



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2015

ENGLISH - HIGHER LEVEL - PAPER 1

180 marks

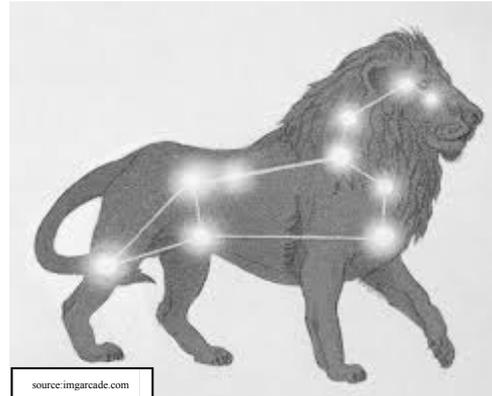
WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE - MORNING, 9.30 - 12.00

**YOU MUST ATTEMPT ALL 4 SECTIONS
ON THIS PAPER**

**IT IS SUGGESTED THAT YOU SPEND ABOUT
HALF AN HOUR ON EACH OF SECTIONS
1, 3, 4, AND ABOUT ONE HOUR ON
SECTION 2**

Read carefully the following passage and then answer the questions that follow.

In the following article, writer Colette Olney explains why she admires the life and work of twentieth-century Irish astronomer, Mary Brück. The article was originally broadcast on the Sunday Miscellany radio programme.



The Night Sky And Mary Brück

In the recent good weather, I was in the garden after dark, putting a pile of washing out to hang in the night air. This, for me, is a pleasurable household chore, particularly if the night is mild, or if the stars are out.

The stars were out.

I saw them twinkling away in great numbers. They made me think of Mary Brück. Although I never met her, Mary Brück often comes to mind when I find myself under a velvety, star-speckled sky. I think of her sometimes too, under the moon, if it's full.

Mary Brück was born to schoolteachers Thomas and Margaret Conway in Ballivor, County Westmeath in 1925. The eldest of eight, she attended St Louis Convent in Monaghan, sat her Leaving Certificate aged sixteen and earned a physics degree from UCD. Later obtaining a doctorate from the University of Edinburgh in the field of solar spectroscopy, she proceeded into research and a post at the Dunsink Observatory where she met her husband, astronomer Herman Brück, and started a family. Dr Mary Brück passed away in 2008 at the age of eighty-three, having acquitted herself with great distinction in the field of astronomy and as a prolific writer on the role of women in science.

Her best-known book is probably *Agnes Mary Clerke and the Rise of Astrophysics*. It was fitting that Mary Brück should write the story of that nineteenth-century, Skibbereen-born chronicler of astrophysical discovery. Mary Brück followed the Skibbereen woman's example — immersing herself in the field of astronomy and contributing hugely to the international scientific and literary world.

You might imagine such lofty scholarship would transport a person into a realm apart — detach them from others — maybe even make them crazy. But Mary Brück was as sane and rounded an individual as one might hope to meet. Here's how I know: when I was a jobbing substitute teacher at primary level, my fastidious principal offered me a box of bedraggled books from the school library — some of them pulverised from years of page-turning. Surplus to requirements, the books were to be replaced by new stock. I could do what I liked with them — use them to start a fire; distribute them to friends with small children who wouldn't mind their grubbiness; or slip them into one of those doorstep bags for collection. In sorting them, I found a few to keep — pocket-sized early Ladybird books from the 1960s and among these I discovered *The Night Sky*, by Dr Mary Brück of the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh.

From it I quote: "The Earth from which we view the world around us is a large ball about eight thousand miles across." Now there was a fact I'd never fully registered. Mary Brück's telling of it was pure child's play! Her trawl through galaxies is similarly distilled into language that bridges

gaps not just between ignorance and information, but between the world of a pensive, knowledgeable adult and the real curiosity of a child ... or indeed any reader.

The relationship Mary Brück proposes between mere mortals and the solar system is encapsulated in one fell swoop with a breathtaking sentence that reads: "There is nothing special about the Earth." This statement is subsequently qualified with an explanation of Earth's place in a family of nine planets, but the impact has been made, our imagination appealed to directly, and we are obliged as Earthlings to accept our precarious predicament.

What makes someone devote their life's work to astrophysics? Mary Brück said her interest in the stars stemmed from her childhood fascination with the man in the moon. It's more than a little ironic that she wrote extensively on the role of women in science.

When *The Night Sky* was published in 1965, man had not yet put a foot on the moon. "The moon has already been reached by rockets from the earth," Mary Brück touchingly observes — dating (irredeemably) the little book, and giving any busy primary-school principal reason to chuck it out in favour of some other, newer book containing up-to-the-minute rocket science.

But because I'm not so busy, to me the book is valuable and timeless: that 1969 moonwalk — a mere blip on the radar.

And because of Mary Brück, I for one, with no scientific studying to speak of, understand, for instance, that on late spring and early summer evenings, the constellation known as The Lion stands in the south and right in front of us.

And that's what has me out in the dark, hanging up the washing, dilly-dallying in the garden, saluting astronomer Mary Brück ... and stargazing.

This text has been adapted from the original, for the purpose of assessment, without the author's prior consent.

Answer the following **three** questions:

1. Based on what you have read in the above extract, what does the writer admire about Mary Brück? Support your answer with reference to the passage. (15)
2. Explain, in your own words, what you think the writer means when she says, "You might imagine such lofty scholarship would transport a person into a realm apart —". (10)
3. Does Colette Olney's writing style in this passage appeal to you? Support your answer with reference to the passage. (15)

Write a prose composition on any **one** of the following titles. Except where otherwise stated, you are free to write in any form you wish e.g. narrative, descriptive, dramatic, short story, etc.

1. Breaking the mould.
2. Tremendous silence.
3. Write a humorous article for your school magazine, outlining the five golden rules that you think are important for **one** of the following:
 - Being a good friend
 - Being a member of a team
 - Being a teenager.
4. A skill I am proud to have developed.
5. Write a speech for **OR** against the motion: "We live in a dull world where there is no longer any mystery."
6. Write a story which includes the phrase, "Please speak plainly, this is very important!"
7. Write a story entitled 'Change' that includes **all** of the following elements:
 - A character whose priorities have changed
 - A friend who feels left behind
 - A moment of realisation or understanding
 - A hopeful conclusion.
8. Stargazing.

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

You will be rewarded for:

- Well-structured answers
- Clarity of expression
- An appropriate tone
- Good grammar, spelling and punctuation.

1. Write a set of customer service **guidelines** to be included in the staff manual of a large supermarket. The guidelines should outline, in a clear manner, how staff should present themselves and how they should interact with members of the public. In particular the guidelines should advise staff members on how to respond satisfactorily to customers with complaints.

OR

2. Your school principal has asked you to write a **report** based on a survey your class has carried out concerning the eating habits of students in your school. Write the report, to be submitted to the school principal. In it you should explain how the survey was conducted and outline the survey's findings. The report should also make recommendations for the future, based on the survey's findings.

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

1. Read the editorial comment on **Page 2 of Paper X**.

- (a) Based on your knowledge of Media Studies, explain the role of a newspaper editor. (10)
- (b) To what extent do you agree with the opinions expressed in the editorial comment on **Page 2 of Paper X**? Give reasons for your answer. (10)
- (c) Imagine that you are the editor of a newspaper. Write an editorial in which you express your strong opinions on an issue related to **one** of the following topics: (20)
- Sport • Fashion • Politics • The Environment.

OR

2. Examine carefully the screenshot from the film review website *Rotten Tomatoes* on **Page 3 of Paper X**. *Rotten Tomatoes* provides a forum for the views of both professional film critics and ordinary cinema-goers.

- (a) Explain one advantage of reading film reviews on a website like *Rotten Tomatoes* over reading film reviews in a newspaper or magazine. (10)
- (b) To what extent would websites, such as the one you can see on **Page 3 of Paper X**, influence your decision as to whether or not you would go to see a particular film? Explain your answer. (10)
- (c) You are interviewing a director about his or her latest film for a film review website. Write **two** questions to ask the director, that you think would be of interest to a reader of the website and write the responses you think the director might give to your questions. The director and his or her film can be real or imaginary. (20)

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