

Approach to Paper 1

Marking Scheme for Higher and Ordinary Level

Paper 1 is worth 200 marks, half of the marks for Leaving Certificate English. You have 2 hours and 50 minutes to complete the paper.

There are two sections in the paper, **Comprehension and Composing**.

The paper contains three texts on a *general theme*. Students are advised to familiarise themselves with all texts before beginning their answers.

The **Comprehension** section involves answering two questions, A and B.

Question A involves answering a series of questions on a particular text. It is worth 50 marks.

Question B requires the student to carry out a small writing assignment arising from a particular text. It is worth 50 marks.

Students must do A and B from different texts.

The **Composing** section involves students producing a composition on one of seven titles. It is worth 100 marks.

Recommended Time Allocation	
Scanning through paper	10 minutes
Question A	40 minutes
Question B	45 minutes
Composition	1 hour 15 minutes
Checking over paper	5 minutes

Marking Criteria

Both Paper 1 and Paper 2 are marked according to the following criteria:

30%	Purpose	Engagement with set task
30%	Coherence	Sustaining your response over the entire answer
30%	Language	Appropriate to task – vocabulary, style, punctuation
10%	Mechanics	Spelling, grammar

Remember – view each question as a task.

What exactly are you being asked?

Underline the **key words** of the question.

The Five Language Genres

It is important to have a good understanding of the five language genres, as this will help you to get to grips with the paper.

Three of the genres are closely connected to each other:

Language of Information

Key Words

clear – simple – logical – organised

Example: Report

Women earn less, live longer

A new gender report published by the CSO today compares key differences in the social and economic lives of men and women in Ireland.

Highlights from the report include:

- The employment rate for women aged 20-44 varied from 87.2% for women with no children to 52.4% for women whose youngest child was aged 3 or under.
- Men worked almost 10 hours longer per week than women in 2004.
- In 2004, only 13.3% of TDs in Dáil Eireann were women. This rate was well below the average EU 25 rate of 22.1%.
- Life expectancy for men is around 5 years less than for women.
- Less than 1% of persons whose principal economic status was looking after the home and family in 2004 were men.
- Around 95% of pupils taking the higher level Leaving Certificate engineering, construction studies and technical drawing papers were boys. At third level, 71% of graduates in engineering were men while 82% of graduates in health and welfare were women.
- Around 86% of primary school teachers were women but only 51% of primary school management.

Language of Argument

Key Words

evidence – logical – organised – persuasive techniques

Example: Letter to an Editor

Madam-,

In case anyone has forgotten, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is a shockingly violent, disturbing play.

It opens with Macbeth's defeat of the rebel leader where he "*unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps*". Soon after horrible images unfix Macbeth's hair and Lady Macbeth claims that she would while feeding an infant *child* "*Have plucked my nipple from his boneless jaws / And dashed the brains out*". The violence is relentless. Duncan is murdered, Banquo is murdered, Lady Macbeth commits suicide, the witches chant about birth-strangled babes, Macbeth cries "*I am in blood / Stepp'd in so far, that should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go o'er*", Macduff "*was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripp'd*" and later his wife and child are brutally murdered.

This play makes Wes Craven look like a wimp. And worse, unless denial is your strong point, it is impossible to find the 'everything's going to be okay' moral message. Although Macbeth does die in the end, the sheer blandness of his successor and the suburban neatness of his vision makes us pine for the Tony Soprano-like figure that is Macbeth. Bad beats boring any day of the week. And then there is that soliloquy. Hauntingly beautiful lines of poetry that give us a despairingly nihilistic vision of life:

*It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

If we're not happy with our seventeen year olds being exposed to this X-rated voyage into evil and anarchy, lets blame Shakespeare and not theatre companies.

Yours etc.

Language of Persuasion

Key Words

repetition – contrast – direct address – variety of sentence length – concrete illustrations – forceful language

Example: Property Advertisement

Escape the stresses and strains of city living. Picture yourself in ‘Lakeview’, a delightful Georgian house surrounded by mature landscaped gardens with magnificent views across Ballynakill Bay to the Twelve Pins.

This dream home is approached off a quiet country road by a long avenue that winds through the attractive grounds. The extensive lawns and gardens, include an orchard, vegetable garden, woodlands with Rhododendrons, Hydrangea, Oak, Ash and Cedar. There are fishing rights on Lough Garraunbaun, which borders the property, and provides good brown trout fishing.

The house and lawns face south. The reception rooms and principal bedrooms have superb views over Diamond Mountain and the Maam Turks . The reception rooms are pleasantly proportioned and full of light, and include decorative chimney pieces and ceiling plaster work.

The enchanting Connemara coastline with its inviting sandy beaches and harbours is only a few miles away. The spectacular hills and mountains have much to offer the hill-walking enthusiast. Also closeby is Kylemore Abbey and its famous Victorian gardens. The local town of Clifden has a range of restaurants and pubs and other services including a supermarket, primary and secondary schools. ‘Lakeview’ has everything to offer you and your family.

They are linked because a good argument is persuasive and gives you information, etc.

The other two language genres can similarly be linked together:

The Language of Narration

Key Words

refers to any kind of story
Characters – plot – setting – narrative technique

Example: Extract from Short Story

Sinead heard the door shut and the car ease out of the driveway. She stared at the stipple ceiling. White. And the room was white, or it might as well be it was so pale. Everything was carefully arranged. A wardrobe, a desk, a chair, a locker. Linda, her father's girlfriend, was certainly efficient. She thought about Linda very rarely before this and now she was living with her. It was strange to see someone else hanging her clothes on the line, or telling her to take Vitamin C, or asking her what kind of sanitary towel she preferred. It made her feel new; not in a good way but as though she had just been created. A fifteen-year-old blank canvas.

She got up. Enough time had passed. If dad or Linda had forgotten anything they'd have returned by now. The morning was warm and the carpet pile was snug underfoot. Sinead's hand ran down the smooth banister. The light poured in through the stained glass at the front doorway throwing blue and red patterns onto the laminate floor. This was the first time she'd been left on her own. She knew her father and Linda had worked out some sort of a schedule over the last ten days, missing work to be with her. It was an incredible relief to be finally on her own. She clicked on the radio and a man's voice droned out. She whizzed the dial up to 2fm and felt comforted by the familiar base beat of music.

Everything was so tidy. The smooth red presses, the shiny utensils in their pottery holder, the cereals in see-through plastic containers. Sinead reached towards the well-stocked fruitbowl and that was when she saw the note in Linda's neat handwriting, giving instructions for everything. The tear fell fat onto the page. All up through Sinead into her chest rose the pain. Her home, sixty-two Morview Drive with its straggly hedge and key under the cracked slab at the top of the driveway suddenly seemed so far away.

The Aesthetic Use of Language

Key Words

**the use of language to evoke pleasure
refers to descriptive writing
detail – imagery (simile, metaphor, personification) – contrast –
descriptive words (adjectives, adverbs, verbs) – repetition –
variety of sentence length**

Example: Descriptive Writing

The Luas slices through the night air like a silver bullet. There is a metallic hiss. The swoosh of electric doors. I am encapsulated in this space. It is glamorous, I think. And so utilitarian. I take a seat with my fellow pioneers and with a short spurt of efficiency we are off.

We glide through suburbia. A legoland of velux windows and patio doors. No longer shy, the net curtains have long ago been abandoned and the journey offers a peep show of moving life in the half-light. Shadows creep over lawns and leaves kick up and down two-car driveways, banking endlessly by red brick walls.

The names of the stations resonate of some other suburb, some other city. The woman's voice on the recording is seductive. She holds the broad vowels in her mouth, like wine. Cowper, Windy Arbour, Ballally. And the Gaelic is grafted on, seamlessly, like a corporate creole. Each new junction is a cousin I never knew I had.

And then it is over. We surface just off Grafton Street. I inhale sweet spicy air. I am pulled gently along towards the heartthrob of an ancient city.

These genres are linked because stories are made interesting by the author using language in a descriptive way.

Comprehension – A

Spend about 10 minutes at the start of the paper familiarising yourself with the three texts.

The texts will represent different genres. For example, in last year's Higher Level paper, Text 1 was an **Argument/Information** piece, Text 2 was a **Narrative** and Text 3 was a **Persuasive** piece combining a written and visual element.

I would suggest you select the Question B that you want to do at this point as it is essential that you get as many marks as possible in this question.

You will then have two A Questions to choose from. Check through the questions before making your final choice.

When you have selected a Text **read** back carefully through it. **Examine** the questions. Underline **key words**. **Underline** relevant sections of the text. Make **notes** on the paper. Only then should you begin to **write** out your answers.

The marks can be distributed in a variety of ways so check the allocation of marks for each question. For every **5 marks** you should try and make **one point** with relevant quotation/reference.

Be aware of the difference between a comprehension question (**What**) and a style question (**How**).

Comprehension – B

Question B is a **Short Writing Assignment**.

1 1/2 – 2 pages are enough to write.

For example last year's Ordinary Level students had a choice between writing a problem page **Letter** of advice, writing a **Speech** for a Local Community Association meeting, and writing three short **Diary** entries.

Remember

- **Plan** your points
- Decide on a suitable form or **layout**
- Think about your **Register** – using language that is appropriate for the task.

For example, the language used in a problem page **Letter** (casual, humorous, friendly, etc.) is different to the language used in a **Speech** (formal, organised, logical, well-informed)

Composition

You have a choice of **seven titles**.

The titles range over the **five language genres**.

The titles are **linked in some way to the three texts**.

You may refer to the text to which the composition is linked or you may complete the composition assignment with reference to your own store of knowledge or experience.

You are free to refer to, quote from, or draw ideas from any or all of the texts and their accompanying illustrations.

This is known as **creative modelling** and is very much encouraged in the new syllabus.

When composing there are three elements to consider:

1. The **purpose** of the task.
2. The **audience** for whom you are writing.
3. The **register** appropriate to the task.

You should be conscious of the relationship between the audience, context and style.

Remember – while all categories interact and feed into each other, you must be clear about the workings of each genre and know which genre you are writing in when you select your composition assignment.

Choosing a Title

- Use a process of elimination.
- Know what genre you are writing in:
- Write about what you know.

Plan your essay

- Brainstorm - write the title in the centre of the page and jot down all relevant ideas.
- Select the order of your paragraphs.
- Remember – You may decide to omit some of your original ideas.
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Popular Compositions

The personal experience Essay

- Draw on your own experience.
- Points made in an indirect way through the narrative.
- Be reflective, reveal your personality.
- First-person narration.
- Clear, logical structure or sequence of events.
- Draw pictures with imagery and detail.
- Comment on past events from your present standpoint, perhaps using a flashback structure.

Short Stories

- A short story is a limited piece of fiction. Focus on a little corner of life.
- It is a story, which involves some plot, happening or progression of some sort. This will usually mean some tension or conflict and a resolution of that conflict.
- Reveal your characters through description, dialogue and actions. Go for a little depth and difference. Make your characters credible.
- Setting – feel it, see it, smell it.
- Relevant to the title – don't wander off and then try to force it round at the very end.
- Beware of over-long introductions.

The Discussion/Argument Essay

- Express your views and opinions on a particular subject.
- This is analytical writing – points are made and arguments are constructed.
- Logical structure.
- Use examples and references to convince the reader.
- Use description, anecdote, etc. - keep it interesting.

There is only one way to improve your **writing skills** and that is to sit down and put pen to paper.

The more you **practice**, the better you will become.

Choose a **genre** that suits you and get going!

The students who do best in the composition are often rewriting bits and pieces of their **own work**.