

Leaving Certificate

English

Paper 1 Comprehension

Please see *Teachers' Notes* for explanations, additional activities, and tips and suggestions.

Levels	Students' English language skills should be developed to Level B1 during funded Language Support. Mainstream subject learning will require the development of skills at Level B2 if students are to cope with public examinations.	
Language focus	Key vocabulary, word identification, sentence structure, extracting information from text, writing text, grammar.	
Learning focus	Using English textbooks and accessing curriculum content and learning activities.	
Acknowledgement	The <i>English Language Support Programme</i> gratefully acknowledges the permission of Gill and Macmillan to reproduce excerpts from <i>Less Stress More Success, English Revision for Leaving Cert Ordinary Level</i> by Anne Gormley	
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Using this unit

Language support and mainstream subject class

The sections *Activating students' knowledge*, *Focus on vocabulary*, and *Focus on grammar* have been designed, in particular, for Language Support classes.

Focus on reading and *Focus on writing* are suitable for use in either Language Support or subject classes.

Answer Key

Answers are provided at the end of the unit for all activities except those based on free writing.

Textbooks

This unit focuses on the *Comprehension* section of Paper 1 of the Leaving Certificate exam. Students will need to use their textbooks if they are to gain the most benefit from the activities.

Learning Record

The Learning Record is intended to help students monitor their progress. This can be downloaded or printed from the website in the section *Advising Students and Record of Learning for the Leaving Certificate*. A copy of the Learning Record should be distributed to each student for each unit studied.

Students should:

1. Write the subject and topic on the record.
2. Tick off/date the different statements as they complete activities.
3. Keep the record in their files along with the work produced for this unit.
4. Use this material to support mainstream subject learning.

Symbols

Symbols are used throughout the unit to encourage students to develop their own learning and support materials.



prompts students to file the sheet when they have completed the activity. This is used for activities which can be used as a reference in the future e.g. for subject classroom, revision, homework etc.



prompts students to add vocabulary, definitions, or examples of vocabulary in use to their own personal glossary for the topic. A personal glossary makes study and revision more efficient.

Keywords

The list of keywords for this unit is as follows:

Nouns

argument
argument writing
aspect
attitude
autobiography
writing
character
(clear) picture
climax
comprehension
 passage
conclusion
connotation
description
drama
emphasis
end
example
feelings
fiction
form
genre
hero
image
imagery
(informative) writing
intention
letters
mood
narrator
paragraph
plot
point-of-view
prose
purpose
question
relationship

resolution
sentence
setting
short piece
story/stories
storyteller
storytelling
structure
style
subject matter
theme
tone

Verbs

to analyse
to appeal (to)
to compare
to contrast
to convey
to define
to describe
to discuss
to emphasise
to evaluate
to explain
to focus
to identify
to illustrate
to imagine
to inform
to outline
to persuade
to read
to reflect
to relate
to rewrite
to talk

to tell a story
to think
to understand
to write

could
would

Adjectives

absurd
autobiographical
careful
clever
detached
descriptive
general
great
informative
ironic
logical
long
odd
modern
organised
persuasive
plain
short
simple
talented
vivid

Adverbs

sometimes
suddenly

NAME: _____ DATE: _____
LC English Paper 1: Comprehension

Vocabulary file (1) for the topic
Paper 1: Comprehension

Word	Meaning	Page(s) in my textbook	Note
comprehension			
argument			
autobiography			
imagery			
narrator			
paragraph			
prose			
purpose			
to illustrate			



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Vocabulary file (2) for the topic
Paper 1: Comprehension

Word	Meaning	Page(s) in my textbook	Note
resolution			
sentence			
theme			
tone			
descriptive			
ironic			
logical			
to compare			
to contrast			



Introduction

Activating students' existing knowledge

Use a spidergram to activate students' ideas and knowledge on the key points in this chapter. See **Teachers' Notes** for suggestions.

Possible key terms for the spidergram:

- **Reading**

 - **Reading skills**

 - **Reading for pleasure**

 - **Reading for study purposes**
-
- Invite students to provide key words in their own languages.
 - Encourage dictionary use.
 - Encourage students to organise their vocabulary into relevant categories (e.g. meaning, nouns, keywords, verbs etc.).



Students should record vocabulary and terms from the spidergram in their personal dictionaries.

Level: B1 Individual / pair

Focus on vocabulary

1. Matching – types of prose writing

All of the expressions in column A refer to different types of writing on the Leaving Certificate syllabus. Match each expression in Column A with a definition in Column B. Draw a line between the matching expressions. Then look at the four pieces of writing below, and decide what type of writing they might be.

Column A	Column B
Autobiographical writing	Trying to sway the reader towards a certain viewpoint on the strength of feeling and emotion.
Argument or discursive writing	Telling a story.
Informative writing	A strong emphasis on describing things and/or people.
Narrative writing	Presents information in a logical and organised manner.
Persuasive writing	Writing about oneself, the use of 'I'
Descriptive writing	To inform or convey certain facts in a clear manner.

- I was the only boy in a school of 600 who studied music. Being seen walking the streets of my home town with a musical instrument by my side left me open to jeering, ridicule and humiliation.
- Experience in other countries has told us there is only one solution to this debate. Experts are all agreed. We must vote.....
- Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 is a new flu virus which has been circulating worldwide since April. The World Health Organisation has declared this to be pandemic – a flu epidemic that spreads around the world.
- Julie rang the door bell many times but could get no answer. Using her sleeve, and not wanting to touch the grime, she rubbed at the glass in the door, peering though for a sign that someone was inside.



2. Comprehension Vocabulary

The words in the grid (all verbs) are often used when asking and answering comprehension questions. Some of the words are similar in meaning. It is important to know what these verbs mean. Read them carefully, think about what they might mean. Then select a meaning from the list below and write it in the space provided.

to analyse	
to compare	
to compare and contrast	
to contrast	
to define	
to discuss	
to evaluate	
to explain	
to illustrate	
to outline	

- Describe only the most important facts or ideas about something.
- To consider something carefully and decide how good or bad it is.
- To give information or examples to explain or prove something.
- To say exactly what something means.
- To compare two people or things in order to show the differences between them.
- To examine the way in which two people or things are similar.
- To give your ideas and opinions on something or someone.
- Make something clear or easy to understand by giving reasons for it or details about it.
- To examine the way in which two people or things are different and similar.
- To examine the details carefully in order to explain it.

Level: B1
Individual / pair

Focus on grammar

3. Reported Speech

When writing in English about what people have said, sometimes we quote **directly**, and sometimes we **report** what has been said.

Direct speech: 'I love you.'

Reported Speech: Michael said he loved her.

Direct speech: 'Do you love me?'

Reported speech: Michael asked her if he she loved him.

- To report speech we need a reporting verb (for example: said, asked)
- If the reporting verb is in the past, we change the verbs in direct speech from present to past.

Below are some famous quotations. Write them as reported speech in the space below.

***'I can resist everything except temptation.'* (Oscar Wilde)**

Oscar Wilde said that _____

***'That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.'* (Neil A. Armstrong)**

Neil A. Armstrong said that _____

***'The report of my death was an exaggeration.'* (Mark Twain)**

***'All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.'* (George Orwell)**

***'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.'* (Winston Churchill)**

4. Reporting verbs

When writing, it is important not to overuse words, such as *say* and *tell*.

a) In the example from exercise 3, can you think of a different verb to use instead of *said*?

Michael said he loved her.

b) Rewrite the following sentences using the verbs in brackets. Be careful, sometimes other changes have to be made also!

'The business is losing money.' (*explain*)

'Let's go to the cinema.' (*suggest*)

'You'd better telephone the school and tell them you are ill.' (*advise*)

'Don't stay out later than midnight.' (*warn*)

'If you don't leave immediately I will call the police.' (*threaten*)

'I'll send you a post card.' (*promise*)

'Please try to understand our position.' (*ask*)

c) Complete the sentences by reporting what people might say in these situations:

After winning €7, 000,000 in the lottery, Sean O'Brien from Cork said...

The one survivor of the plane crash told reporters that...

On the day she became Taoiseach, Ms Lynch said...

Level: B1 / B2
Individual / pair

Focus on reading comprehension

5. The reading passage below is about comprehension passages.

- a. Read the passage first to get a general understanding of it.
- b. Three key definitions are missing. Read the three definitions in the boxes below.
- c. Decide where the definitions belong.

Features of comprehension passages

In the comprehension passage always look for the following:

- Theme: _____.
- Tone: _____.
- Intention of purpose: _____.

All three features are related. If a writer's intention is to condemn violence, the theme will reflect that intention. A writer may wish to tell a story, so the subject matter will be written in the form of a narrative. Another writer may wish to persuade the reader about something and will therefore use a persuasive style of writing.

a. the relationship between the writer and the reader; *how* the writer is saying what is in the passage

b. *why* the writer wrote the passage

c. the subject matter of the writing

Level: B1 / B2
Individual / pair

Focus on reading comprehension

6. Reading to remember.

a. First look at the title of this extract from your textbook. Before you read, try to guess some of the points that will be in the extract. Write them in the space below.

b. Next read the article and underline or highlight the main points.

c. Turn over the page and try to remember as many of the ten do's as possible. Give yourself 10 points for each one you remember and see who gets the highest score!

How to answer comprehension questions

1. Spend approximately 40 minutes on each question.
2. Read the passage through several times in order to grasp the gist or general idea of what it is about.
3. Quickly scan the layout of the passage. If the text is divided into sub-headings, these headings can often provide you with an idea of what the passage is about and how the plans are developed.
4. If the passage uses imagery, examine why it is used and what point is being made in the imagery.
5. Does the writer intrude in the text? Why?
6. In a passage that is factual or based on argument, know how to distinguish facts from opinions in the writing. Is evidence used to support the points made?
7. Before beginning to write your answers, work on a rough draft – getting your points down in note form – for each question.
8. Tackle every aspect of the question. Keep control of time. Stop when your allotted time is up.
9. Use your own words as much as possible.
10. When reading back, read your answers with a purpose. Check the question and then your answer. Have you answered the question asked? Have you used answers that are relevant and useful? Is your answer clear and logical, or is it repetitive and long-winded?

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Level: B1 / B2
Individual / pair

Focus on writing

7. Reporting incidents and events

A narrative is a story. Inside a narrative you often have to write about single incidents or simple events.

Remember

- a. The past tenses are usually used.
- b. Linking words are often used so that the length of sentences are varied..

Task A: Write a short account of an incident in public when

Someone tried to snatch your bag.

Or

You saw someone trying to steal someone's' bag.

8. Writing biographical information

You may need to write a report on someone's life, or even report on your own life!.

Remember

- a. When people *do* things, English uses the active form of the verb.

He/she went...

He/she worked as...,

He/she spent a lot of time....

- b. When things *happen to* people, the passive form of the verb is used.

He/she was born

He/she was brought up in

He/she was educated at

He/she was involved in

Task B: Write a brief biographical account of a person that you admire.

Or

Write a short biographical sketch of any character in a novel, film, or play.

Or

Write a biography of an imaginary person.

Answer key

1. Matching – types of prose writing

Column A	Column B
Autobiographical writing	Writing about oneself, the use of 'I'
Argument or discursive writing	Presents information in a logical and organised manner.
Informative writing	To inform or convey certain facts in a clear manner.
Narrative writing	Telling a story
Persuasive writing	Trying to sway the reader towards a certain viewpoint on the strength of feeling and emotion.
Descriptive writing	A strong emphasis on describing things and/or people.

- a. autobiographical
- b. persuasive
- c. Informative
- d. narrative

2. Comprehension vocabulary

to analyse	To examine the details carefully in order to explain it
to compare	To examine the way in which two people or things are similar
to compare and contrast	To examine the way in which two people or things are different and similar
to contrast	To compare two people or things in order to show the differences between them
to define	To say exactly what something means
to discuss	To give your ideas and opinions on something or someone
to evaluate	To consider something carefully and decide how good or bad it is
to explain	Make something clear or easy to understand by giving reasons for it or details about it
to illustrate	To give more information or examples to explain or prove something
to outline	Describe only the most important ideas or facts about something

3. Reported Speech

'I can resist everything except temptation.' (Oscar Wilde)

Oscar Wilde said that he could resist everything except temptation.

'That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.' (Neil A. Armstrong)

Neil A. Armstrong said that was one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.

'The report of my death was an exaggeration.' (Mark Twain)

Mark Twain said that the report of his death was/had been an exaggeration.

'All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others' (George Orwell)

George Orwell said that all animals were equal, but that some were more equal than others.

'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.' (Winston Churchill)

Winston Churchill said that he had nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.

4. Reporting verbs

- a) Michael claimed/declared/whispered/ that he loved her.
- b) He explained that the business was losing money.
She suggested going to the cinema.
He advised her to telephone the school and tell them she was ill.
She warned him not to stay out later than mid-night.
He threatened to call the police if she didn't leave immediately.
She promised to send him a postcard.
He asked her to understand their position.

5. Features of comprehension passages

In the comprehension passage always look for the following:

- Theme: **c. the subject matter of the writing.**
- Tone: **a. the relationship between the writer and the reader; how the writer is saying what is in the passage.**
- Intention of purpose: **b. why the writer wrote the passage.**

6. Reading to remember

How to answer comprehension questions

1. Spend approximately **40 minutes** on each question.
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4. If the passage uses **imagery**, examine why it is used and what point is being made in the imagery.
5. Does the **writer intrude** in the text? Why?
6. In a passage that is factual or based on argument, know how to **distinguish facts from opinions** in the writing. Is evidence used to support the points made?
7. Before beginning to write your answers, work on a **rough draft** – getting your points down in note form – for each question.
8. Tackle **every aspect** of the question. Keep **control of time**. Stop when your allotted time is up.
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