



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2025

English - Higher Level - Paper 2

Total Marks: 200

Thursday, 5 June – Afternoon, 2.00 – 5.20

Candidates must attempt the following:

- **ONE** question from SECTION I – The Single Text
- **ONE** question from SECTION II – The Comparative Study
- **ONE** question on the Unseen Poem from SECTION III – Poetry
- **ONE** question on Prescribed Poetry from SECTION III – Poetry

N.B. Candidates must answer on Shakespearean Drama.

They may do so in SECTION I, The Single Text (King Lear) or in Section II, The Comparative Study (King Lear, The Merry Wives of Windsor).

INDEX OF SINGLE TEXTS

<i>The Tenant of Wildfell Hall</i>	Page - 2
<i>All the Light We Cannot See</i>	Page - 2
<i>The Crucible</i>	Page - 2
<i>King Lear</i>	Page - 3
<i>Frankenstein</i>	Page - 3

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The 2025 examination papers were adjusted to compensate for disruptions to learning due to COVID-19.
This examination paper does not necessarily reflect the same structure and format as the examination papers of past or subsequent years.

SECTION I

THE SINGLE TEXT

(60 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** question from this section (A – E).

A THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL – Anne Brontë

- (i) “The world Brontë creates in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* offers readers an opportunity to gain many fascinating insights into how power, in different forms, operates in this society.” Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to the text.

OR

- (ii) “Writers often employ a range of literary techniques in an attempt to heighten the credibility of characters in texts.”
Choose **two** characters from Brontë’s novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and discuss the effectiveness of the writer’s use of a range of literary techniques to heighten the credibility of these characters.
Support your response with reference to the text.

B ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE – Anthony Doerr

- (i) “The world Doerr creates in *All the Light We Cannot See* offers readers an opportunity to gain many fascinating insights into how power, in different forms, operates in this society.” Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to the text.

OR

- (ii) “Writers often employ a range of literary techniques in an attempt to heighten the credibility of characters in texts.”
Choose **two** characters from Doerr’s novel, *All the Light We Cannot See*, and discuss the effectiveness of the writer’s use of a range of literary techniques to heighten the credibility of these characters.
Support your response with reference to the text.

C THE CRUCIBLE – Arthur Miller

- (i) “The world Miller creates in *The Crucible* offers readers an opportunity to gain many fascinating insights into how justice and injustice, in different forms, can operate in society.” Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to the text.

OR

- (ii) “Miller’s exploration of the conflict between obeying one’s conscience or betraying one’s conscience reveals a variety of compelling insights into human nature.” Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to Miller’s play, *The Crucible*.

D KING LEAR – William Shakespeare

- (i) The duality of some of the characters in *King Lear*, allowing them to be interpreted as both victims and persecutors, creates fascinating insights into human nature and society.

Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to at least **two** characters in Shakespeare's play, *King Lear*.

OR

- (ii) "Shakespeare's exploration of the conflict between a world of justice and order and a world of chaos and cruelty, reveals a variety of compelling insights to the audience."

Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to Shakespeare's play, *King Lear*.

E FRANKENSTEIN – Mary Shelley

- (i) "The world Shelley creates in *Frankenstein* offers readers an opportunity to gain many fascinating insights into how power, in different forms, operates in this society." Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to the text.

OR

- (ii) "Writers often employ a range of literary techniques in an attempt to heighten the credibility of characters in texts."

Choose **two** characters from Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein*, and discuss the effectiveness of the writer's use of a range of literary techniques to heighten the credibility of these characters.

Support your response with reference to the text.

SECTION II THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** question from **either A** – Theme or Issue **or B** – Cultural Context **or C** – General Vision and Viewpoint.

In your answer you may not use the text you have answered on in **Section I** – The Single Text.

All texts used in this section must be prescribed for comparative study for this year's examination. Candidates may refer to only one film in the course of their answers.

Please note:

- Questions in this section use the word **text** to refer to all the different kinds of texts available for study on this course.
- When used, the word **reader** includes viewers of films and theatre audiences.
- When used, the term **technique** is understood to include techniques employed by all writers and directors of texts.
- When used, the word **author** is understood to include all writers and directors of texts.
- When used, the word **character** is understood to refer to both real people and fictional characters in texts.

A THEME OR ISSUE

1. (a) In the case of **one** text on your comparative course, explain how the particular frame of mind or mindset of a central character aided the author's exploration of the complexity of a theme or issue. Develop your response with reference to your chosen text. (30)
- (b) Compare how the particular frame of mind or mindset of a central character, in each of **two other** texts you studied on your comparative course, aided the authors' explorations of the complexity of the same theme or issue you discussed in part 1 (a) above. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

OR

2. Compare the extent to which inclusive or exclusive behaviour, in **at least two** texts on your comparative course, reveals interesting lessons about a theme or issue in these texts. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (70)

B CULTURAL CONTEXT

1. (a) In the case of **one** text on your comparative course, discuss the extent to which understanding the consequences of not conforming to societal norms influences the behaviour of a central character in the cultural context of this text. Develop your response with reference to your chosen text. (30)
- (b) In the case of **two other** texts on your comparative course, compare the extent to which understanding the consequences of not conforming to societal norms influences the behaviour of a central character in the cultural contexts in each of these texts. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

OR

2. In the case of **at least two** texts on your comparative course, compare the extent to which divisions are encouraged in subtle rather than obvious ways, in order to maintain control and power successfully. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (70)

C GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT

1. (a) Do you think that the climax of a text is over-influential in shaping a reader's perception of the general vision and viewpoint of that whole text? Develop your response in relation to **one** text on your comparative course. (30)
- (b) In the case of **two other** texts on your comparative course, compare the extent to which the climax, in each of these texts, is over-influential in shaping a reader's perception of the general vision and viewpoint of these whole texts. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (40)

OR

2. Compare the extent to which your perception of the general vision and viewpoint, in at **least two texts** on your comparative course, is influenced by the varying degrees to which these texts present human nature as contradictory and paradoxical. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts. (70)

SECTION III

POETRY

(70 marks)

Candidates must answer **A** – Unseen Poem **and** **B** – Prescribed Poetry.

A UNSEEN POEM (20 marks)

Read the following poem by Pat Boran carefully. Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2 which follow.

As Far as Turn Back

After we've walked for long enough
the conversation peters out,
and grunts, sniffs and the occasional cough
are all that punctuate the quiet.

Now and then, there's a heel-burst
slipstream of shingle; a see-saw
slate-flat rock taps and trembles
its morse code underfoot;

a crow caws, a sheep responds
from a clump of grass a field away.
But that's about the size of it.
No path agreed in advance,
we're just out walking on this lockdown day,
taking the air and, taken by it,
leaving the road for animal tracks,
heading, as my father's phrase would have it,
'as far as turn back'.

And who knew that not knowing
where that turn would turn out to be
would turn out to be
the thing we'd miss the most.

Pat Boran

1. (a) How would you describe the mood of this poem? Support your response with reference to the poem. (10)
- (b) Do you think, *As Far as Turn Back*, is an appropriate title for this poem? Give two reasons for your answer, supporting your response with reference to the poem. (10)

OR

2. "The poet's use of language in *As Far as Turn Back* is both clever and skilful." To what extent do you agree with this observation? Support your response with reference to the poem. (20)

B PRESCRIBED POETRY (50 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** of the following questions (**1 – 5**).

1. Eavan Boland

“Boland’s skilful use of evocative imagery in her poetry allows her to explore the complex nature of powerlessness.”

Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to the poetry of Eavan Boland on your Leaving Certificate English course.

2. Patrick Kavanagh

“Kavanagh’s discerning use of simple language allows him to produce powerful insights into the world of nature and human nature, both drawn from a parochial perspective.”

Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to the poetry of Patrick Kavanagh on your Leaving Certificate English course.

3. T.S. Eliot

“Eliot’s clever use of imagery is essential to his vivid portrayal of a morally bankrupt and futile world.”

Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to the poetry of T.S. Eliot on your Leaving Certificate English course.

4. Derek Mahon

To what extent do you think an audience’s appreciation of both Mahon’s language and thematic concerns would be enhanced if his poetry was read aloud?

Develop your response with reference to the poetry of Derek Mahon on your Leaving Certificate English course.

5. Tracy K. Smith

“In her poetry Smith makes effective use of tone, to heighten a variety of thought-provoking questions about the nature of our lives.”

Discuss this statement, developing your response with reference to the poetry of Tracy K. Smith on your Leaving Certificate English course.

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Leaving Certificate – Higher Level

English

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