

Introduction to Comprehension Question B

Question B, the short writing task, is worth **50** marks. This is the same as the marks given for the prescribed poetry section, so it is well worth taking the time to prepare for this task. It is a relatively simple exercise to prepare for and students should be aiming for high marks here. Unfortunately, many students do not take this short writing task seriously enough, and fail to get a good grade.

You must answer Question A from one comprehension and Question B from another. It is a good idea to check all the Question Bs first and choose one that suits you, and then decide which comprehension you will use for Question A.

Typically, Question B asks for a response in one of the following forms:

- Letters
 - Short Talks
 - Reports
 - Diary Entries
 - Reviews
 - Newspaper or Magazine Articles
 - Interviews
 - Advertisements
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Points to Note

This is a short piece of writing, roughly a page or two of foolscap. Keep an eye on the length: this is not a composition so don't make your answer too long. (300 words is about a page of foolscap, assuming an average of ten words per line.) Check to see if a particular length is specified.

- Plan your answer. You should get into the habit of doing this for every section of Paper 1 and Paper 2. A plan need not be detailed or contain more than a few words per paragraph. If you write a plan, it will ensure that you do not wander off the point and will also show you at an early stage whether you have enough material to sustain an entire assignment. If this is the case, better to abandon the task at this point and try another, rather than wasting time and trying to start again after fifteen minutes of writing.
 - When you are planning the short writing task, think of the following **five** steps: **I, E, E, S, C**. These letters stand for **I**ntroduction, **E**laboration, **E**xploration, **S**ummary and **C**onclusion.
 - Think about the target audience for the piece. If you are writing a letter to your friend the tone can be chatty and informal whereas if you are writing a letter to a government minister, the tone must be formal.
 - Which language genre are you going to use? Will you be using more than one?
 - You don't have the time or the space to ramble on so make sure your points are organised before you write. It can help to ask yourself the following four questions before you begin your Question B:
 1. What **form** should this task take?
 2. What should the **content** be?
 3. Who is my **audience**?
 4. What **register** should I use?
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Letter Writing - Formal

(Sender's address)

Address Line 1,
Address Line 2,
Address Line 3.

(Recipient's address)

Address Line 1,
Address Line 2,
Address Line 3.

2nd May 2012

Dear _____,

In the first paragraph you should state the purpose of the letter. Think of the tone: if you are asking for money, you will want to be persuasive. Ask yourself who will be reading the letter and keep this person in mind throughout. Avoid using contractions in formal writing, e.g. 'don't' instead of 'do not'.

In the second paragraph, you should expand on the subject of the letter. Make sure you have made a plan and that there is a logical sequence to the paragraphs. When writing formal letters, skip a line before beginning each new paragraph.

In the third and subsequent paragraphs, you should continue to develop the theme of the letter, giving any facts that you think relevant. Four or five points should be sufficient for the Leaving Cert letter. Remember to avoid slang, exaggeration, deeply personal anecdotes and any remarks which may be racist, sexist or otherwise prejudiced. Keep the tone as formal as possible.

The final paragraph is usually quite short, thanking the person for taking the time to deal with your complaint or consider your request. If you wish them to take some action on your behalf, this is the time to ask what they intend to do. You may also tell the recipient not to hesitate to contact you if they have any further queries.

Yours faithfully, (if you have opened with Dear Sir or Madam).

Yours sincerely, (if you have used the recipient's name at the start of the letter).

2012 Text 1 – Comprehension Question B

Write a letter to Margaret Laurence, in response to Text 1, commenting on what you find interesting in the extract, and telling her about your home place and its impact on you.

Remember to ask yourself these four questions every time you plan your answer:

5. What form should this task take?

This is a letter. It is to a person you do not know personally, so it is a formal letter.

6. What should the content be?

Note the word ‘and’ in the question. You are required to do two things: tell Margaret Laurence what you found interesting about her description of her home place, AND tell her about your home place.

7. Who is my audience?

Your audience in this case is a writer who is not personally known to you but whose work you admire.

8. What register should I use?

As this is a formal letter, and as you are addressing a writer, your language should be as correct as it can be. You should read the notes on formal letter writing before you begin. Also, as the text upon which the assignment is based contains both narrative and descriptive elements, you may wish to reflect these language genres in your own writing.

The Elms,
Glenville,
Co. Cork.

Ms. Margaret Laurence,
No. 8 Regent Street,
Lakefield,
Ontario,
Canada.

6th June 2012

Dear Ms. Laurence,

It was with great interest that I read your wonderfully evocative description of your home place. As you so astutely point out, the majority of descriptions of prairie towns focus on the flatness and seeming dullness of the surrounding landscape. However, you opened my eyes to the magic inherent in the place. I was particularly moved by the way you lovingly described how each season brought with it a new type of beauty. As an Irish person unaccustomed to anything more than a light dusting of snow in the coldest months, I read with fascination of your childhood adventures in this winter wonderland. Your language was positively poetic as you waxed lyrical in your description of 'the perpetual fascination of the frost feathers on windows, the ferns and flowers and eerie faces traced there during the night by unseen artists of the wind'. Your eye for detail really brought this scene, and others, to life for me.

Your descriptions of the summer were no less compelling, again because of the beautiful, sensual images. The setting you describe is unfamiliar, but the childhood play is not. I could almost hear the song of the meadowlark and feel the scorching sun on my back as I lost myself in your wonderful recollection of you and your young friends poling the battered old boat along the little river.

Not everything in your essay was strange or exotic to me, and an aspect of your writing which I found particularly intriguing was the way in which your childhood mirrored mine. Although we grew up thousands of miles apart, I was struck by the universality of childhood. What child would not relish a day off because of heavy snow, and is there any child on the planet who would not then immediately dash out into those same conditions deemed too dangerous and

inclement to allow children to travel to school?

Your love for your home place shines through every word of this essay. This is something you and I share. Although I live in a suburb of a small Irish city, there is a feel of the country town to the area. People tend to stay here, and if they have to leave for further education or for work, most of them come back if they possibly can. I understand that, as there is a great sense of community in our local area.

You say that your childhood shaped you and made you the person you are today. I feel exactly the same way, and I am perfectly content with that. To an outsider, this place may seem dull and much like any other little village that has been swallowed up by suburban sprawl, but all I see are the playgrounds of my childhood. At the top of the hill is the small stream where my sisters and I – along with a gang of neighbourhood children – fished for tadpoles every summer. Across the road is the small wood where we walked our dogs, climbed trees and made innumerable camps and fortresses. And all around me are the houses of my childhood friends. Nowadays they are my companions for evenings out in town rather than summer days in the woods and fields, but their friendship brings me the same sense of security and warmth that it always did.

I'm not sure that I would have put my thoughts about my home place into words were it not for your charming essay about your childhood, but I am grateful to you for helping me to see the value of all that I had as a small child, and still have today. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and for inspiring your readers to look around them with new and appreciative eyes.

Yours sincerely,

Clodagh O'Sullivan

2006 Text 2 – Comprehension Question B

Write a letter to a famous writer or celebrity or sports personality of your choice offering your services as a ghost writer for a future book. In your letter you should outline the reasons why you believe you would make a successful ghost writer for your chosen author.

This sample answer is taken from The Irish Times.

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| <p style="text-align: right;">“Hades”, Faithleg, Co. Waterford.</p> <p>Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro, c/o Manchester United FC, Manchester.</p> <p>6th June, 2006</p> <p>Dear Senor Aveiro,</p> <p>Following your double triumph in being selected as both the Senior and the Young Footballer of the Year in England, and in the wake of Jose Mourinho’s ungracious comments about your ‘difficult childhood, no education,’ could I suggest that now is the perfect time to consider publishing your own account of your life thus far, your autobiography. Not only have your dazzling football skills brought the attention of the world to you, but the world awaits your response to Senor Mourinho’s unkind remarks. I know that your manager, Sir Alex Ferguson, has stoutly defended you in public, but what could be more interesting than your own story of your childhood and teenage years?</p> <p>I am a ghost writer. I write books on behalf of my clients, whose names appear on the covers and whose life stories appear within these covers. Contractual restrictions forbid me to reveal the names of previous clients,</p> | <p><i>Get the format right. This is a letter, so I comply with the basic conventions. I provide my own address, the address of the recipient, the date, a salutation and a valediction.</i></p> <p><i>Get your audience set in your mind. Here I'm addressing an individual. I want something from him. So, I'm being flattering.</i></p> <p><i>Try and avoid being predictable. Add a little bite to your writing by selecting unusual or controversial angles.</i></p> |
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but could I assure you that my area of experience is the English Premiership and that you are already professionally acquainted with all my previous clients. Many of these will confirm this to you, privately and in the strictest confidence, if you require testimonials.

Allow me to explain the process involved in creating your autobiography and to clarify your own part in it, assuring you that only the material you want to share with the public will appear in the finished work.

For a large project such as this, I always conduct a series of interviews with the subject. These are recorded and later transcribed. Obviously, the more relaxed the interviewing is and the less it resembles an interrogation or an obligation, then the more varied and interesting and colourful the material that will emerge. Nobody wants to confide in an unsympathetic listener. This has always been my particular strength in my profession. As others will confirm, again privately and in the strictest confidence, the interviews are really informal chats, during which we get to know each other. Usually, a few hours a week for several weeks is sufficient. If I need further material, we can arrange to meet again at your convenience.

After that, up to the approval of the first draft of the completed manuscript, the work is entirely mine, although you always retain the final say at each stage and I may occasionally need to consult you to confirm a detail or two. My previous work, under the names of others, of course, has been praised as 'full of insights,' 'a gripping read,' and 'providing the sort of intimacy every fan craves to experience.'

But, as I've said, it is neither my skills as a researcher nor my skills as a writer that will make this project even better than my previous work, but rather the colour and courage of your own life story.

I look forward to hearing from you, sir.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Coodabin

Here, I'm looking for someone in the news, someone involved in a little controversy.

*Get the **task** right. I have to 'offer (my) services as a ghost writer,' so I need to **explain** what's involved.*

*Get the **register** right. I note that I 'should outline the reasons' why I would be a success here. In other words, I've got to sell myself a little, I've got to be **persuasive**.*

***The register has to be consistent.** I am persuasive again.*

Letter Writing - Informal

(Sender's address)

Address Line 1,

Address Line 2,

Address Line 3.

2nd May 2011

Dear _____,

In an informal letter, the tone can be much more relaxed. You may use slang and colloquialisms but avoid text language and of course, bad language. If you use exclamation marks, use them with caution and never use more than one at a time. It is usual to indent rather than to skip a line when beginning a new paragraph.

The content of an informal letter is naturally dictated by the recipient and by the task assigned. Use personal anecdotes and try to keep the tone lively and interesting. I always advise students to be positive but not gushing when writing an informal letter.

How you sign off depends again on the person to whom you are writing. 'Love', is probably the most common way to sign off; other possibilities are, 'All the best' or 'Thanks again' or 'Best wishes'.

Note: I know that very few – if any – of you write informal letters these days. If you should be asked to write an email, you simply omit the address and the relative formality of the greeting and the sign-off. Avoid slang, text speak or abbreviations.

QUESTION: 2007, TEXT 3, QUESTION B: Imagine you have a friend in another country which is considering the introduction of a ban on smoking in public places.

Write a letter to your friend advising him/her either to support or not to support the proposed ban. In giving your advice you may wish to draw on the recent experience of the smoking ban in Ireland.

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| <p>No 12 Main Street Mallow, Co. Cork.</p> <p>2nd May 2011</p> <p>Dear Maria,</p> <p>I am sorry I haven't written to you for so long but I have been studying really hard for the Leaving Cert and there just don't seem to be enough hours in the day at the moment. I hope you had a good Christmas and that you got the presents you were hoping for.</p> <p>It's funny, we were talking about you a lot over the last few days. My sister Claire's new boyfriend is from Italy too and your name naturally came up in the conversation a lot. He's a nice guy but a little temperamental. We were out for dinner on Christmas Eve and he flew into a bit of a rage when the waiter told him he couldn't smoke in the restaurant. Stephano said that he thinks our recently-introduced smoking ban is a disgrace and that the majority of his friends agree that such a ban should never be brought into Italian law. I hope he doesn't, as he claims, speak for most young Italians.</p> <p>You know my feelings on smoking. I absolutely hate the smell and the health risks associated with second-hand smoke and I think the ban is one of the best things that has ever happened in this country. If you can, you should encourage everyone you talk to to support the Italian government in bringing in similar anti-smoking laws.</p> | <p>Get the <i>format</i> right. This is a letter, so I comply with the basic conventions. I provide my own address, the date, a salutation and a valediction.</p> <p>Get your <i>audience</i> right. Here I'm addressing a friend. English is not her first language so I am a little more formal than I might be with a friend from Ireland.</p> <p>Get the <i>task</i> right. I am arguing in</p> |
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If I remember correctly, you are not exactly a fan of smoking yourself and I know you have been trying to persuade your Dad to give up cigarettes for some time now. Well, a smoking ban would certainly help with that. My brother has made it his New Year's resolution to quit smoking and he claims one of the main reasons is that he is fed up of having to go outside every time he wants a cigarette. You know how much it rains here and standing outside in the drizzle at best or downpour at worst is quite an incentive to give up for good. It might be just the thing for your Dad.

The other thing I know you and I agree on is the dreadful smell of cigarette smoke on your clothes whenever you've been in the company of smokers. You were furious last summer when you wore your new jacket to the pub the night you arrived and found that it stank of old smoke for days afterwards. That's one of the things I like best about the ban – the fresh smell in restaurants and cafés. As for pubs, well, they still don't smell that great to be honest but at least the odour of old beer doesn't linger on your clothes for weeks! It's also nice to go home knowing you haven't unwittingly and unwillingly inhaled other people's nicotine for the entire evening. I bet you'll notice a big improvement in your asthma if public places in Italy become smoke-free.

Well, speaking of healthy living, I'd better sign off now and get to bed. I keep planning to have an early night but it never seems to work out. If I'm not emailing friends, I'm writing to those few who, like you, live in such a remote spot that they don't have reliable internet access! Once the smoking ban is sorted out, you'll have to start campaigning for broadband in your area, you know.

Give my love to your Mum and Dad and tell them I look forward to seeing you all again in July. I can't wait for the exams to be over and it's great to have that trip to look forward to.

Love,

Rebecca

favour of a smoking ban so I must explain my reasons for doing so.

*I am being **persuasive** in an informal way by referring to shared experiences.*

Wrapping up with a link to the main body of the letter.

Letters to the Editor

- Letters to the editor are similar to normal formal letters: only the layout is different.
- There is generally no need to write the editor's name and address at the top of the letter, but you may do so if you wish.
- In your opening sentence, you should give the name, writer and date of the article which prompted you to write the letter. If the letter is a general one, and is not in response to an article which appeared in the paper, then you should simply address the topic in the opening lines: "The issue of exam stress is one which affects almost every student in this country."
- You sign off by writing, "Yours etc." rather than "Yours faithfully".
- You do not put your name and address at the top of the letter, but at the very end, underneath your signature.
- Remember that your audience is the general public. Keep the tone formal throughout.
- Humorous touches are allowed, of course, but be careful here. Not everyone may share your sense of humour.

The Irish Times advises anyone writing to the editor to bear the following advice in mind:

The Irish Times receives a great many letters each day and it is possible to find space only for a small selection. When writing, bear in mind that short letters are more likely to be published than long ones and that letters ranging over several topics are unlikely to appear.

It is generally best to make one point as concisely as possible, without preamble. When referring to an article, report or previous letter in The Irish Times, it is helpful to give the date of publication, if possible.

The following letter is from "The Irish Times" letters page. While the writer is discussing a serious issue, he introduces a light-hearted note in the final paragraph.

Madam, – While I can only echo Harry Havelin's (December 9th) sentiment expressing thanks to all those frontline staff who have worked throughout this snow and ice, as a Siberian living in Ireland, I must object to him blaming Siberia for this bad weather.

In fact, conditions here are nothing like in Siberia. In Siberia, when it snows, roads and pavements are cleared, schools continue to open, airports are not shut down, public transport continues to operate, pedestrians are not forced to walk in the road because the footpaths are so treacherous and the water supply is never interrupted.

After many years living in Ireland, I still fail to understand why, at the first flurry of snow, the country grinds to a halt. I invite any politician to visit Siberia, where the temperature is hovering around minus 30 degrees, and life continues as normal . . . perhaps they may even decide it is better to stay there!

Yours, etc.,

VITALY KRAVCHENKO,
Leeson Street Upper,
Dublin 4.



The following letter is from "The Irish Times" letters page. The name and address have been changed.

Sir, – Unlike last year, the mild Christmas period allowed me to travel freely across the country. I was struck by the number of derelict lorries, vans and trailers which have been parked along the roadside and draped with advertising. Everything from new homes to multinational restaurant chains appears to enjoy this new form of publicity. In parts of the midlands the roadside fields begin to resemble a series of highly sponsored trailer parks.

When we are spending millions to encourage people to see this wonderful country it seems odd for planning authorities to permit or turn a blind eye this trailer trash. The businesses involved may claim they need this advertising to sustain jobs.

Perhaps it might be more fruitful for them, and those involved in the rest of the economy, to consider creating a website, rather than creating a camp site?

Yours, etc,

John O'Sullivan,
Orchard Road,
Blackrock,
Cork.



Speeches and Short Talks

You may be asked to write a short talk as part of Question B or you may choose to write a longer speech as part of your composition. Whichever is the case, the most important things to remember are (a) your audience and (b) to plan what you are going to say.

Imagine you are delivering the speech. You want to capture your audience's attention and hold it. You don't want them to wonder what the speech was about or what point you were trying to make. Have a clear objective in mind and make sure that every point and every paragraph helps you to achieve that objective.

- Open with the correct form of address:
'Ladies and Gentlemen' or 'My fellow students'. If it is a debate speech, remember to begin formally with "Madam Chairperson, fellow students, members of the opposition." The most important people are mentioned first.
 - If you are giving a talk, the tone and the form of address can be less formal than in a speech. 'Good morning, everyone,' may be all you need to say.
 - Be definite in your speech; you are trying to win the audience over to your way of thinking. If the speech is part of a debate, don't forget that your fellow team members will have points to make too so you will not be expected to cover every aspect of the argument.
 - Don't bully your audience or make wild, unsubstantiated claims.
 - Be logical and if you make a point, be prepared to back it up.
 - Use factual information but beware of boring your audience with statistics. Imagine that you are making your speech on a soapbox in Hyde Park and you will only get and hold an audience if you are entertaining enough.
 - Effective use of anecdotes can engage and interest your audience.
 - Rhetorical questions can provoke thought.
 - Use the language of argument/persuasion here.
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Sample Speech (based on 2012 examination)

‘You’re old enough, I reckon, to make your own decisions.’

Write a short speech in which you attempt to persuade a group of parents that older teenagers should be trusted to make their own decisions.

Note:

You don't have the time or the space to ramble on so make sure your points are organised before you write. It can help to ask yourself the following four questions before you begin your Question B:

1. What form should this task take?

This is a short speech.

2. What should the content be?

You should give reasons why parents should trust older teenagers to make their own decisions.

3. Who is my audience?

Your audience is people the same age as your own parents.

4. What register should I use?

You should be persuasive, but you should also be respectful. It’s fine to be chatty, but don’t use slang or bad language. Your speech could be serious or light-hearted; that is up to you.

Good evening, everybody, and thank you all for taking the time to sit patiently and listen to various members of the student body presenting their point of view on issues that affect all of us. You will no doubt be relieved to learn that I am the last speaker tonight and that I do not intend to keep you for long. My chosen topic is one which I know is close to the hearts of all my fellow classmates and one which is a bone of contention in many, if not all, of our households. Should you, our parents, allow your older teenagers more responsibility?

Make it clear that this is a speech and not just a piece of persuasive writing. Address your audience directly a number of times during the speech.

The first thing I would like to say to all of the parents here tonight is that you have done a great job. No, I’m serious. Don’t look so sceptical. Give yourselves a little credit. Thanks to your years of tireless work, we are ready to face the world.

The next step is up to you. Do you trust that your parenting has moulded us into reasonable young adults who know the difference between right and wrong and who are capable of having a great time without ending up in A&E, prison or worse? You should! Now you need to let go a little

Rhetorical questions are a feature of the language of argument/persuasion

and allow us to prove to you that we have learned the lessons you taught us. That will never happen unless you bite the bullet and allow us a little more responsibility to make our own decisions.

I know what you're thinking: 'The last time I allowed him to prove how responsible he was I had to pick up the pieces for weeks afterwards'. And you have a point. We will make mistakes. In fact, I can see my parents in the front row, nodding. I freely admit that one night last weekend I came in three hours later than I said I would. And Dad

Anecdotes are an appropriate way to support your point in a speech of this type.

took me aside and explained that it wasn't the so much lateness of the hour as the lack of information that bothered him. He pointed out

that if he or Mum were going to be late, they'd let the other know, because that's what adults do. And I realised then that being an adult does not mean doing whatever you want, but does mean realising that it's only fair to let those who care about you know what you're up to. I wouldn't have learned this lesson if I had not been allowed the freedom to make mistakes in a secure and controlled environment. I'm not promising that I'll never be late again, but I will definitely text my parents to let them know what I'm up to. And hopefully they'll respect my decision to stay out a bit later from time to time.

As well as our social lives, the other area where there is often conflict between parents and children is in the choice of third level courses. Parents worry that if left to make their own

This is not true, but it is plausible. You can make up facts and figures as long as they are not ridiculous.

decisions, their teenagers may not select a course that offers them a good chance of future employment. However, a recent Irish Times poll of first year college students found that of the nine per cent of students who dropped out at the end of first year, over half said it was because they had been pressured by parents into doing a course for which they were unsuited. Even more tellingly, over ninety per cent of students who achieved first class honours at the end of first year attributed their success to the fact that they were studying a course they had researched and decided upon themselves. Certainly, they had help from parents and teachers, but the final say was theirs. I'm sure that if all of the parents here tonight take a moment to reflect on their education and career choices, those that are happiest are those who followed their own dreams, not those of their parents.

Make it clear that your speech is coming to an end and show awareness of your audience.

To sum up, what I'd like to leave you with here tonight is the knowledge that you have done sterling work to date but that you are not finished yet. Give us more responsibility to make our own decisions and see how well we do. With your help, I'm sure we'll go from strength to strength. And on that note, I would like to

thank you all for listening to me so patiently. It is that understanding willingness to hear our point of view which makes you the great parents you are. And if that doesn't gain me a later curfew, I don't know what will! Thank you and goodnight.

Sample Speech

Your community has been offered €100,000 euro for use on any local project.

Write the speech you would make to a meeting of your local Community

Association in which you outline the project that you think the money should be spent on.

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| <p>Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Niamh McCarthy and I am a resident of Oakfield Park. Like everybody here tonight, I was extremely pleased to hear that the local businesses have donated such a large sum of money, €100,000 to be exact, for use on a community project. As you all know, there has been much excitement generated and many people have strong views on how the money should be spent. Although we may have different proposals, I'm sure you will all agree with me that this is a marvellous opportunity for us to improve our local amenities in a way that can, and should, benefit the whole community.</p> <p>I have heard several different ideas put forward on how the money should be used to help specific groups within the area: the elderly, children, teenagers and so forth but what I am proposing is something which I believe will benefit every single member of our community.</p> <p>Everybody here is familiar with the large plot of waste ground between the library and the boy's primary school. At the moment, this is nothing more than a dumping ground for rubbish, it is a dreadful eyesore which badly needs to be tackled once and for all.</p> <p>I propose that we use the money to turn this overgrown field into a community park, with a playground at one end and the rest landscaped with trees and grass. We could also lay some cement pathways and place a number of benches around the park. I have spoken to a landscape gardener who says that all this could be</p> | <p><i>Greets the audience appropriately, this is a speech, not an informal talk.</i></p> <p><i>Gives brief introduction to purpose of speech. Tries to persuade audience to agree. (Refer to language genres handout – section on persuasive writing.)</i></p> <p><i>Sets out basis of proposal, acknowledges other viewpoints but says own idea is better.</i></p> <p><i>Introducing specifics of proposal by using contrast - how the park is now.</i></p> <p><i>Concrete proposal, definite plans. Optimistic that it can be easily</i></p> |
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| <p>easily achieved for €100,000. The land is owned by the Council and they have already stated that they would have no objection to such a plan, indeed, they have agreed to maintain it by mowing the grass and picking up any litter.</p> <p>A local park with a playground and benches would be an ideal area for people of all ages to stroll and meet friends and a playground would be of great benefit to parents of young children. Such an amenity would also enable residents to walk their dogs and would be a safe place for teenagers to meet and chat.</p> <p>I would strongly encourage you to accept this proposal as I believe it will kill two birds with the one stone. An ugly eyesore will be removed and replaced with an attractive, functional park. In catering to young and old and providing a place in which all the members of our community can enjoy themselves, won't we be truly benefiting everyone in our area, not just one specific group? I think so and I hope you do too.</p> <p>Thank you for giving me the chance to speak to you all here this evening. I look forward to your decision.</p> | <p><i>achieved.</i></p> <p><i>Outlines benefits.</i></p> <p><i>Rhetorical question to persuade audience to agree.</i></p> <p><i>Ends speech quite formally.</i></p> |
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Here is another example of an effective speech on the topic of chain mail, taken from a website. It is longer than you would be expected to write for the short writing task but remember that speeches also appear as composition assignments and the same rules apply.

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| <p><u>Break the Chain!</u></p> <p>Did you know that if you're being forced to withdraw money from ATM at gunpoint, you can inform the police by entering your pin in reverse?</p> <p>Or that Coca-cola logo is a secret message directed against a particular religion and the blasphemous message is clear if you hold the logo in front of a mirror?</p> <p>I'm sure you also know that Bill Gates is sharing his fortune and you can be a beneficiary if you choose to forward a certain mail?</p> | <p><i>Begins with a series of rhetorical questions, immediately provoking the audience to think. The questions are intriguing.</i></p> |
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All of these seemingly unrelated examples appear at first glance to be appealing, interesting and informative but the biggest connection is that the source of all of these is a number of different chain-mails and each of them is untrue.

My fellow students, I come before you today to urge you to break the chain and to help put a stop to this irritating phenomenon. My main grudge is against the mails that seek to lure or threaten the recipient into forcefully continuing the chain: the ones which are meant to spread hatred, superstitions or misinformation or simply to continue the chain. Yes, I've even seen a chain saying, 'Let's see how far it can get; just add your name to the list and forward it to your friends'. Can it get any more absurd than this?

At this juncture, many of you may be wondering what harm an innocuous forwarded mail can do even if it's factually incorrect? This is what many of my friends argue. But believe me, it's more dangerous than it looks.

To start with, it can make you look like an idiot. Recently, I got a mail from one of my friends asking me to forward it to ten others and then press F6 five times. The mail claimed that after this, the name of my secret admirer would appear on the screen. I couldn't believe that such nonsense could come from a seemingly intelligent student! I stopped reading his mails after that.

Many of us, who normally do not forward unsolicited mails, often give in to the emotional appeals and consider our job to the society done after forwarding such mails. I believe that most of us must have at some time received a mail regarding Red-Cross donating a cent for a cancer-struck child or for some 9/11 victim. What we don't realize is the fact that we're in fact causing more harm to the reputation and work of such organizations by forwarding unverified information about them. And then, they need to spend hundreds of man-hours refuting the contents of the mail.

Remember: often the original context of the mail is often lost in a chain and if some legal issue crops up and the mail is traced back to you, then you can be considered the author of that mail. Are you prepared to take that risk? Let us take a fictional scenario of Mr X,

The topic is introduced and the speaker's views made clear.

Addresses students directly. Makes an appeal to their better judgement. Emotive language is used: "hatred," "absurd," "irritating" etc.

Other points of view are acknowledged, then refuted.

Anecdotal evidence provided. Tone is light-hearted.

Use of the word "us" makes the audience feel they are on the same side as the speaker.

working for Microsoft in Dublin, who gets a hoax-mail regarding a new virus attacking Windows XP. Mr. X forwards it to some of his friends thinking, 'What's wrong with being cautious?' His friends forward it claiming, 'This comes from one of friends, who is working for Microsoft'. It won't take more than two-three steps of the chain for that to become, 'This is an official email from Microsoft'. Very soon, Microsoft is contacted for verification and when they trace the mail to their own employee, do you think it's going to be easy for Mr X to explain himself? I've read about employees losing their jobs on similar grounds.

Things can get worse for people who fall for such imaginary ideas. Think what can happen if you try the ATM trick and the tech-savvy robber gets to know that you were actually trying to inform the police.

Now that I believe I've managed to convince you against the dangers that this menace poses, here are some ideas to counter it.

The minimum we can do is not to be the source of any such message. A two minute search can reveal its falsehood. There are sites like Break-the-chain and Hoax-slayer dedicated to the cause and they will give you scientific reasons why the particular message is hoax. But don't stop at just ignoring the mail. If you're able to establish that the mail is fake, do attack the source. Reply to the sender, mention the links and request him to write a damage control mail to recipients of this mail as well as the person from whom he got the mail. I know this may create a kind of reverse-chain, but this surely is worth it.

Furthermore, if you really want to forward something, ask yourself if you're ready to be identified as the original source of message. Simply by taking these few simple steps, we can all do our bit against this menace.

The e-mail is one of the best innovations in the field of communication. Let's be responsible users and not abuse this wonderful communication tool. We just need to use some common sense and follow some simple steps to break the chain.

The register is consistent and the audience borne in mind throughout. Rhetorical questions and hypothetical situations hold the listeners' interest.

The locution "tech-savvy" is used but it is appropriate in the context of this speech.

Having introduced and elaborated upon the subject, the speaker now concludes by offering some possible solutions.

Again, note the use of the words "we can all" and the description of these emails as a "menace."

Clear end to speech.

Reports

When you are writing a report, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who has commissioned the report and why?
- What is the problem or issue on which I am reporting?
- Do I need facts and figures?
- What topics are to be covered?
- What is supposed to happen as a result of the report?

Writing your report

- Give your report a title. This can be a simple rewording of the question.
 - State the aim of the report in the introduction/title.
 - Say who commissioned (asked you to write) the report and what was examined as a result.
 - State what research was carried out.
 - Look at the facts, detail any problems and highlight any good points.
 - If you wish, you may use bullet points or numbers to organise your findings.
 - Draw a conclusion from what you have just outlined.
 - Make recommendations for remedying any problems.
 - You will be using the language of information, so be as objective, clear and concise as possible.
 - Be factual and avoid any words which may imply judgement or subjectivity.
-

Sample Report : Write a report to your school principal suggesting ways in which more freedom could be given to senior students in the school.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Introduction</p> <p>This is a report on the ways in which more freedom could be given to senior students in St. Ann's College, Waterford.</p> <p>Terms of reference</p> <p>Under instruction from Mr. Donal Murphy, Principal, St. Ann's College, Waterford this report will investigate the amount of freedom currently allowed to senior cycle students in the school and will make recommendations for possible changes based on the findings.</p> <p>Methods of gathering information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 135 senior cycle students were given a detailed questionnaire designed to establish what they are dissatisfied with at present and what changes they would like to see brought about. • Students were encouraged to add their own suggestions at the bottom of the questionnaire. • The staff was also questioned and asked if there were any suggestions they would make or whether they had any reservations about allowing more freedom to the students. <p>Findings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 84% of the students surveyed feel there should be a greater distinction between the freedoms allowed to junior and senior cycles. 2. 92% of students surveyed believe they would not abuse additional privileges and would be happy to agree to a code of conduct drawn up by the staff and the student council. 3. 90% of students surveyed feel that greater freedom in senior cycle would better prepare them for life after school. 4. The staff members interviewed all agreed that they would be happy for a distinction to be made between junior and senior cycle students in terms of the freedoms allowed. However, teachers were agreed that any proposed changes should not include allowing students out of school grounds between eight fifty and three thirty. | <p><i>Title / Introduction</i></p> <p><i>Who commissioned the report.</i></p> <p><i>Procedure.</i></p> <p><i>Findings. Bullets and numbering are optional.</i></p> <p><i>Language of information used throughout. The writer's opinion is not given.</i></p> |
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Conclusions

Based on the findings of this report, it would appear that the majority of staff and students are keen to see a change to the current system. It was generally agreed that it would be appropriate for the older students to be allowed to have more of a say in the way they spent their time in school, particularly during free classes.

The majority of students accept that greater freedoms must be accompanied by greater responsibilities and they agree that such privileges, if granted, would be reviewed after a probationary period and thereafter on a term-by-term basis to see if they were working well for both students and staff.

Recommendations

1. The large alcove beside the library should be turned into a social area for senior students, with couches, a fridge, a microwave and a kettle provided. Students are willing to fund raise for these items themselves. Many suggested ways in which this could be done and a meeting should be arranged with Mr. Murphy as soon as possible to discuss the options.
2. Senior students should be in school between 8.50 and 3.30 but if they have a free class, they should be allowed to decide whether to go to the library to study or whether they wish to go to the new social area.
3. A meeting between the student council and the staff should be arranged for a date two months after the implementation of any changes and the success or otherwise of the changes should be discussed by both.

The majority of students, 93%, accept that greater freedoms must be accompanied by greater responsibilities and they agree that such privileges, if granted, would be reviewed on a term-by-term basis to see if they were working well for both students and staff.

Niamh McCarthy

6th Year

September 2011

*Suggestions /
Recommendations.*

Conclusion

*Name of person
who compiled
report (optional)*

Diary Entries

A diary is a personal account through which we see an individual's view of the world. The language is generally chatty and relaxed and would suit those students who find the structure of speeches and reports difficult. The diary entry seems to be one of the examiners' most popular tasks: it has come up five times in the last nine years.

In your diary entry, you can:

- Record events that have taken place or give details of a way of life.
- Record travels. (This is called a journal.)
- Entertain your readers.
- Give your opinions.
- Talk about your secret hopes and wishes.

Remember to choose the appropriate tone (formal or informal) and language for whichever type of diary you decide to write. If you are writing a personal diary, or one which is intended to entertain your readers (the diary is commonly used in newspapers) then the tone can be informal, chatty and relaxed.

It is usual to record events in chronological order and to reflect on each event you discuss.

You must give the date and start by saying, 'Dear Diary'.

There is no need to sign off as if you were writing a letter to a friend. Simply end when you are finished recounting and reflecting on the events of the day.

Sample Diary Entry (based on 2011 Paper)

Plan:

1. What form should this task take?

This is a diary entry. How it is laid out is not hugely important as there is scope within this type of task to approach it in a number of different ways. Generally, however, it is best (and easiest) to stick to a fairly conventional layout (see sample answer).

2. What should the content be?

You are Sarah, so you should reflect on events and talk about the impact they have had on you. Try to be imaginative about Sarah's reasons for leaving, but make sure to base as much as possible on the text. When talking about your meeting with the old woman, look for clues which tell you how Sarah feels about her, and consider Sarah's demeanour when she gets off the train.

3. Who is my audience?

A personal diary records the writer's thoughts and feelings and is not intended to be read by anyone else.

4. What register should I use?

The level of formality here is up to yourself. However, remember that it is difficult to be too correct, while it is easy to be too casual. As always, avoid text-speak, overuse of slang and abbreviations. Never use bad language. Don't focus on whether or not you would really be likely to write this sort of thing: focus on the fact that this is an opportunity for you to show the examiner how well you can write.

Thursday 14th November, 7.30 am

It is usual to give the date (and possibly the time) at the start of a diary entry.
Note that the extract mentioned the passengers carrying 'raw November on the breath'.

Well, that's that. I'm sitting in Kent Station in the freezing cold, waiting for the Dublin train. I wonder if Mike has woken up yet and whether or not it has dawned on him that I've left. He'll work it out fast enough when he sees the note on the kitchen table. God knows, I dropped enough hints that I wanted to move on. He never picked up on them, though. Just smiled and said I sounded a bit tired and he'd make me a cup of tea, as if that would solve anything.

He thought we were so happy. It sickened me, in the end, to hear him talking to his family about 'our future'. I could never have a future with someone so unambitious. It was all well and good when we had just left school, but it became clear very early on that he'd have been content to live like that forever: him in his dead-end job and me picking up bits and pieces of work where I could.

It's up to you to decide why Sarah left, but the old woman in the extract does say that she is cold and distant.

If I tried to explain any of this to him, he'd just look puzzled and say we had it all going for us and that as long as we had each other we didn't need much else. No chance he'd ever have had the guts to leave his precious home town and try to make it in Dublin or London. I'm well rid of him. Slipping out quietly was the best way. I couldn't have dealt with his begging and pleading. I had made my mind up to go, so what would be the point of talking about it?

Thursday 14th November, 2.30 pm

Here in the hotel at last after the train journey from hell. It was fine until Mallow, but then an old woman barged into the seat opposite mine. I did my best to put her off but she was like Mike's Aunt Bridie: unstoppable once she was in full flow and wittering on about the dullest things imaginable.

That was bad enough, but then things became so strange that I'm shivering a little even thinking of it. She went oddly silent and stared at the ceiling as if she were reading something terrible that was written up there. The hairs on the back of my neck stood up, but there was nowhere to go, so I just sat there, frozen.

When she looked down again, the old hag stared right at me and started telling me all about myself. Honestly, I felt physically ill when I heard her accurately describing the way I left this morning and telling me that everything had a consequence. It was the first time I had a moment's doubt that I had done the right thing. But then I pulled myself together. After all, I'm just looking after my own interests, and that's simply good sense. I know people might judge me for it, but I can't help that. They'll see in time that I was right. I don't need them anyway.

There goes the phone again. Another text from Mike, as needy and frantic as all the others. He needs to face facts and realise it's over. I'm moving onwards and upwards and I don't need any dead weight holding me back.

There is no need to sign off at the end of a diary entry, although you can if you like. The same applies to the opening: you can write 'Dear Diary' if you wish.

Sample OL Diary Entry (based on the extract given in full below)

THE RESCUE

This true story is adapted from Michael Smith's biography of Tom Crean, the Antarctic explorer. On 4 January, 1912, a three-man party – Crean, Lashly and Evans – set out on a punishing 750-mile journey across the South Pole. However, only 35 miles from base camp, disaster struck. Evans fell ill. Crean was forced to make the rest of the dangerous journey on his own. The survival of all three men depended on Crean's success.

1. Crean now took the bravest decision of his life and volunteered to make the solo walk to Hut Point. Lashly had offered to go but Crean had told him to remain and look after the very frail Evans. Then Lashly stuffed Crean's pockets with the only food they could find. Before he left, Crean ducked his head inside the tent to say goodbye to his two companions. They watched the courageous Irishman stagger forward in knee-deep snow, to begin his lonely march for survival.

2. Crean was bitterly cold, thirsty, starving and physically drained as he began his journey. The travelling was hazardous. His thighs frequently sank in the soft snow and there was the ever-present fear of crashing through a crevasse. The wind was blowing up the drifting snow and blinding Crean. A blizzard could be seen approaching in the distance. In his tiredness, Crean frequently slipped on the glassy ice. He scrambled down the hill as the wind picked up and made his way slowly towards the hut.

3. Then to his utter relief, Crean saw dogs and sledges in the distance out on the sea-ice. He somehow found enough strength to reach the camp. When Crean finally stumbled into the hut, he fell to his knees, almost delirious with hunger and exhaustion. Inside, he found the Russian dog-driver, Dimitri, and Atkinson, the one doctor within 400 miles of Hut Point. He blurted out the alarming news about his two companions and collapsed on the floor. A rescue party set off immediately to find Lashly and Evans.

4. Lashly had wisely torn up an old piece of clothing and attached it to a long piece of bamboo so that the recovery party would not miss the tiny green tent on the vast Barrier landscape. After hours on the Barrier, the two men had almost given up hope of being rescued. Suddenly the howling and yelping of Atkinson's dogs which galloped right up to the tent door shattered the stillness and silence. One animal stuck his head through the little tent flap and licked the face and hands of the stricken Evans. To hide his emotions, Evans grabbed his ears and sank his face into the hairy mane of the grey

Siberian dog. Then both men laughed uncontrollably. They never should have doubted the courage and determination of the Irishman. They couldn't believe that they had been saved. It was as if a heavy weight had been lifted from their shoulders.

Diary Entries

Imagine that you are Lashly. Write two diary entries describing your thoughts as you wait to be rescued.

I underlined the important words in the question to keep myself on track in my answer.

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| <p>30th January 1912 11a.m.</p> <p>It is now over an hour since Tom set off, I hardly dare to hope that he will make it and manage to bring help. I gave him the last of our food: Evans is too weak to eat and it is surely better to give Tom every advantage on his mission.</p> <p>It's odd, really – when we set out on this adventure all those weeks ago, I knew we risked death but the possibility seemed somehow remote. Maybe it was arrogance, but I never honestly thought I would die out here; instead, I only thought of our triumphant return home. Now that we are faced with the bleak prospect of slowly freezing to death in this hostile wilderness, I find that I am terribly afraid.</p> <p>Evans is weakening more with every passing moment. I fear that even if Tom does reach us with help, it may be too late. I've never been a very religious man but I am praying now.</p> <p>30th January, 1912 3.30p.m.</p> <p>It is nearly six hours since Tom left and, although we talk cheerfully to one another about his return, I think that Evans and I have little hope of rescue. I ventured outside a short time ago and saw that the snow had drifted into high mounds around our tent, making it even more difficult to spot. It occurred to me that if Tom were to make it back here with a rescue party, there is little chance that he would be able to pinpoint our exact location. I rigged up a sort of flag, using a long pole and an old red shirt. Hopefully that will make us more visible from a distance.</p> | <p><i>Date and time given.</i></p> <p><i>Correct opening.</i></p> <p><i>Refers to text - facts are correct.</i></p> <p><i>Private thoughts – as asked for in the question.</i></p> <p><i>Language is reasonably formal as would be appropriate for 1912. No modern slang or expressions used.</i></p> <p><i>Again, refers to</i></p> |
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Evans is dozing again. He is sleeping more and more, which is not a good sign. I don't know if I should wake him or if that would simply be cruel. Perhaps our best hope is to fall asleep and simply not wake again. It is lonelier than I could ever have imagined, out here in the snowy wastes and I find it difficult to avoid thinking morbid thoughts. I wonder if we do die, will anybody find our bodies? It seems unlikely. It will undoubtedly be harder for our families if they do not know exactly how, or when we died, and it will obviously make any sort of burial impossible. It is odd how much my thoughts drift towards God at this time; I had always considered myself more a man of science.

Evans is stirring once more, I will stop writing now and put on as cheerful a countenance as possible so that we may spend what may well be our last hours in pleasant conversation. God speed Tom on his quest.

text. Shows close reading of text and uses facts.

Private thoughts given – fears and doubts expressed.

Ends diary in a plausible way. Does not mention rescue, as question did not ask for this.

Approx 450 words

Reviews

When you are writing a review of a film, book, concert or television programme, remember to give your own opinion. Think about the content and decide what you are going to say about the quality.

Your review should be structured as follows:

1. **Introduction** – tell the reader what you are going to review.
 2. If it's a book, give the title and the name of the author.
 3. If it's a film, give the names of the principal actors and the director.
 4. If it's a concert, give the name of the band and the venue.
 5. **Description** – Describe the film/book/CD/concert in some detail but remember not to give away the ending.
 6. **Evaluation** – Tell the reader what you thought of the film etc. Your opinion is important; it is what the reader wants to know. Explain why you liked or disliked it. Think of the advice you've been given for answering questions on Paper 2, a lot of it applies here. It is not enough to say that you found the film 'boring' or 'brilliant', you must say why.
 7. Think of your audience when you say what you liked and disliked about the film/book/event. Are you writing for your peers (school magazine) or a serious publication? Is this film or book in a series with which they are likely to be familiar? (For example, James Bond, Twilight, Harry Potter.) You may wish to refer to previous books/films if that is the case. 'This is the third book in the "Twilight" series and it came as somewhat of a disappointment to me,' etc.
 8. **Recommendation** – End with a recommendation in favour of the film/book if you liked it. If you didn't, advise your readers not to waste their time and money.
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Write a review for your school magazine of any film that you have enjoyed. Your review should encourage other students to go and see it.

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| <p>Last week, I went to see 'Hot Fuzz', directed by Edgar Wright and starring Simon Pegg and Nick Frost. I had enjoyed 'Shaun of the Dead', the last film produced by this trio so I had great hopes of 'Hot Fuzz'. All too often, high expectations are dashed by a tired, clichéd re-hashing of the same themes and the trotting out of the same old jokes, but not in this case. Pegg and Wright are as hilarious as ever and there are brilliant cameo appearances by Steve Coogan and Bill Nighy among others, not to mention a startlingly funny performance by Timothy Dalton, playing a sleazy supermarket manager.</p> | <p><i>Introduction gives name of film, director and principal actors.</i></p> <p><i>Mentions other films by same people.</i></p> <p><i>Gives opinions.</i></p> |
| <p>The basic storyline is simple, Nicholas Angel (Simon Pegg) is the finest cop London has to offer, with an arrest record 400% higher than any other officer on the force. He's so good; he makes everyone else look bad. As a result, Angel's superiors send him to a place where his talents won't be quite so embarrassing -- the sleepy and seemingly crime-free village of Sandford. Once there, he is partnered with the well-meaning but overeager police officer Danny Butterman (Nick Frost). Danny is a huge action movie fan and believes his new big-city partner might just be a real-life "bad boy," and his chance to experience the life of gunfights and car chases he so longs for. Angel is quick to dismiss this as childish fantasy and Danny's puppy-like enthusiasm only adds to Angel's growing frustration. However, as a series of grisly accidents rocks the village, Angel is convinced that Sandford is not what it seems and as the intrigue deepens, Danny's dreams of high-octane, car-chasing, gun fighting, all-out action seem more and more like a reality. It's time for these small-town cops to break out some big-city justice.</p> | <p><i>Description – enough detail given without spoiling the film for those who might wish to go and see it.</i></p> <p><i>Evaluation – the writer gives opinions and explains them.</i></p> |
| <p>'Hot Fuzz' brilliantly pokes fun at all those high-speed, special effects-laden, high-mortality American cop films by bringing all the elements of such movies to the most unlikely setting of rural England. I think its appeal will be most appreciated by those of us who were raised on a diet of such films as the clichés and stereotypes are sent up in an incredibly clever way.</p> | <p><i>Mentions those to whom the film might appeal.</i></p> <p><i>More evaluation.</i></p> |
| <p>I went to see this film with a mixed group, both girls and boys: some lovers of rom-coms, some of action movies and some of horror films. Every one of us thoroughly enjoyed 'Hot Fuzz', possibly the first time that we have all agreed on a film's appeal.</p> | <p><i>More evaluation.</i></p> |
| <p>If you haven't seen 'Hot Fuzz' already, go this weekend. You won't regret it.</p> | <p><i>Recommendation.</i></p> |

Articles

Points to note:

- Decide on the type of publication for which you are writing. This will determine the tone of your article and the type of language you use. If you are writing for a magazine, you may decide to use a more light-hearted approach than if you are writing for a serious broadsheet.
- Think about which language genre you should use. If you are writing a serious article about a controversial topic, you may choose to use the language of argument or persuasion. If you are writing a more light-hearted article on a less serious topic, you may use the language of persuasion and include several personal anecdotes (funny little stories from your own experiences.)
- Read as many articles as you can between now and the Leaving Cert. Most of the major newspapers are available online, so you don't even need to buy a paper to keep up with the news.

Feature Article

A feature article is usually intended to amuse or inform. It often centres around human interest stories and can be opinionated. Personal anecdotes may be used and the tone is frequently light-hearted. Of course, the topic may be a serious one, in which case, the tone should be adjusted accordingly. Read the question carefully and study the text on which it is based. This will give you a clear idea of what is required.



Sample Article (based on 2013 Text 3 – Question B)

Write an opinion piece, for inclusion in a series of newspaper articles entitled: Must-see Attractions for Tourists, in which you identify one place or public building in Ireland that, in your opinion, tourists should visit and explain your choice.

Note:

You don't have the time or the space to ramble on so make sure your points are organised before you write. It can help to ask yourself the following four questions before you begin your Question B:

Plan:

1. What form should this task take?

This is a feature article for a newspaper.

2. What should the content be?

You should name the place or public building and explain why you think tourists should visit it.

3. Who is my audience?

Tourists who are interested in learning about 'Must-see-Attractions'.

4. What register should I use?

You can be serious or humorous, but you must remember to be persuasive and to give information about the place or public building you have chosen.

Sample Answer:

In the centre of Cork city, tucked away between the busy main streets, is the English Market. If you step through one of the gateways that lead you into this warren of shops and stalls, you are stepping into history. This covered market has served the people of Cork for over four hundred years and has survived famine, floods and fire. Its name derives from the fact that it was built in a wealthy part of the city and originally served the prosperous inhabitants, many of whom were Anglo-Irish. The poorer people shopped in what was known as the 'Irish Market' a few streets away where prices were lower. Times have changed, of course, and while the English Market is still famous for its high-quality produce, it is equally well-known for its superb value.

Whatever your tastes, you will find something to delight you here. From fish to fowl, from artisan breads to organic chocolates, there is something for everyone. One word of

advice, bring cash, not cards. Most of the stallholders deal in cash only and believe me, you will want to spend!

All of this shopping can be tiring, so what could be nicer than popping upstairs to the award-winning Farmgate café and enjoy delicious, wholesome food on the wooden balcony above the heart of the market? There is no better place in the city to sit and watch the world pass by. Keep an eye out for some well-known faces while you are there. Darina Allen, of the world-famous Ballymaloe cookery school, is a regular visitor, as is her daughter-in-law Rachel. Best of all, of course, because this is a covered market you are safe from the vagaries of the Irish weather!

Rhetorical questions are a feature of the language of persuasion.

One of the most attractive aspects of the English market is that, despite its fame, it is not a tourist trap. This is a place where locals shop every day and they expect – and receive – good value, excellent quality and friendly service. There are no snooty, supercilious sales assistants here, but down-to-earth, helpful and often entertaining shopkeepers and stall owners: the real people of the Real Capital. This was never more obvious than during the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Cork a few years ago. As she and her entourage walked around the market, Prince Philip's eye was caught by some produce on one of the fish stalls. He pointed at fish cakes and asked the fishmonger what was in them. The immediate response: 'Fish, boy! What do you think?' epitomises the no-nonsense attitude all shoppers can expect. It's safe to say that if you visit the market, you will be treated like royalty too!

Sample Feature Article (edited from an Irish Times article)

WITH AIRLINE travel seen as less of a pleasure and more of a pain these days, air travel etiquette has taken on a whole new set of rules.

There used to be a time, not so long ago, when airline travel was a comforting and pleasurable experience. Cabin crews smiled, fluffed pillows and sliced lemons for complimentary gin and tonics. They asked how you were, thanked you for flying with them and didn't try to charge you €2.50 for a watery cup of tea. Now, air travel is a series of stressful situations that travellers have to endure, from cancelled or delayed flights to reduced in-flight food services, varying baggage allowances and cramped onboard seating. So, what are the best ways to minimise the stress of air travel and what rules of etiquette are now a given for modern flyers?

Let's start with checking in. For many the anxiety of air travel begins when entering the airport and approaching the desk to check-in. That's assuming, of course, that your airline allows you check-in at the airport. The simple rule is arrive in plenty of time. This ensures you face smaller queues and are less likely to encounter frazzled airline staff.

How you board the plane depends on whether you have been allocated a seat or not. If you have to fight for your seat, then it's best to sit or stand near the boarding gate, unless you want to end up beside the bathroom and creche corner. But, can you join the queue where you have been sitting or must you go to the back of the line? This mostly depends on the size of the passengers ahead of you.

On the plane itself, if you're travelling long haul, then the best advice is to try create your own peaceful environment. Bring an eye mask and ear plugs.

Sitting next to a passenger who is intent on continuing a conversation with you can be tricky, but there is no harm in letting them know you'd like some quiet time – "I've enjoyed our chat but I'm going to get stuck into this book now".

On shorter flights many of the complimentary snacks and drinks on offer previously have been withdrawn, so it is a good idea to bring your own onto a flight. Generally the prices within the airport itself will be cheaper than those onboard and the added bonus is that you won't have to wait until the trolley reaches you. With passengers in close proximity to you, you do need to be mindful of the type of food you are consuming – an apple may be preferable to garlic bread.

The bottom line then is that modern air travel is a minefield of potentially stressful situations. You just have to accept that air travel is not what it used to be and is, as Al Gore noted, "nature's way of making you look like your passport photo".

Interviews

The purpose of an interview is to learn more about the person being interviewed, their background, life, work, likes, and dislikes.

Points to note

- Give the name of your publication / radio station / TV show.
 - State the name of the person you are interviewing and give some brief background information.
 - Give each speaker a new line each time they ask or answer a question.
 - Put the initials of the speaker before their question / answer each time.
 - The interviewer's questions and comments should be short: one sentence should be plenty.
 - The interviewee can answer in more detail, usually a short paragraph.
 - The interviewer's tone is usually fairly neutral.
 - The interviewee's tone is usually relaxed and chatty.
 - It can be a nice touch to end the interview with some information about the book, film, concert etc. For example, you might mention where and when the concert is taking place.
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Sample Answer: Text 1 2012 – Question B

‘Early-in-life experience has been central to me.’

Imagine yourself fifty years from now. You have achieved great success and public recognition in your chosen career. Write the text of an interview (questions and answers) about the experiences and influences in your youth that contributed to your later success. (50)

Note:

As always, read the question carefully. Your chosen career must be one which has allowed you to achieve public recognition and great success. It might be a good idea to use your own interests or hobbies as a basis for this piece as that will make your writing more realistic. For example, do you participate in sports? Do you sing or play a musical instrument? Are you keen on science? There are many possibilities here, so try to choose something that really does matter to you and with which you have been involved since you were young. This last point is important because the question also requires you to talk – like Heaney – about the experiences and influences in your youth which contributed to your later success.

You don't have the time or the space to ramble on so make sure your points are organised before you write. It can help to ask yourself the following four questions before you begin your Question B:

Plan:

1. What form should this task take?

This is an interview. The interviewers questions should be quite short and the interviewees answers much longer.

2. What should the content be?

You should have at least two questions and answers. An anecdote or two would help to bring the piece to life.

The interview with Seamus Heaney may give you some ideas for questions.

3. Who is my audience?

This interview will be read by anyone with an interest in your chosen career.

4. What register should I use?

Your approach could be serious, humorous, narrative, discursive or a mixture of all of these.

Sample Answer:

In this month's episode of 'Before They Were Famous', Colm Dennehy talks to recent Nobel Prize winner Rory Kennedy about his formative years.

You can write a brief introduction if you like. It makes it easier to abbreviate the interviewer and interviewee's names later on if you have given them in full in the introduction.

CD: Good morning, Rory, and thank you for taking the time to come into the studio this morning. Your breakthrough with cold fusion ushered in a new era of safe and cheap energy, and has brought you incredible fame and fortune. However, we're not here today to talk about the discovery; we're here to talk about the man behind it.

I think it's fair to say that many people are surprised to learn that you do not come from a scientific background at all. Can you tell me a little about your parents?

RK: My father was a full-time farmer and my mother worked part-time in the local bakery. So no, I didn't exactly come from a scientific background, but my parents placed huge emphasis on their children's education. Every evening after dinner, no matter how tired they were, they made time to check up on our homework and help us out if we were struggling with anything. They never pretended to have all the answers, but they did show us that the answers could be found if you stuck at it. I think that's what made me so tenacious as a scientist; to this day I find it almost impossible to give up on a project. I hear my father's voice in the back of my head, quoting that old chestnut about success being '99% perspiration and 1% inspiration'. It might be annoying, but it's true!

CD: You went to a small, local secondary school, and you have been quoted before as saying that the facilities there were fairly basic. Did that make your study of science subjects more difficult?

RK: Not really. Don't get me wrong: we'd have loved a brand-new lab with all the bells and whistles, but we had an exceptionally dedicated science teacher who was a genius at making do and who encouraged all the pupils in his class to take science out of the realm of books and exams and into the real world. He helped my friends and me with our entry for the Young Scientist competition – we came up with a way to harness the energy generated by the breakdown of material in compost heaps - and winning first prize for our invention gave me huge confidence and made me believe I had what it took to make a future for myself in scientific research.

Don't fall into the trap of saying 'my friends and I' here. Break it up: 'he helped my friends and he helped me'. 'He helped my friends and me'.

CD: When and why did you decide to make the production of low-cost, safe energy your

goal?

RK: Growing up on a farm and being part of a rural community meant that I saw firsthand the effects of climate change. I remember with awful clarity the devastation that a series of harsh winters, late springs and wet summers wreaked on our farm. My father lost his entire herd because there was no fodder available in this country and the cost of shipping it in from overseas was beyond his means. The farm had been in the family for four generations, and I'll never forget the look of despair on my father's face when he thought he'd lose it all. He just managed to hang on and thankfully the following year was a bit better, but I resolved there and then to devote my future career to seeking out some way of lessening our reliance on climate-destroying sources of energy. Happily, I was successful and the rest is history.

CD: It certainly is, and there is no doubt that you will go down in history! Thank you again for coming in to talk to us this morning. It's been fascinating.

