

Leaving Certificate

English

Paper 1 Composition

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 *Composition* section of Paper 1 of the Leaving Certificate English 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

activity/activities
argument
audience
chairperson
clarity
composition
concept
conclusion
construction
content
debate
essay
gaps
grammar
group
guidelines
hints
idea
length
letters
material
motion
organisation
outline
page
paragraph
parts
planning
preparations
pre-writing
punctuation
purpose
reader
rough outline
sense
sentences
speaker
speech
spelling

storyteller
strategy/strategies
style
theme
thoughts
topic
vocabulary
words

Nouns (grammar and punctuation)

adjective
adverb
apostrophe
comma
conjunctions
noun
prepositions
pronouns
verb

Verbs

to begin
to brainstorm
to conclude
to construct
to develop
to discard
to establish
to explore
to gather
to have an idea
to help
to improve
to insert
to involve
to link
to organise

to pay attention (to)
to plan
to prepare
to revise
to rewrite
to sum up
to write

must
will

Adjectives

appropriate
basic
best
bold
casual
common
effective
essential
formal
functional
important
informal
logical
personal
plural
proper
reasonable
singular
substantial
successful

Useful phrases

- to eliminate common errors
- to take into account

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

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

Word	Meaning	Page(s) in my textbook	Note
argument			
composition			
debate			
essay			
grammar			
paragraph			
punctuation			
speech			
content			



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

Word	Meaning	Page(s) in my textbook	Note
theme			
vocabulary			
to brainstorm			
informal			
formal			
effective			
logical			
personal			
successful			



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:

- **Writing stories**

- **Writing letters**

- **Writing descriptions**

- 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 - writing tasks

In table A there is a list of composing, or writing tasks that students are asked to do in the Leaving Cert. Match each writing task in Column A with a definition in Column B. Draw a line between the matching expressions. Which ones are similar in meaning?

Column A	Column B
Write an article	Write a story or description of a series of events.
Write a personal account	Write a formal talk for a group of people.
Write a short story	Write a description of a series of real or imaginary events.
Write a speech	Write a description of something that has happened.
Write a narrative	Write for a magazine or newspaper
Write an account of	Write a description of something that has happened, relate this description to yourself.

2. Matching verbs and nouns

Match the verb on the right which 'goes' with a noun on the left.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| to develop | ideas |
| to write | a debate |
| to take part in | a speech |
| to brainstorm | an argument |
| to make | a composition |



Level: B1 Individual / pair



Focus on grammar

3. Grammar words

It is useful to know the meanings of words used to describe grammar. We have given you some of the key words.

- a. Find the meanings of the words from the list underneath, and re-write them in the box.
- b. Select examples from the list below, to complete the table,

Grammar word	Meaning	Examples
adjective		
adverb		
conjunction		
noun		
preposition		
pronoun		
verb		

Meanings:

- A word that refers to a person, place, event, feeling or quality.
- A word that describes or gives more information about a verb.
- A word that is used to connect phrases or parts of sentences.
- A word that refers to an action, state or experiences.
- A word that describes a noun or pronoun.
- A word that is used before a noun or pronoun to show place, direction, time etc.
- A word that is used instead of a noun.

Examples:

and teacher beauty on he it arrive
make do big black she development in
quickly book because happily

4. Linking words

1. In English we use linking words (conjunctions) to join pieces of information in a sentence or to form one longer sentence from two short sentences.

Look at these three examples:

1) I've got a headache. I feel sick.
I've got a headache and I feel sick.

2) I've got a headache. I am going to school.
I've got a headache, but I am going to school.

3) I've got a headache. I am staying in bed.
I've got a headache so I am staying in bed.

2. Fill in the table with link words from the list below.

Link word	Meaning	Link words similar in meaning
and	additional information	
but	contrasting information	
so	as a result	

in addition, also, consequently, nevertheless,
moreover, although, therefore, however

3. Now rewrite these sentences using **and**, **but** or **so**.

- I came here in 1999. I have lived here ever since.
- It was a long walk. It was worth it.
- He speaks very little English. I talked to him through an interpreter.
- I was tired. I went to bed.
- Mary had some money. She bought a bike.
- The party wasn't very good. I left early.
- Thousands of pupils are leaving school. There are no jobs for them.
- At that time there was no railway. There is now.
- The game was violent. They banned it.
- These watches are accurate. People buy a lot of them.

5. Write five new sentences using **and**, **but** or **so**. Leave a blank where the link words should be. Swap your sentences with another student. Fill in and correct one another's work.

Level: B1 / B2
Individual / pair

Focus on reading

5. Reading and making predictions.

- Cover the words in the box below – no looking!
- Read the extract from an English, Paper 1 textbook and guess what words might fit in the blank spaces.
- Now find words in the box which are suitable to your guessed words, in order to complete the text.
- You can compare your work with the original text in the Answer Key.

How to write effectively

Successful writing involves taking a number of different things into account:

- Knowing how to construct sentences so that they form effective and clear _____.
- The ability to construct paragraphs and to _____ them together to achieve a coherent unity and structure.
- Selecting the appropriate style for your _____.
- The ability to master the conventions of spelling and _____.
- Polishing and _____ what you have written.

Before you start writing clearly establish:

- What the purpose of your communication is
- What your subject matter is
- The type of reader and what expectations they have.

Your _____ must be your own individual response to the subject. It is important therefore not to regurgitate material or to learn compositions _____. Nor is it advisable to write a composition simply 'off the top of your head', without any _____ whatever. Remember, the best compositions and writing are written on topics you _____. Work at cultivating a variety of interests, and learn to identify your own style – your own particular way of _____.

punctuation	reader	revising	paragraphs	enjoy
composition	writing	link	off by heart	preparation

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 'do's' and write them in the space below.

b. Next read the article and underline or highlight all the 'do's'.

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!

Ten 'do's' on writing a composition

1. Write a paragraph everyday on any topic. Leave it to 'cool' then come back later and correct it.
2. Always brainstorm your title, and always write rough drafts.
3. Organise your paragraphs, putting the most important ideas first.
4. Write interesting and exciting opening paragraphs.
5. Make your composition a reasonable length, three to four pages of A4 paper are usually sufficient.
6. Make sure the ideas you use are relevant. Use your own ideas.
7. Make your conclusions clear, fairly substantial non-repetitive.
8. Vary the length and structure of your sentence.
9. Link your literature course to your composition; weave in quotations or ideas naturally and fluently.
10. Read your composition aloud in order to hear your mistakes.

Level: B1 / B2
Individual / pair

Focus on writing



7. Writing paragraphs

Before writing full compositions, practise by writing good paragraphs!

Remember:

- A paragraph is a unit of information unified by a central idea (or theme).
- The central idea is expressed at some point in the paragraph by one sentence (the main or topic sentence).
- A paragraph usually *develops* an idea – that is, it adds information, explanation, examples and illustrations to the central idea.

Practise by writing a paragraph on the following Leaving Cert tasks.

Always remember to check and edit your work.

Write 90-100 words.

- a. “This is a multi-tasking generation.” Write an article for a magazine about what it is like being a teenager in the twenty-first century.

- b. ‘A special friend...’ Write a personal account of what friendship means to you.

- c. “What is the fascination?” Write an account of some pastime or hobby that fascinates you.

Answer key

1. Matching - writing tasks

Column A	Column B
Write an article	Write for a magazine or newspaper
Write a personal account	Write a description of something that has happened, relate this description to yourself.
Write a short story	Write a description of a series of real or imaginary events.
Write a speech	Write a formal talk for a group of people.
Write a narrative	Write a story or description of a series of events.
Write an account of	Write a description of something that has happened.

Writing tasks which are similar;

Write a narrative/ short story

Write an account of/a personal account of

2. Matching verbs and nouns

These are the most common combinations.

to develop an argument

to write a composition

to take part in a debate

to brainstorm ideas

to make a speech

3. Grammar words

Grammar word	Meaning	Examples
Adjective	A word that describes a noun or pronoun.	big, black
Adverb	A word that describes or gives more information about a verb.	happily, quickly
Conjunction	A word that is used to connect phrases or parts of sentences.	and, because
Noun	A word that refers to a person, place, event, feeling or quality.	teacher, book, development, beauty
Preposition	A word that is used before a noun or pronoun to show place, direction, time etc.	on, in
Pronoun	A word that is used instead of a noun.	he, she, it
Verb	A word that refers to an action, state or experience.	arrive, make, do

4. Linking words

Link word	Meaning	Link words similar in meaning
and	additional information	In addition, moreover, also
but	contrasting information	nevertheless, however, although
so	as a result	therefore, consequently

- I came here in 1999 **and** I have lived here ever since.
- It was a long walk **but** it was worth it.
- He speaks very little English **so** I talked to him through an interpreter.
- I was tired **so/and** I went to bed.
- Mary had some money **so** she bought a bike.
- The party wasn't very good **so** I left early.
- Thousands of pupils are leaving school **but** there are no jobs for them.
- At that time there was no railway **but** there is now.
- The game was violent **so** they banned it.
- These watches are accurate **so** people buy a lot of them.

5. Reading and making predictions

How to write effectively

Successful writing involves taking a number of different things into account:

- Knowing how to construct sentences so that they form effective and clear **paragraphs**.
- The ability to construct paragraphs and to **link** them together to achieve a coherent unity and structure.
- Selecting the appropriate style for your **reader**
- The ability to master the conventions of spelling and **punctuation**
- Polishing and **revising** what you have written.

Before you start writing clearly establish:

- What the purpose of your communication is
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Your **composition** must be your own individual response to the subject. It is important therefore not to regurgitate material or to learn compositions **off by heart**. Nor is it advisable to write a composition simply 'off the top of your head', without any preparation whatever. Remember, the best compositions and writing are written on topics you **enjoy**. Work at cultivating a variety of interests, and learn to identify your own style – your own particular way of **writing**.

7. Reading to remember

- **Write a paragraph everyday** on any topic. Leave it to 'cool' then come back later and correct it.
- Always **brainstorm** your title, and always write rough drafts.
- **Organise** your paragraphs, putting the most important ideas first.
- Write **interesting and exciting** opening paragraphs.
- Make your composition a **reasonable length**, three to four pages of A4 paper are usually sufficient.
- Make sure the ideas you use are **relevant**. Use your own ideas.
- Make your **conclusions clear**, fairly substantial non-repetitive.
- **Vary** the length and structure of **your sentence**.
- Link your **literature** course to your composition; weave in quotations or ideas naturally and fluently.
- **Read** your composition **aloud** in order to hear your mistakes.