't have the internet, we didn't have video games or e-mail, we didn't have lap-top computers, and we didn't have phones in our pockets. The integrated circuit didn't exist yet. If you wanted music you listened to a tinny transistor radio. There were only a few places called McDonald's. The Beatles hadn't recorded *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* yet. Martin Luther King hadn't yet stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and declared, "I have a dream!" Oh, and one more thing – there were no footsteps on the moon. That particular dream was still three years away.

2. Then, on September 8, 1966, NBC broadcast the first episode of a new television series, called *Star Trek*. That moment was a turning point. It was the first pebble

rattling down the slope before the rest of the avalanche starts. It was, in a sense, the moment the future arrived in America's living room. *Star Trek's* vision was so far beyond the lives of ordinary Americans that it may very well have been beyond the understanding of many of them. It was a vision of a different way of being. It was startling.

3. Part of it was the details. The clothes. The hair. Those ears. Doors that slid open as you approached. Hand-held communicators that flipped open. Wall sized view-screens. Medical scanners and displays. Information stored on credit-card-sized blocks or silvery discs. Beams of light that could be used to heat things or cut through them. Computers that could store an unlimited amount of information, sounds and pictures and video. All of these things, and more, suggested that in the future, life would be different.

4. Today, we take it for granted that the supermarket doors slide open as we approach, that we can flip open a telephone and call anywhere in the world. We are not surprised by televisions with 60-inch high-definition displays or by gadgets smaller than candy bars that allow us to carry around a library of music and movies and photos. But after we step past the technological predictions, there was something else about *Star Trek*, something far more important than flip-phones and high-definition televisions and lap-top connections to the Internet.

5. *Star Trek* represented a different way of being human – because it represented a different way of thinking about humanity. Coming scarcely twenty years after the brutality of World War 2 it represented a new vision that as human beings we could do better. *Star Trek* creator, Gene Roddenberry said, “We are going to show people that the way things are is not

necessarily the way they have to be.” *Star Trek* was about possibilities. Not simply the possibilities of technology – but the possibilities of humanity. The real legacy of *Star Trek*, as with all the best science fiction, is that it invites you to think. It encourages you to ask questions. It stretches the horizon of your imagination.

**N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.**

**Questions A and B carry 50 marks each.**

### Question A

- (i) From your reading of paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of this text, how has America changed since 1966? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) From what you have read in the above passage, explain why you would or would not like to have lived in America in 1966? Give reasons for your answer. (15)
- (iii) (a) Based on Palmieri’s writing above, would you agree that *Star Trek* had a mainly positive effect on American life? Explain your answer.
- (b) Describe an image (photo, painting, drawing, etc.) that could be used to illustrate this extract, which would capture the effect that the *Star Trek* series had on American life. (20)

### Question B

Imagine you have been selected as a space-ship crew member. There is limited living space aboard the space-ship. Therefore, you must carefully choose the things you would take on your voyage into space. **Write a list** of up to five things you would choose to take with you. Explain and justify your choices. (50)



## SECTION II

### COMPOSING (100 marks)

Write a composition on **any one** of the following.

Each composition carries 100 marks.

The composition assignments below are intended to reflect language study in the areas of information, argument, persuasion, narration, and the aesthetic use of language.

1. ‘Everyone knew that something big was about to happen.’ (Text 1)

**Write a series of diary entries (two or more) leading up to a big event in your own life, or in your school, or in your local area.**

2. ‘I recalled just how wonderful my life had been to get me to this point.’ (Text 1)

**Write about a time in your life when you achieved something that really mattered to you.**

3. ‘... I was completely ignored ...’ (Text 2)

**Write a personal account of an occasion when you felt you were being ignored.**

4. ‘... it was all so beautiful that I forgot to be afraid.’ (Text 2)

**Write about a time in your life when someone or something inspired you.**

5. ‘... the first episode of a new television series ...’ (Text 3)

**Write an article for your school magazine about television programmes or television series that you would or would not recommend.**

6. ‘...in the future, life would be different.’ (Text 3)

**Write a short story set in the future.**

7. ‘... a new vision that as human beings we could do better.’ (Text 3)

**Write a talk you would give at your school graduation ceremony encouraging your classmates to play their full part as citizens of Ireland and the world.**



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