



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2020

English - Higher Level - Paper 1

Total Marks: 200

Duration: 2 hours 50 minutes

- This paper is divided into two sections, Section I COMPREHENDING and Section II COMPOSING.
- The paper contains **three** texts on the general theme of **EXPLORING GENRE**.
- 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.

SECTION I – 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.

SECTION II – COMPOSING

- Candidates must write on **one** of the compositions 1 – 7.

TEXT 1 – FROM GENRE to GENRE

This text consists of two elements: firstly, edited extracts adapted from Alan McMonagle's essay, *The Misadventures of a Dithering Writer in Thirteen and A Half Fragments*, in which he discusses writing in different genres. The second element is a genre-related cartoon by Tom Gauld.

I flit anxiously and eagerly from genre to genre. I always have a few stories on the go. Some of them are like eels – they slip away if I do not make a fast grab. Some are like bold children – they pay absolutely no attention to anything I tell them to do. One or two arrive unannounced from the farthest recesses of my imagination and insist on writing themselves with little or no input from myself. I have four novels to write and a couple of plays require open heart surgery. Several poems are threatening to rise up and bite off my fingers if I don't give them immediate attention.

I don't know if my writing is in anyway distinctive. I am an aural learner as opposed to say the more common visual learning that attends so much writing. I can hear things before I see them. My reasons for writing are partly intrinsic, partly spiritual, partly fanatical. Intrinsic because if I do not write I will go mad. Spiritual because I like to hang around with people who do not exist. Fanatical because I like moving as quickly as possible from the everyday world into the world of the imagination. Stretching reality; bending it, distorting it, somehow twisting it out of shape. Watching what characters make of this tilt in their lives – this is what I like to do.

I began writing as a boy. Little stories, plays, poems. My early offering was heavily influenced by an unlikely combination of Agatha Christie and an anthology of Greek myths and legends devoured innumerable times in my local library. By the age of twelve I announced my retirement as a writer. I stopped writing for a long time and was reluctant to resume. Having abandoned it for so long, when I returned to writing as an adult I was so grateful and so relieved upon realising that the realm of the imagination had not abandoned me. Let

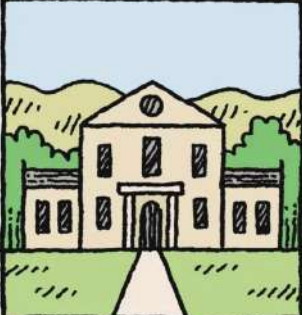
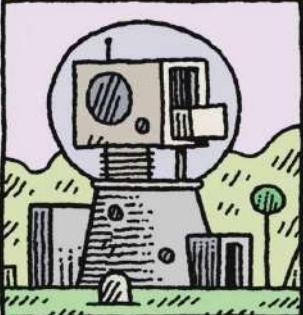
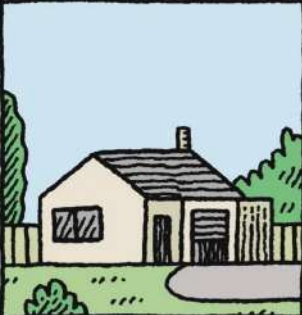

yourself be led by the child that you were. This is a tendency I adhered to upon my resumption and, indeed, return to when it all threatens to get away from me.

I am, at various times, a reluctant, plodding, instinctive, spontaneous writer. At times I feel that, if I stay awake for long enough, I can reach the end of a considerable narrative arc. At other times I feel that uncapping a pen is a bridge too far. I wake and enter every day with varying combinations of wonder and dread.

I have started several novels. There is the edgy-existential one about the brother-sister assassination squad. There is the comedy-of-desperation one about the office slave finally tipped over the edge by a boss constantly referred to as the highly evolved vegetable. There is the life-weary one about the last day in the working life of a barber terrified beyond measure of the imminent reunion with his poet-activist daughter. There is my novel featuring an as-yet-to-be named antagonist who is more of a genius in dreams than in life. I am all the time hankering to work on the very project I am not currently tangled up inside.

If you know what you want to be you will be it. If you don't know, then you will spend your days reinventing yourself, discovering who you are. I envy the former standpoint in so many ways. But I am an uncertain person and rather than rail against this uncertainty I try to harness it. And so each day becomes the first day; it allows room for discovery, invention, re-invention, wonder, mystery; all of which are manna for the creative urge and time spent dwelling in the imagination. Writing is about taking risks. It is a high wire act. A game you lose almost all the time.

FINISH WRITING YOUR NOVEL AT ONE OF OUR RENTAL PROPERTIES

FOR ROMANCE WRITERS	FOR SCI-FI WRITERS	FOR REALIST WRITERS	FOR HORROR WRITERS
			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXTENSIVE GROUNDS • HORSES AND SERVANTS • BALLROOM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HERMETICALLY SEALED* • ROBOT BUTLER • HOVER CAR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CENTRAL HEATING • FITTED KITCHEN • GARAGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SINISTER NEIGHBOURS • GRAVEYARD • UNRELIABLE POWER

* Hermetically sealed – sealed with airtight closure

Cartoon by Tom Gauld

N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

- Based on your reading of the written element of TEXT 1, explain three insights you gain into Alan McMonagle's approach to writing. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)
- The edited extract from Alan McMonagle's work that appears on Page 2 is an example of personal writing. Explain why you think genres of personal writing, such as autobiographies, memoirs and diaries, have a wide and enduring appeal. Make three points in your response. (15)
- Based on your reading of the written element of TEXT 1, discuss four stylistic features that make the extract from Alan McMonagle's essay an engaging piece of personal writing. Support your response with reference to four stylistic features evident in the text. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

You have been asked to write the text for a **promotional article** by the editor of a property magazine called, *Rentals for Writers*. Your article will be illustrated by the cartoon that appears above. In your promotional article you should: advertise the properties featured in the cartoon as inspirational venues in which to finish novels in particular genres, draw attention to previous literary successes associated with some of these properties, and detail any unique terms and conditions which will apply to particular properties. The article may be humorous or serious or both.

TEXT 2 – DETECTIVE FICTION

This text is based on edited extracts adapted from *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*, a short story by Arthur Conan Doyle, originally published in 1892.

I had called upon my friend Sherlock Holmes. He was lounging upon the sofa in a purple dressing gown, a pipe within his reach, and a pile of crumpled morning papers, evidently newly studied, near at hand. Beside the couch was a wooden chair, on which sat a very seedy and disreputable hard-felt hat, much the worse for wear, and cracked in several places. A magnifying glass was lying upon the seat of the chair. I seated myself before his crackling fire, for a sharp frost had set in, and the windows were thick with the ice crystals.

‘I suppose,’ I remarked, ‘that, homely as it looks, that hat has some deadly story linked on to it – that it is the clue which will guide you in the solution of some mystery and the punishment of some crime.’

‘No, no, Watson. No crime,’ said Sherlock Holmes, laughing. ‘Only one of those whimsical little incidents which will happen when you have four million human beings all jostling each other within the space of a few square miles. You know Peterson, the commissioner*? It is to him this trophy belongs, he found it. Its owner is unknown. I beg that you look upon it as an intellectual problem.’

‘The facts are these. About four o’clock in the morning, Peterson was making his way homewards down Tottenham Court Road. In front of him he saw, in the gaslight, a tallish man, walking with a slight stagger. A row broke out between this stranger and a little knot of roughs. One of these knocked off the man’s hat. Peterson had rushed forward to protect the stranger from his assailants, but the man, seeing an official looking person in uniform rushing towards him, took to his heels, and vanished amid the labyrinth of small streets. The roughs had also fled.



Peterson was left in possession of the field of battle, and also of the spoils of victory in the shape of this battered hat. He brought the hat to me, knowing that even the smallest problems are of interest to me. Here is my magnifying glass. You know my methods. What can you gather as to the individuality of the man who has worn this article?’

I took the tattered object in my hands and turned it over rather ruefully. It was a very ordinary black hat of the usual round shape, hard, and much the worse for wear. ‘I can see nothing,’ said I, handing it back to my friend.

‘On the contrary, Watson, you can see everything. You fail however, to reason from what you see. You are too timid in drawing your inferences.’

Holmes picked the hat up and gazed at it in the peculiar introspective fashion which was characteristic of him. ‘There are a few inferences which are very distinct, and a few others which represent at least a strong balance of probability. That the man was highly intellectual is, of course, obvious. Also, he was fairly well-to-do, although he has now fallen upon harder times. He has grizzled hair, which he has had cut within the last few days. These are the more patent facts that are to be deduced from his hat.’

‘You are certainly joking, Holmes. I have no doubt that I am very stupid, but I must confess that I am unable to follow you. How did you deduce that this man was intellectual?’

For answer Holmes clapped the hat upon his head. It came right over the forehead and settled upon the bridge of his nose. ‘It is a question of cubic capacity,’ said he: ‘a man with so large a brain must have something in it.’

‘The decline of his fortunes, then?’

‘This hat is three years old. These flat brims curled at the edge were fashionable then. It is a hat of the very best quality. Look at the band of ribbed silk and the excellent lining. If this man could afford to buy so expensive a hat three years

ago, and has had no hat since, then he has assuredly gone down in the world. The further point, that his hair is grizzled, and that it has been recently cut, are to be gathered from a close examination of the lower part of the lining. The magnifying glass discloses a large number of hair-ends, clean cut by the scissors of the barber.’

‘Well, it is very ingenious,’ said I, laughing. ‘But since, as you said just now, there has been no crime committed, all this seems to be rather a waste of energy.’

Sherlock Holmes had opened his mouth to reply when the door flew open, and Peterson rushed into the apartment with flushed cheeks, dazed with astonishment.

*Commissionaire – a uniformed hotel door attendant.

N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

- (i) Based on your reading of the edited extract above, explain three insights you gain into the character of Sherlock Holmes. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) TEXT 2 is an example of writing in the genre, detective fiction. Explain why you think this genre has a wide and enduring appeal. Make three points in your response. (15)
- (iii) Identify four features of good storytelling evident in the extract. Discuss how the features you have identified add to your enjoyment of the extract. Support your response with reference to the extract. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

You have been asked to write **the introduction** to a new collection of contemporary detective fiction. In your introduction you should: outline the reasons why you think detective stories have enduring appeal, discuss some of the personal qualities you believe are essential in a memorable fictional detective, and explain why you recommend this particular collection of stories to readers.

TEXT 3 – SCIENCE FICTION (SCI-FI)

Text 3 consists of two elements: edited extracts adapted from Becky Chambers' recent science fiction novella, *To be Taught, if Fortunate*, and a sci-fi magazine cover from the 1950s.

My name is Ariadne O'Neill, and I'm the flight engineer aboard the Open Cluster Astronautics space craft, *Merian*. My crew mates are mission specialists Elena Quesada-Cruz, Jack Vo, and Chikondi Daka. We're part of the Lawki programme, a broad ecological survey of exoplanets – that is, planets that do not orbit our sun – known or suspected to harbour life. Our mission is focused on the habitable worlds in orbit around the red dwarf star Zhenyi (BA-921), including the icy moon, Aecor. In terms of formal training, I'm not a scientist. I'm an engineer. I build the machines that get scientists where they need to go.

We descended into Aecor's atmosphere without a hitch. My heart pounded as I put on my Terrestrial Extra-Vehicular Activity (TEVA) suit. TEVA suits are partially for our own protection, but mostly to protect the world from ourselves. Human skin is laden with bacteria, we exhale bacteria too, and there is no telling what human contaminants could do to an environment. Are we passively poisonous? There's no way of knowing. Plus, we could get sick too. Hence, suits.

This was not my first step off Earth. I'd spent a year and a half at the New Millennium Lunar Base. The Moon is incredible. I felt my daily share of reverence. But I felt a similar reverence, a related reverence, when I stood at the rim of the Grand Canyon for the first time, or stood breathless and shivering atop Mount Fuji.

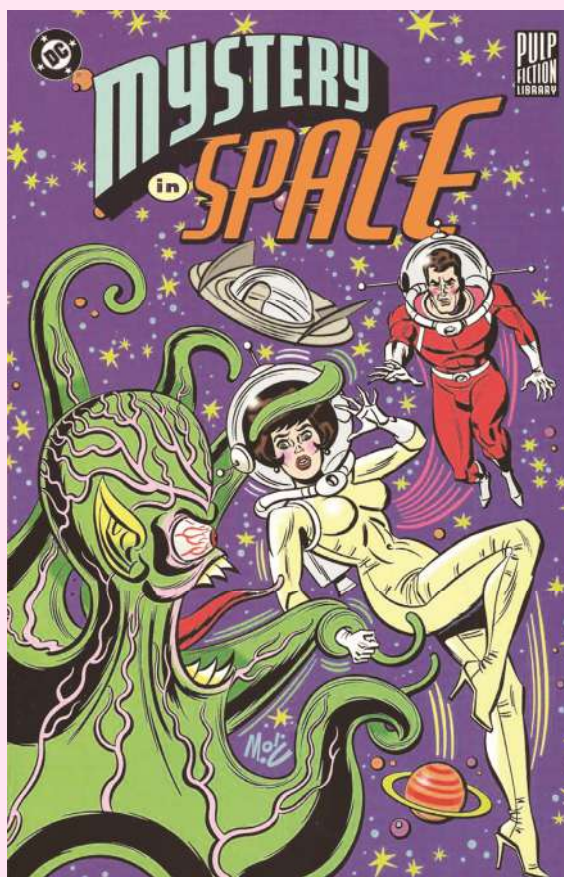
Like any good guests, we carefully checked our surroundings before setting up our temporary home. We scrutinised the ground below us for anything better left alone. We do our best to leave no trace. We try to be mindful tenants and ethical observers, to have as minimal an impact as possible.

Inflatable habitat modules are one of my favourite inventions. The *Merian* comes equipped with two of them – one for the greenhouse, one for the clean lab – each attaching to an airlock on the side of the capsule. You might think that spending years in such a dwelling might start to feel claustrophobic, but consider the fact that ours is the only building at all on any world we travel to. As of yet, we have found no other life forms that build cities or machines.

I was already in my happy place. Landing had worked, the suits worked, the modules worked. In order to do science you need tools, shelter and a means to get where you are going. I was responsible for all of these. I was building a trellis where good work would grow. There was nothing I wanted more than that, nothing that brought me more pride.

We did plenty of work. We catalogued nine hundred and twenty-six species of multi-cellular organisms. We additionally catalogued over three thousand species of bacteria. The *Merian* ran so beautifully on Aecor that I had little to do for her beyond standard maintenance. I spent most of my time in the lab, helping to program image recognition software. Any task that needed an extra pair of hands, I was there for.

I was happy. Content like I could never remember being. I was surrounded by people I loved, safe in a place free of noise and the empty trappings of civilisation. Here, nobody cared about status or money, who was in power, who was kissing or killing whom. The right things mattered on Aecor. I am a secular woman but it felt to me like a sacred place. A monastic world that repaid hard work and patience with the finest of rewards: Quiet. Beauty. Understanding.



N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

- (i) Based on your reading of the written element of TEXT 3, explain three insights you gain into the character of Ariadne O'Neill. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) Both elements of TEXT 3 belong to the genre, science fiction. Explain why you think this genre has a wide and enduring appeal. Make three points in your response. (15)
- (iii) Based on your engagement with TEXT 3, make four points in which you compare the fictional world presented in the written text with that presented in the visual image. Support your answer with reference to both the written and visual elements of TEXT 3. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

Enlightened aliens, horrified by the injustice and inequality evident in human society, have decided to eliminate all human beings and recolonise Earth with more deserving inhabitants. You have been chosen to represent humanity and deliver **a speech** to the alien powers in which you try to save us from our fate. In your speech you should: acknowledge some of humanity's failings in relation to justice and inequality, point to evidence of the many admirable qualities of the human race, and explain why the aliens should believe we can be trusted to work together for a better future.

SECTION II

COMPOSING

(100 marks)

Write a composition on **any one** of the assignments that appear in **bold print** below.

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. In TEXT 3, flight engineer, Ariadne O'Neill, explains how she takes pride in her work.

Write a personal essay in which you reflect on what you are proud of in your life.

2. In TEXT 1, Alan McMonagle writes about allowing room for, among other things, discovery, invention and re-invention in life.

Write a feature article, suitable for publication in a popular magazine, offering some ideas for new inventions and discoveries you think would improve your life or make the world a better place. Your article may be serious or humorous or both.

3. In TEXT 2, the extract from Arthur Conan Doyle's short story ends with a dramatic arrival.

Write a short story, in which a crime or mystery is solved, that begins with a dramatic arrival. You may set your short story in any era and may choose to include or not include the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes.

4. In TEXT 3, we read about a range of advanced technology such as TEVA suits and inflatable habitat modules.

Write a discursive essay about our changing relationship with machines and the rise of artificial intelligence.

5. The theme of TEXTS 1, 2 and 3 is "EXPLORING GENRE".

Write a short story which features the three characters that appear on the magazine cover on Page 7 of this examination paper. You are free to write your story in any genre you choose.

6. In TEXT 3, Ariadne O'Neill observes that on Aecor, "... nobody cared about status or money, who was in power, who was kissing or killing whom."

Write a speech in which you argue for or against the motion: *Contemporary Irish society is both tolerant and progressive.*

7. In TEXT 2, we see that Sherlock Holmes and his friend, Watson, are very different characters.

Write a personal essay in which you celebrate friendship, and reflect on how you have been influenced by the unique and diverse personalities of your friends.

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Acknowledgements

Images and texts that appear on this examination paper were sourced as follows:

Text 1: H. Schwall (Ed.), *The Danger and the Glory, Irish Authors on the Art of Writing*, Dublin, Arlen House, 2019

Cartoon: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/gallery/2015/jul/06/tom-gauld-cultural-cartoons>

Text 2: A.C. Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventures of the Blue Carbuncle*, London, Daunt Books, 2018

Image: <https://www.etsy.com/ie/listing/486168358/vintage-image-bowler-hat-gentleman>

TEXT 3: B. Chambers, *To Be Taught, If Fortunate*, London, Hodder & Stroughton Ltd., 2019.

Image: <https://briandanacamp.wordpress.com/2018/12/10/science-fiction-art-of-the-1950s-comics-film-tv/>

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Leaving Certificate – Higher Level

English

2 hours 50 minutes