

LEAVING CERTIFICATE ENGLISH

Higher

PAPER ONE – 2 ½ HOURS

A number of texts will appear on the paper. Hopefully they will be of different types, **e.g. an extract from a story, a piece of informative writing, a newspaper report, an article from a serious publication, a piece of persuasive argument, a picture or set of pictures, a humorous piece etc.**

Each text will deal generally with the same theme e.g. in the Sample papers the theme at Higher Level was OUR WORLD, at Ordinary Level the theme was FRIENDSHIP.

The purpose of this themed approach to Paper 1 is to help the student come to grips with the paper and also to help you when it comes to the Composing element of the paper.

There are THREE TASKS in this paper;

- 1. COMPREHENDING (50 marks)**
- 2. FUNCTIONAL TASK (50 marks)**
- 3. COMPOSING (100 marks)**

Note; If you answer Question A on one text you MAY NOT answer question B on the same text.

COMPREHENDING

Two, three or four pieces of text will appear on the paper. One of these texts may be composed of pictures.

Here is a survey of some of the questions on the Sample Paper;

TEXT ONE

OUR WORLD – THEIR WORLD

Question A (i)

Things to think about;

This question asks you to draw "general conclusions". Be sure that you don't just repeat the specific facts in the text. General conclusions from this text may concern the state of health of people in the First and in The Third world. Another general conclusion may be drawn with regard to Education or the amount of cash wasted on

silly luxuries by the people of the West when the people of the third world can barely feed themselves.

A (ii)

Sample Answer

The author's purpose in laying out the information as two parallel lists is firstly to display the information as clearly as possible. His intention in writing the piece is to draw a comparison between the lifestyle and expectations of Our World and Their World and the format chosen by the author allows us to observe those comparisons clearly and instantly. If the information was contained in two separate paragraphs, the reader would have to do the work of the editor and so the impact of the comparison would be lessened.

The second purpose in using this format is to shock the reader into an awareness of the injustice in the world and so is more likely to provoke him to do something about it. The facts speak for themselves.

TEXT 3 THE LIBRARY.

Question A (i)

Things to think about;

You will need to read the passage you have chosen to answer on at least twice. Think about possible responses to this question. Read the introduction above the main image. Note the mention of "vast crumbling castle". Look at the images; they are part of the experience and may help you to come to a clearer view. Remember the adjectives you choose will be important. Consider some of the following; **gloomy, solemn, dilapidated, depressed, melancholic etc.** Add some of your own. Your answer should consist also of references to the text to justify your opinion.

Question A (ii)

Decide clearly what you think of Sepulchre before you start writing. Mark those portions of the text where you have the evidence to back up your opinion. Don't be afraid to respond personally. Try to imagine meeting Sepulchre. Be vivid, be direct.

Question A (iii)

Sample Answer

The passage contains many excellent examples of descriptive writing which help to vividly portray both the gloominess of the castle and the melancholy of its owner.

The best examples I found were in Section 2. The description of the Library is masterly in its use of significant detail. The chandelier's light is "unable to reach the extremities of the room" thus contributing to a sense of gloom and mystery. The table in the centre is made of "the blackest marble"; note the use of colour and the superlative "-est" to intensify the glumness of the scene.

The finest examples of description are reserved for Sepulchre himself. Five or six deft sentences suffice to bring him to life (if that's the proper word!). The use of the adverb "limply" to describe his arms is very effective. His "Grey habit" is also effective in allowing us to picture the scene. The description of his hands using the image "shadowy transparency of alabaster" makes us aware of his sensitivity. Another excellent description is "His dejection infected the air about him" implying his sadness is like a disease. The personification of the galleries "brooding with slow anguish" is wonderfully descriptive. It's as if they were alive. Overall, I think it's very good descriptive writing.

(Note this is 200 words. Less than a page.)

Question B – THE FUNCTIONAL TASK

Be sure you think before you choose the task to write on.

On the sample paper there are FOUR tasks but you will have a choice from **THREE** only.

The choices are;

- 1. A letter to a politician arguing a point of view and persuading.**
- 2. Thought for today delivered to early morning listeners.**
- 3. The text of an advertisement selling Gormenghast – persuasive writing**
- 4. A letter of response arguing a point of view.**

(Please see The Sample Paper for the full questions)

IMPORTANT

The purpose in answering on the Functional task is to display your ability to write fluently and convincingly in a variety of different styles or registers.

Therefore before you write think through the following process;

- 1. What is the purpose I'm trying to achieve?**
- 2. Who is my audience going to be?**
- 3. What style of writing (or register) will I adopt in order to achieve my purpose most effectively?**

Look again at the Functional Tasks above. Think out your answers to each of these questions. Now practise doing them.

SAMPLE ANSWER

Question B - TEXT 4 EXPLORING OUR WORLD

Dear Sir,

I read with sorrow the letter written "in ever diminishing hope" and feel I must reply to his condemnation of the progress of the modern world.

He seems to suggest that scientific experiment and discovery are merely the child's play of scientists who have nothing better to do. However, it is these very same scientists who have painstakingly discovered real solutions to the many problems and difficulties that beset mankind.

Take the area of health, for example. One hundred years ago the mortality rate for young children was very high, but today it is negligible. Why? The answer is simple. Scientists in the medical field have worked to help find cures for diseases such as typhus, cholera and polio. If they had not then maybe your dissatisfied letter-writer would not be here to complain. So, instead, let him be thankful!

The writer's view that science has ruined our sense of wonder is a bit romantic, I think. If you look at the night sky through the Hubble Telescope (designed, I believe, by scientists) you will see the most wonderful array of galaxies invisible to the naked eye.

And as to breathing clean air! Well there is very little of that at present and unlike the writer I live in hope that the clever scientists will come up with a solution to pollution so that we can all continue to benefit from progress.

(240 words)

Yours sincerely,