

NAME: _____ DATE: _____
EXAMS: English Leaving Certificate

EXAMS

Leaving Certificate English

Theme	Exams: English	
Level	B1 – B2	
Language focus	Key vocabulary for exam questions, type and structure of questions.	
Learning focus	Understanding the instructions on an exam paper, reading questions for detail	
For the teacher	The questions used in this unit are taken from exam paper 2009.	
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Keywords

The keywords which are found in English exam papers are as follows:

Types of text/genres

advertisement
caption
composition
dialogue
essay
extract
film
media
narrative
novel
paragraph
passage
play
poem
poetry
prose
reference
scene
story
style
text
title

listener
poet
writer

Adjectives

best
descriptive
dramatic
edited
exciting
ordinary
short
unexpected

Nouns

adventure
channel
feelings
quotation
reasons
thing
version
words

Instructions in questions

answer
choose
describe
give
imagine
must
say
select
suggest
support
think
write

Answering questions

attempt
background
basis / basing/ based on
bear as in "bear in mind"
capitals
grammar
impression
punctuation
reasons
spelling
supporting

People

audience
author
character
hero

Other words

thee
thou

SECTION A. Paper 1

1. General information on Paper 1

Read the text in the box below and answer the questions

General Information on Paper 1

This paper is divided into two sections,
Section I COMPREHENDING and Section II COMPOSING.

- The paper contains **three** texts on the general theme of CONNECTIONS.
- Candidates should familiarise themselves with each of the texts before beginning their answers.
- Both sections of this paper (COMPREHENDING and COMPOSING) must be attempted.
- Each section carries 100 marks.

- a) How many sections (*parts*) are in Paper 1? _____
- b) How many sections must you try to answer? _____
- c) How many texts are there in the paper? _____
- d) What is the theme of the texts in this exam? _____
- e) What should you do before writing the answers? _____
- f) What is the maximum amount of marks for this exam? _____

2. Section I – Comprehending

We know from question 1, that there are 3 texts in the exam paper. Read the information in the box (on the next page) in order to find answers to the following:

- a) How many questions are there on each text? _____
- b) Do you have to answer all the questions? _____
- c) How many questions must you answer in the exam? _____
- d) What is the maximum amount of marks for this part of the exam? _____

Section 1 - Comprehending

- Two Questions, A and B, follow each text.
- Candidates must answer a Question A on one text and a Question B on a different text. Candidates must answer only one Question A and only one Question B.
- **N.B.** Candidates may NOT answer a Question A and a Question B on the same text.

Questions A and B carry 50 marks each.

3. Sample Questions on Comprehending. Question A.

For questions a) – g), tick ✓ the correct answer (i) or (ii)

a) Having read the entire interview, what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of YouTube? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)

- (i) You must give only your own opinion of YouTube.
- (ii) You must use information from the text as well as your own opinion.

b) The picture that accompanies this text shows YouTube inventor Chad Hurley, Planet Earth and computer screens. Do you think this is a suitable picture to accompany the interview? Give reasons for your answer. (15)

- (i) You must explain why you think the picture is suitable or why you think it is not suitable,
- (ii) The answer to this question is 'yes' or 'no'.

c) What do you learn about the Sheridan family from your reading of the extract? Support your answer with reference to the extract. (15)

- (i) You must give examples from the text.
- (ii) You must use your own general knowledge to answer the question.

d) This extract is full of detailed description. Choose your favourite detail/description from the passage and explain why you liked it. (15)

- (i) If you choose the wrong detail, you won't get any marks.
- (ii) It doesn't matter which detail you chose, as long as you give the reasons why you chose it.

e) How does the writer create an atmosphere of suspense and excitement in paragraph 2 of the extract? (20)

- (i) You must answer yes or no.
- (ii) You must show how the writer does this, by quoting from the text, and describing the excitement.

f) Choose **one** of the images from Text 3 and explain why you think **it is** or **is not** a good illustration of that type of connection. (15)

- (i) You must give your opinion and your reasons for your opinion.
- (ii) You must give the opinion of the person who made the image.

g) If you were asked to replace **one** of the images illustrating a connection in Text 3, which one would you choose to remove? Describe the image you would use as a replacement. (N.B. The caption should remain the same.) (15)

- (i) The word caption means title or slogan
- (ii) The word caption means a type of hat.

4. Sample Questions on Comprehending. Question B

For questions a) – c), tick ✓ the correct answer (i) or (ii)

a) You have won a competition entitled ‘Be a Celebrity for a Day’. Write out **two diary entries** or **two blog entries** about your experience.

- (i) You must write about how you entered the competition.
- (ii) You must write about your experience as a celebrity for one day.

b) Imagine you are the young Peter Sheridan. Write the **letter** he might have written to his grandmother describing the events that took place in his house on New Year’s Eve, 1959 and his role in them.

- (i) It is necessary to read the text about Peter Sheridan, before writing this answer.
- (ii) You don’t need to read anything, just use your imagination.

c) Write the short **talk** you would give to your class on **one** of the following topics:

- letter writing is a thing of the past
- the internet can be a fascinating place

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_there is nothing in newspapers to interest young people

- (i) You must write a letter.
- (ii) You must write a speech.

5. Section II – Composing

Read the information on the exam in the box below, then answer the following questions:

SECTION II

COMPOSING (100 marks)

Write a composition on **any one** of the following.

Each composition carries 100 marks.

The composition assignments below are intended to reflect language study in the areas of information, argument, persuasion, narration, and the aesthetic use of language.

- (i) What does composing mean? _____
- (ii) How many compositions should you write in the exam? _____
- (iii) What is the maximum amount of marks for the composition? _____
- (iv) Match the 5 types of language with the definitions (they are mixed up in the box below).

Types of language used in compositions	
information	reason or reasons why you support or oppose an idea, actions etc.
argument	telling a story
persuasion	relating to beauty and how something looks
narration	facts about a situation, person, event
aesthetic use of language	trying to make someone agree with you

6. Different Compositions

For questions a) – g), decide which type of language you should use in your composition (from the 5 listed on page 6). Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

a) “We were in the right place at the right time.” (TEXT 1)

Write about a time when you found yourself in the right place at the right time.

Type of language: _____

b) “This is a multi-tasking generation.” (TEXT 1)

Write an article for a magazine about what it is like being a teenager in the twenty-first century.

Type of language: _____

c) “New Year’s Eve... A light snowfall.” (TEXT 2)

Write a personal account of your favourite memories of Christmas and the New Year.

Type of language: _____

d) “They looked like zombies who’d been attacked by the abominable snowman.” (TEXT 2)

Write a short story inspired by the above sentence.

Type of language: _____

e) “I couldn’t wait for the rest of the 1960s to begin.” (TEXT 2)

Write a talk you would give to your classmates about what you imagine life will be like in the year 2060.

Type of language: _____

f) “Connections with foreign places” (TEXT 3)

Write a narrative or short story inspired by image 3.

Type of language: _____

g) Look at the images in Text 3. (TEXT 3)

Write a personal account of an experience that showed you the importance of connections.

Type of language: _____

Section B. Paper 2

7. Read the exam instructions and answer the questions.

Candidates must attempt the following:-

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

(i) How many sections are in this paper? _____

(ii) Do you have a choice when you are answering the question on the Unseen Poem? _____

(iii) Do you have a choice when you are answering the question on the Prescribed poem? _____

8. SECTION I THE SINGLE TEXT (60 MARKS)

Check that you understand the questions in the box by answering questions (i) to (iv).

- a) Based on your reading of the novel, describe the relationship between Elaine Risley and Mrs. Smeath. (10)
- b) What kind of character was Elaine's brother, Stephen? Support your view by reference to the novel. (10)
- c) Describe briefly **one** event from *Cat's Eye* that you thought was particularly memorable, and explain why you found it to be so. (10)
- d) "Cordelia is a fascinating character." Do you agree with this view of her? Support your answer by reference to the novel.
- e) "What if..."
Suggest **one** change you would make to the storyline of *Cat's Eye*. Describe what you think would happen as a result of that change.
- f) You have been asked to talk to Fifth Year students about the novel you have studied for your Leaving Certificate. Write out the short talk you would give them on *Cat's Eye*.

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- (i) In which question(s) must you describe a character? _____
- (ii) In which question can you use your imagination? _____
- (iii) In which question must you describe in detail something that happened?

- (iv) In which question must you describe the relationship between two characters?

9. SECTION II THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 MARKS)

a) Check you understand the exam instructions in the box by answering the questions that follow.

Candidates must answer **ONE** question from **either A – Social Setting or B – Theme**.

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

N.B. The questions use the word **text** to refer to all the different kinds of texts available for study on this course, i.e. novel, play, short story, autobiography, biography, travel writing, and film. The questions use the word **author** to refer to novelists, playwrights, writers in all genres, and film-directors.

- (i) Can you write about the same book as in Section 1? _____
- (ii) What does the word 'text' mean in the exam? _____
- (iii) What does the word 'author' mean in the exam? _____

b) 5 verbs often used in English exam questions are listed in the box below. The meanings have been mixed up. Match the verb with the meaning.

Verbs used in exam questions	
imagine	Say what someone or something is like.
compare	Describe only the most important ideas or facts about something.
outline	To make something clear to understand by giving reasons for it or details about it.
describe	Create an idea or picture of something in your mind.
explain	To examine the ways in which two people or things are different or similar.

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c) Check that you understand the 5 verbs from exercise b) by deciding where each verb fits in the exam questions below.

SOCIAL SETTING

1. (a) Write a paragraph in which you _____ what you liked (or disliked) about the social setting in **one** text from your comparative course. (30)
(b) _____ the social setting in the text you have described in part (a) above with the social setting in another text you have studied. (40)

OR

2. _____ that you, as a reader, could visit the world or social setting of the comparative texts you have studied.
(a) _____ what you found interesting about the social setting in **one** text. (30)
(b) _____ how the social setting in the second text is more (or less) interesting than the one already described in (a) above.

10. SECTION III Poetry

For questions a) – f), tick ✓ the correct answer (i) or (ii)

a) What *impression* does this poem give you of the way the father feels towards his son? (4)

What words or phrases from the poem give you this *impression*? (6)

- (i) An impression is an idea, feeling or opinion about something or someone.
- (ii) An impression is your opinion on someone or something.

b) The writer chose the title *Sentimental Moment* for this poem. In your view, what other title might he have chosen? Explain your choice by referring to the text of the poem.

- (i) You are being asked why you liked the title of the poem.
- (ii) You are being asked to give an alternative title for the poem.

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c) What, in your opinion, is the poet's *attitude* towards the monument?
commemorating the dead?

Support your answer by reference to the poem. (10)

(i) Attitude is how you think or feel about something and how this makes you behave.

(ii) Attitude is the feeling that exists in a place or situation.

d) Why, in your *view*, does Sassoon describe the war dead as 'unheroic and unvictorious'?

Support your answer by reference to the poem. (10)

(i) View is another word for experiences.

(ii) View is another word for opinion.

e) What words and phrases in this poem, in your opinion, best *convey* the awful experiences of the soldiers in the First World War?

Explain your answer. (10)

(i) Convey means to show.

(ii) Convey means to move.

f) You are to make a video in which this poem is spoken. Describe the sound effects, music, images, etc. you would use to illustrate the reading of the poem.

(i) You must make a video of someone singing the poem.

(ii) You must describe a video you would make, of someone reading the poem, and all the images and sounds you would include.

Answer key

Section A. Paper 1

1. a) 2, b) 2, c) 3, d) connections, e) read the texts, f) 200
2. a) 2, b) No, you must answer one question A, and one question B, c) 2, A + B, d) 100
3. a) (ii) / b) (i) / c) (i) / d) (ii) / e) (ii) / f) (i) / g) (i)
4. a) (ii) / b) (i) / c) (ii)
5. (i) writing a composition
(ii) one
(iii) 100

(iv) Types of language used in compositions	
information	Facts about a situation, person, event.
argument	Reason or reasons why you support or oppose an idea, actions etc.
persuasion	Trying to make someone agree with you.
narration	Telling a story.
aesthetic use of language	Relating to beauty and how something looks.

6. Note: To be discussed with students, very often when someone is telling a story, narrative, they may include the aesthetic use of language
 - a) narration
 - b) information
 - c) aesthetic use of language, narration
 - d) narration
 - e) information, persuasion
 - f) narration, the aesthetic use of language
 - g) narration, the aesthetic use of language, or information, depending on how this is answered.

Section B. Paper 2

7. (i) 2, (ii) no, (iii), (yes)
8. (i) b., d. (ii) e, (iii) c, (iv) a
9. a)
 - (i) No, (ii) the novel, play, short story, autobiography, biography, travel writing and film (iii) novelists, playwrights, writers in all genres and film-directors
 - b)

Verbs used in exam questions	
imagine	Create an idea or picture of something in your mind.
compare	To examine the ways in which two people or things are different or similar.
outline	Describe only the most important ideas or facts about something.
describe	Say what someone or something is like.
explain	To make something clear to understand by giving reasons for it or details about it.

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c)

SOCIAL SETTING

1. (a) Write a paragraph in which you outline what you liked (**or** disliked) about the social setting in **one** text from your comparative course. (30)

(b) Compare the social setting in the text you have described in part (a) above with the social setting in another text you have studied. (40)

OR

2. Imagine that you, as a reader, could visit the world or social setting of the comparative texts you have studied.

(a) Describe what you found interesting about the social setting in **one** text. (30)

(b) Explain how the social setting in the second text is more (**or** less) interesting than the one already described in (a) above.

10. a) (i), b) (ii), c) (i), d) (ii), e) (i), f) (ii)