



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2008

ENGLISH - HIGHER LEVEL - PAPER 1

180 marks

WEDNESDAY, 4 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.

The following is an extract from the journal of the naturalist, Charles Darwin, in which he recorded his research and observations into the natural history and geology of the countries visited during the voyage of the H.M.S. "Beagle" round the world under the command of Captain FitzRoy, R.N.

Charles Darwin's Journal



Charles Darwin

After having been twice driven back by heavy southwestern gales, Her Majesty's Ship, *Beagle*, a ten-gun brig, under the command of Captain FitzRoy, R.N., sailed from Devonport on the 27th of December 1831. The object of the expedition was to complete the survey of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, begun by Captain King in 1826 and continuing until 1830; to survey the shores of Chile, Peru, and of some islands in the Pacific; and to carry a chain of chronometrical measurements round the World. On the 6th of January we reached Tenerife, but were prevented from landing by fears of our bringing the cholera. The next morning we saw the sun rise behind the rugged outline of the Grand Canary Island, suddenly illuminating the Peak of Tenerife whilst the lower parts of the island were veiled in fleecy clouds. This was the first of many delightful days never to be forgotten. On the 16th of January, 1832, we anchored at Porto Praya, in St. Jago, the chief island of the Cape de Verd archipelago.

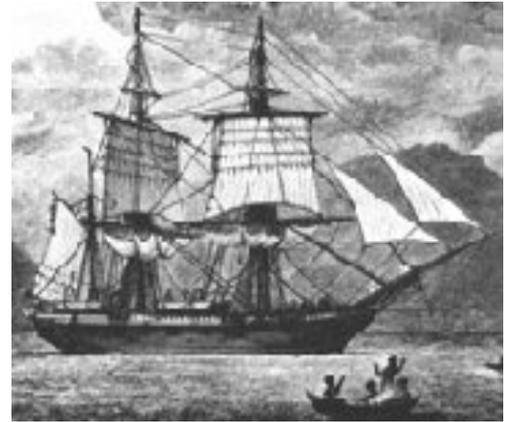
The neighbourhood of Porto Praya, viewed from the sea, wears a desolate aspect. The volcanic fires of a past age and the scorching heat of a tropical sun have, in most places, rendered the soil unfit for vegetation. The country rises in successive steps of table-land, interspersed with some truncate conical hills, and the horizon is bounded by an irregular chain of more lofty mountains. The scene, as beheld through the hazy atmosphere of this climate, is one of great interest - if, indeed, a person, fresh from sea, and who has just walked, for the first time, in a grove of cocoa-nut trees, can be a judge of anything but his own happiness. The island would generally be considered as very uninteresting, but to any one accustomed only to an English landscape, the novel aspect of an utterly sterile land possesses a grandeur which more vegetation might spoil. A single green leaf can scarcely be discovered over wide tracts of the lava plains; yet flocks of goats, together with a few cows, contrive to exist. It rains very seldom, but during a short portion of the year heavy torrents fall, and immediately afterwards a light vegetation springs out of every crevice. This soon withers, and upon such naturally formed hay the animals live. It had not now rained for an entire year.

When the island was discovered, the immediate neighbourhood of Porto Praya was clothed with trees, the reckless destruction of which has caused here, as at St. Helena, and at some of the Canary islands, almost entire sterility. The broad, flat-bottomed valleys, many of which serve during a few days only in the season as watercourses, are clothed with thickets of leafless bushes. Few living creatures inhabit these valleys. The commonest bird is a kingfisher (*Dacelo Iagoensis*), which tamely sits on the branches of the castor-oil plant, and thence darts on grasshoppers and lizards. It is brightly coloured,

but not so beautiful as the European species. In its flight, manners, and place of habitation - which is generally in the driest valley - there is also a wide difference.

Another day we rode to the village of St. Domingo, situated near the centre of the island. On a small plateau, which we crossed, a few stunted acacias were growing; their tops had been bent by the steady trade-wind in a singular manner, some of them even at right angles to their trunks. The direction of the branches was exactly northeast by north, and southwest by south, and these natural vanes must indicate the prevailing direction and the force of the trade winds. The travelling had made so little impression on the barren soil that we here missed our track to Fuentes. This we did not find out till we eventually arrived there. Fuentes is a pretty village, with a small stream; and everything appeared to prosper well, excepting, indeed, that which ought to do so most – its inhabitants.

When morning came the view was clear; the distant mountains being projected with the sharpest outline onto a heavy bank of dark blue clouds. Judging from the appearance, and from similar cases I had observed in England, I supposed that the air was saturated with moisture. The fact, however, turned out to be quite the contrary. The hygrometer gave a difference of 29.6 degrees between the temperature of the air, and the point at which dew was precipitated. This difference was nearly double that which I had observed on the previous mornings. This unusual degree of atmospheric dryness was accompanied by continual flashes of lightning. Is it not an uncommon case thus to find a remarkable degree of clear dry air in attendance with such action of lightning?



H.M.S. Beagle
(A ten-gun brig)

Answer the following **three** questions:

1. Darwin had an eye for detail. Briefly discuss this view with reference to the passage. (10)
2. Despite being written in 1832 much of the content of the passage is of interest to modern readers. Do you agree? Explain your point of view with detailed reference to the text. (15)
3. Would you like to have accompanied Darwin on his voyage? Give reasons for your answer based on evidence from the text. (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. “December 27th 1831. Left Devonport bound for Tierra del Fuego. The weather does not look kind with a westerly gale blowing hard. The Beagle is a fine ship - a ten-gun brig - however ...”
Continue this diary entry written by Charles Darwin’s assistant.
2. An undiscovered paradise.
3. Write a composition including the line, “It was the unfairness of it all that annoyed me most.”
4. What the world needs now.
5. I could hardly sleep with excitement. Only three more days to go ...
Continue this composition.
6. Look at the picture on **Page 4** of **Paper X**, which accompanies this examination paper, and write a composition inspired by it.
7. Write a speech for or against the motion: ‘Young people are not taken seriously in Ireland.’
8. The most interesting place **OR** places I have ever been.

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. You are a member of your school's Student Council. As there are now students from a range of different nationalities attending the school, your Principal has asked the Council to come up with some suggestions to help your school to develop as an intercultural community.

Write a report to be submitted by the Student Council to the Principal outlining your ideas.

OR

2. NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is running an international competition to send one student from Ireland on the next moon mission. You wish to enter the competition.

The following are the competition entry requirements:

1. Entries should be between 170 and 200 words
2. You should outline
 - Your suitability for the mission
 - Why you wish to participate in the mission

Complete your competition entry.

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

1. (a) An Irish athlete has won a gold medal at the Beijing Olympic Games. Write a script for a radio commentary on the event. Try to capture the excitement of the athlete's winning performance in your script. (20)
- (b) Would you have preferred to experience the gold medal win by watching it on television or listening to it on the radio? Outline the advantages, as you would see them, of your preferred medium in this case. (20)

OR

2. Look at the posters on **Page 2 and Page 3** of **Paper X**.
- (a) Which of the two posters do you think conveys its message most effectively? Explain your answer with detailed reference to the poster. (20)
- (b) Media Studies teaches us that the Media can be a powerful force for change. Select **ONE** form of media (e.g. radio, television, newspapers, internet, etc.) and explain how it could be used to combat racism. (20)

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