

## 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.

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, 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

### 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.
- Think about the target audience for this piece. If you are writing a letter to your friend the tone can be chatty and informal, 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?
- Plan your answer very carefully. You don't have the time or the space to ramble on so make sure your points are organised before you write.

## LETTER WRITING - FORMAL

(Sender's address)

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

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2009

(Recipient's address)

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

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

In the first paragraph you should state the purpose of the letter, whether it is to make a complaint or whatever else the exam question has asked you to do. 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. 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 plenty. Remember to avoid slang, exaggeration, deeply personal anecdotes and any remarks which may be 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 and so forth. 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)

*Signature*

Yours sincerely, (if you do know the recipient's name and have used it at the start of the letter)

(If you are writing to a newspaper, it is acceptable to sign of 'Yours etc.' if you wish.)

## 2011 Comprehension Question B

### Text 1 – Out Of This World

Q. What **form** will my writing take?

A. This will be a formal letter. As it is a short writing task, you should aim to write around 200 to 300 words.

Q. What will be the **content** of the piece?

A. You must address both parts of the task. In other words, outline both your suitability for the mission and your reasons for wanting to participate. Both sections need not be dealt with in the same amount of detail, but it would be a good idea to think of it in terms of writing one short paragraph for each aspect.

Q. Who will my **audience** be?

A. The audience will be adults whose job it is to pick the winning entry.

Q. What **register** will I use?

A. Your language should be persuasive and enthusiastic.

<p>Hillside, Main Street, Carrigaline, Co. Cork.</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> June 2011</p> <p>NASA, Washington DC, United States of America</p> <p>Dear Sir or Madam,</p> <p>I am writing in response to your recent advertisement looking for a young person to be part of your next moon mission. I believe that I am an ideal candidate for the position.</p> <p>I am a keen science student and I was the leader of the winning team at this year's prestigious 'Young Scientist' competition in</p>	<p><i>Scientific experiences are linked to this mission.</i></p>
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Dublin. Our project, 'Reaching Out to the Stars' looked at the possibility of colonising other planets. I believe our success proves that I work well with others and that I have plenty of initiative.

Sport is an important part of my life and I make sure that, no matter how busy my schedule, I keep physically fit and active. This, I feel, would be of assistance to me were I to secure a place on the moon mission as I would be likely to cope well with the rigors of space travel, from G-forces to all the other strains put on the human body.

I have always dreamed of going into space, and my recent experience with the 'Young Scientist' project only fuelled that desire. Ireland does not have a space programme, but we have many potential space travellers and scientists: students who would be a positive asset to NASA in years to come. I believe that my participation in this mission would generate huge Irish interest in NASA and in the study of science. I would love the chance to come back and tell other students what space travel is really like, and why they too should pursue their dreams of working with NASA some day. My dream is to reach out, not just to space, but also to future generations of scientists.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Adam Murphy

*Having mentioned your suitability for the mission, you must also say why you wish to go.*

## Sample Formal Letter 2

**Write a letter to your favourite pop star or celebrity, inviting him or her to come to the launch of a charity to help the homeless. In your letter, you should explain how you intend to raise money for the charity.**

Note: Underline the key words.

Letter – tells you the form the task must take.

Pop star or celebrity – this is not someone you know so the letter should be formal.

Inviting him or her to come to the launch of a charity to help the homeless – tells you the purpose of the letter.

Explain how you intend to raise money for the charity – tells you what the content should be.

<p style="text-align: right;">St. Francis College, Carrigaline, Co. Cork.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009</p> <p>Mr. John Spillane, Passage West, Co. Cork.</p> <p>Dear Mr. Spillane,</p> <p>On behalf of my fellow students at St. Francis College, I would like to invite you to the launch of our 'Street' charity to help the homeless in Cork city. We are having a formal launch in the City Hall on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> July. The exact time has yet to be arranged but we hope to start the event shortly after lunch.</p> <p>The idea for this charity came about when our 4<sup>th</sup> Year students did a project on the rise in the numbers of homeless people on our streets in the last ten years. They made a short film as part of this project, featuring interviews with several homeless people and showing the conditions in which they live. They showed this film to the entire school and everyone was shocked to realise what was going on in our streets.</p> <p>With the help of our principal, Mr. O'Donovan, we decided to do what we could to help and met with the organisers of a local homeless shelter. They told us that they are in dire need of a new</p>	<p><i>Both addresses given.</i></p> <p><i>Details of time and date are given and background information about charity supplied.</i></p> <p><i>Plausible explanation</i></p>
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kitchen, bedding and money for basic repairs.

Each year in the school has come up with a different way to raise money for this worthwhile cause. First years will be going on a sponsored cycle in September, second and third years are organising a table quiz, fourth years are planning a school disco and fifth and sixth years have asked local business to contribute to the charity in return for advertising in our school magazine.

Your presence would be a huge boost to our charity as you are such a popular figure and so closely associated with Cork city. We realise that you are very busy but if you could find time to kick-start our effort to give something back to our community, we would be very grateful.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh McCarthy

Niamh McCarthy

*How money is to be raised.*

*Writer tries to politely persuade recipient to attend.*

*Correct sign-off.*

*(Approx 300 words)*

## LETTER WRITING - INFORMAL

(Sender's address)

Address Line 1,

Address Line 2,

Address Line 3.

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2009

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.

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.

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'.

### Sample informal letter

**You are on holiday abroad. Write a letter to your friend in which you give an account of how you spend your time.**

<p style="text-align: right;">Cambrils Park, Salou, Spain.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">14<sup>th</sup> July 2009</p> <p>Dear Eithne,</p> <p>Hello from sunny Spain. We are having a fantastic time here in Salou, you would love it. We are right by the sea and only a short walk from lots of lovely shops and cafés. The site itself is excellent, we are staying in an air-conditioned chalet and I have my own room – very important when you're on holidays with noisy brothers, as I'm sure you'll agree.</p> <p>Our day to day routine doesn't vary much. I am usually the first to get up and I stroll up to the bakery in my shorts and t-shirt to buy our breakfast of pain au chocolat, croissants and baguettes. I usually bring my book and sit at one of the tables outside, sipping a coffee before heading back.</p> <p>The pool area begins to fill up around ten so I'm almost always given the task of finding some deckchairs and a parasol. The boys and Mum and Dad join me after a while we swim and sunbathe for a few hours.</p> <p>I've met two girls from England who seem OK, they're good fun and we generally go for lunch together. Lunch is almost as healthy as breakfast, chips and eggs or pizza and chips. Mum nags me to eat some veg too but I am on holiday after all.</p> <p>We sometimes go to the beach in the afternoon, it's only a short stroll and it's fairly quiet. If we can persuade Dad to part with the money, the boys and I rent a pedal boat and spend an hour or so diving off it and swimming around. The boys tried to pedal off and leave me to swim in to shore a few times but I caught up with them. Who'd have brothers?</p> <p>We usually have a barbecue for dinner, it's the only time in the year that Dad volunteers to cook so Mum leaves him to it. Then</p>	<p><i>Only give your address when writing an informal letter.</i></p> <p><i>Chatty, informal tone.</i></p> <p><i>Gives account of how a typical day is spent, as asked for in the question.</i></p> <p><i>Slang is acceptable in an informal letter but avoid bad language.</i></p>
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we head to the bar and I ditch the family as quickly as I can. Rose and Lauren, the two English girls, are almost always there too and we head off to play some video games or watch the entertainment, if it happens to be on. The entertainers are dreadful, to be honest, but it's a bit of a laugh anyway.

It is a good holiday and I am enjoying it, spending two weeks with the family isn't as bad as I'd feared. I hope all is well with you and that it's not still lashing rain in Cork; I want to show off my tan when I get home next week.

Looking forward to catching up with all the news and hearing what you've been up to,

Niamh

*Signs off  
informally.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Here is the advice given by a national newspaper on letter writing:*

- 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.

*Sample letter from The Irish Times. The name and address has 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 or a speech 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.

If you are giving a talk, the tone and the form of address can be less formal than in a speech.

Imagine you are delivering the speech aloud. 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.

- Before you even begin to plan your talk/speech, underline the key words in the question and decide the following:
- What form is this task taking? Is it a speech or a short talk?
- Who is my target audience?
- What will be the content of my speech/talk?
- Open with the correct form of address: 'Ladies and Gentlemen' or 'My fellow students'.
- If you are giving a talk, the tone and the form of address can be less formal than in a speech.
- Be definite in your speech, you are trying to win the audience over to your way of thinking.
- Use the language of persuasion and/or the language of argument when you are writing a speech or a short talk.

## Sample Talk – 2006 Paper 1.

### A Class Talk.

**Imagine you were asked to give a talk to younger students about how they would deal with some common childhood fears. Write the talk you would give.**

<p>Good morning everybody. My name is Carol and I used to be a pupil at this school. I'm in sixth year at St. Bridget's Secondary School now and your teacher, Mrs. McCarthy asked me to come and talk to you today about something that you've been discussing in your SPHE classes. Can anyone guess what that might be? I'll give you a hint, Mrs. McCarthy told you that she used to feel this way about spiders! That's right, it's fears - things we're all afraid of at some time or other.</p>	<p><i>Introduces herself to audience in a friendly way, Informal tone, chatty and relaxed and appropriate to a young audience.</i></p>
<p>It's easy to think that you're the only one who has fears, isn't it? But of course, that's not true. We all feel frightened of something at some stage in our lives and that's not always a bad thing. I'm sure your mums and dads, as well as your teachers, have taught you to be very careful when crossing the road and they have warned you against playing with matches. It's sensible to know how dangerous traffic and fire can be and this kind of fear makes us take more care. I'm here today to talk to you about another kind of fear, however.</p>	<p><i>Uses rhetorical questions to involve the audience.</i></p>
<p>When I was your age, I was afraid of the dark. I bet some of you are too, am I right? Do you know how I got over my fear? I talked to my mum and dad about it. I was worried about doing that at first, what if they laughed at me? They didn't, of course; they listened to what I had to say and then they helped me to get over my fears. Dad showed me how he locked the doors every night and checked on us all before he went to bed. Mum got a night light that I hadn't used since I was very small and she plugged it in for me. All of this made me feel much better, but what really made me feel great was having them listen to me and tell me that I wasn't silly, that everyone has fears like that at some stage or other.</p>	<p><i>Reassuring tone suits target audience.</i></p> <p><i>Personal memories to make audience feel they are not alone in feeling the way they do.</i></p>
<p>What I'm really trying to say to you is that you're not alone. No</p>	<p><i>Summarises main point of</i></p>

<p>matter how silly you think your fear may be, or no matter how worried you are about telling someone all about it, I can promise you that you will feel better when you do. Sometimes even saying it out loud can make your fear seem less scary. Your mums and dads and your teacher are here to help but they can't if they don't know what's bothering you. So speak up and above all, don't be afraid of being afraid!</p> <p>Thank you all for being such good listeners and thank you, Mrs. McCarthy, for inviting me here today to meet your class. I hope what I said will be of some help and I look forward to seeing you all again some time. Goodbye.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approx 400 words</i></p>	<p><i>talk, gives advice.</i></p> <p><i>Thanks audience, teacher. Makes it clear talk is over.</i></p>
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### **Sample Speech 2004 Paper 1**

**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.**

<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</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</i></p>
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<p>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 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>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.</i></p> <p><i>Optimistic that it can be easily 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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# REPORTS

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

- ◆ Who has asked me to write the report and why?
- ◆ What is the problem or issue on which I am reporting?
- ◆ What tone is appropriate for my audience/readers?
- ◆ Do I need facts and figures?
- ◆ What topics are to be covered?
- ◆ What is supposed to happen as a result of the report?

Planning 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.

### Writing your report

- ◆ You will be using the language of information, so be as objective, clear and concise as possible.
- ◆ Avoid slang, it is too informal for this type of task.
- ◆ Be factual and avoid any words which may imply judgement or subjectivity.
- ◆ Do not use commercial jargon, it is out of date and appears slightly ridiculous now. For example, say 'I enclose' instead of 'Enclosed herewith'. Keep your style simple and straightforward.

### **Sample Report – 2005 Paper 1**

#### **Greater Freedom for Students**

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

<p>Report on the ways in which more freedom could be given to senior students in St. Philomena's College, Waterford.</p> <p>Under instruction from the principal, Mr. Murphy, the following report has been authorised and a list of conclusions and recommendations drawn up.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The findings were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 84% of the students surveyed feel there should be a greater distinction between the freedoms allowed to junior and senior cycles.</li><li>2. 92% of students surveyed believe they would not abuse additional privileges and would be happy to agree to a</li></ol>	<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. No</i></p>
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<p>code of conduct drawn up by the staff and the student council.</p> <p>3. 90% of students surveyed feel that greater freedom in senior cycle would better prepare them for life after school.</p> <p>Based on the findings and students' own suggestions, the following recommendations have been drawn up:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>2. Senior students should be in school between 9.30 and 3.30 but if they have no classes outside of these times, should be free to go home.</li> <li>3. Senior students should be consulted about the subject choices available in fifth and sixth year. The subject blocks should be organised based on the numbers of students who wish to study particular subjects.</li> </ol> <p>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.</p> <p>Niamh McCarthy 6<sup>th</sup> Year November 2009</p>	<p><i>opinion given.</i></p> <p><i>Suggestions / Recommendations</i></p> <p><i>Conclusion</i></p> <p><i>Name of person who compiled report (optional).</i></p> <p><i>320 words approx.</i></p>
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## DIARY ENTRIES

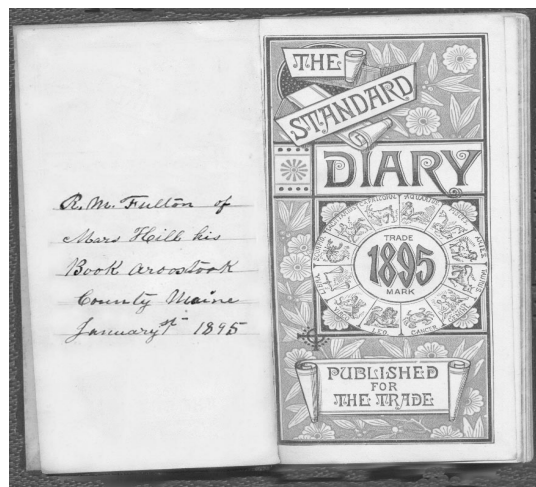
A diary is a personal account through which we see an individual's view of the world. The language is generally chatty and relaxed and would suit those students who find the structure of speeches and reports difficult. The diary entry seems to be one of the examiners' most popular tasks, it has come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

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



## Sample Diary Entry (based on the 2007 comprehension given in full below)

### TEXT I

#### 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.*

30 <sup>th</sup> January 1912 11a.m.	Date and time given
<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><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</i></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>30<sup>th</sup> 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>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><i>be appropriate for 1912. No modern slang or expressions used.</i></p> <p><i>Again, refers to text. Shows close reading of text and uses facts.</i></p> <p><i>Private thoughts given – fears and doubts expressed.</i></p> <p><i>Ends diary in a plausible way. Does not mention rescue, as question did not ask for this.</i></p> <p><i>Approx 450 words</i></p>
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# 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.

It would be no harm to prepare a review of a film/book/concert/CD that you enjoyed. This way, you will have some facts if such a task should come up in the exam.

**Sample answer – 2006 Paper 1**

**Review**

**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.**

<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> <i>Mentions other films by same people.</i> <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). The son of amiable Police Chief Frank Butterman (Jim Broadbent), 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</p>	<p><i>Description – enough detail given without spoiling the film for those who might wish to go and see it.</i></p>

<p>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 explosive, 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>'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>Evaluation – the writer gives opinions and explains them.</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. We couldn't decide what we should go to see, so chose this as a compromise, none of us knowing much about it. 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>Mentions those to whom the film might appeal.</i></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>



## NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE ARTICLES

When you are writing an article, you should include the following:

- **Headline, by-line and subheading.**
- The headline is the title, it should be clear and maybe even amusing, depending on the topic and the publication for which you are writing. For example, in a light-hearted article, the title might be snappy or humorous, using alliteration or a play on words. *Underwear Shipment Hijacked--Thief Gives Police The Slip*
- The by-line is the name of the person who has written the article. It is placed under the headline.
- 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.

Two main types of article:

### **News Report/Sports Report.**

When you are planning a news story, think of an upside down pyramid. The most important information is at the top (beginning of article) and the least important

information is at the bottom (end of article). This way, the article will still make sense even if it is severely edited due to space restrictions.

Unless you are writing a news article for a tabloid paper, your piece should not be opinionated. The language of information should be used.

#### LEAD / HEADLINE

Who? What? Where? When? Why?

Detail 1 Detail 2 Detail 3

Final Detail

#### **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 News Article – Taken from The Irish Times.**

<p><b>Gardaí Threatened In Firearm Incident</b></p> <p>Linda McGrory</p> <p>An investigation is under way after gardaí were threatened with a firearm as they broke up a row outside a rural pub in Co. Donegal in the early hours of yesterday.</p> <p>The incident happened in Gleneely, a village about five kilometres from Carndonogh, following an altercation between several locals and a number of people from the North.</p> <p>Gardaí say a man produced a .38 revolver and pointed it at them as they responded to the melee outside the Orchard Bar at about 12.30 am.</p> <p>Supt William Johnston, who is leading the investigation, said the man fled the scene in a 4x4 vehicle after discarding the firearm. Supt Johnston said the area was sealed off and a number of people were interviewed. The weapon was later recovered in undergrowth a short distance from the pub.</p> <p>A man originally from the North was arrested during a follow-up search of a house about four miles from the village. At least one stolen car was recovered from the back of the property, say gardaí. The man was brought to Buncrana Garda station where he was detained under Section 30 of the Offences Against the State Act.</p> <p>"An incident room has been set up at Buncrana Garda station to piece together what happened on the night and it is envisaged a number of people will be interviewed further as part of the investigation," Supt Johnston said.</p> <p>Buncrana gardaí are appealing for witnesses to the incident.</p>	<p><i>Headline</i></p> <p><i>By-line</i></p> <p><i>Main fact</i></p> <p><i>Facts become less important to main body of article as we read on. The piece could be cut at any time and it would still make sense.</i></p> <p><i>Quotes from source.</i></p> <p><i>The writer does not express any opinion on the story.</i></p>
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## Sample Feature Article – 2007 Paper 1

### Write a feature article for a daily newspaper entitled, 'Staying Fit and Healthy'.

*A feature article is usually intended to amuse or inform. It often centres around human interest stories.*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>New Year – New You</b></p> <p><i>Niamh McCarthy helps you to keep those resolutions and kick start a healthier, fitter lifestyle.</i></p> <p>We all know we should eat less, exercise more and generally take better care of ourselves. After Christmas, there are very few of us who aren't feeling the effects of two weeks of over-indulgence.</p> <p>So, we pinpoint January 1<sup>st</sup> as the date when the new regime begins. We will go to the gym, we will walk the dog, we will give away those last boxes of chocolates.... Let's be honest, we won't. We make these plans every year and we break them just as regularly. The question is, why do we fail when we know how important it is to get ourselves in shape?</p> <p>I believe the answer is simple; we are too ambitious in our plans. There's no point in vowing to go to the gym every night. It is better to start with a more realistic aim and say you'll go twice a week. Setting goals that you are unlikely to achieve will only make you give up entirely. It is far wiser to start with sensible plans and increase your level of activity if it all seems to be going well.</p> <p>The same applies to our eating habits. Crash dieting is no way to lose weight, and in fact it does more harm than good. Instead of eating less, eat more healthily. Start each day with a nutritious breakfast. You will have more energy and you won't look for that sugar 'high' at eleven. If you must snack, then snack on fruit, not biscuits and cakes. Don't do your weekly supermarket shopping when you are hungry, as you are more likely to impulse buy if you do. Make a list and stick to it. Plan your weekly menu. This will help you to eat a more balanced diet. You are not likely to plan to eat pizza and chips three or four times in one week, but it is a habit into which you can easily drift if you are in a rush and have neglected to buy or defrost the ingredients for that evening's</p>	<p><i>Headline, short and to the point.</i></p> <p><i>By-line and subheading combined.</i></p> <p><i>Fairly informal tone.</i></p> <p><i>Use of 'we' to draw the reader in, suggesting shared experience.</i></p> <p><i>Body of article, presenting ideas for dealing with issue.</i></p> <p><i>Writer gives own opinions in feature article.</i></p> <p><i>Language of <u>persuasion</u> and <u>narration</u> used.</i></p>
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<p>meal.</p> <p>Finally, don't forget that those boring household and garden chores can be a great way of burning calories and building muscles. Don't put them off; do them now. An hour's weeding, painting, mowing or hoovering can have not only you but also your home looking great!</p> <p>So remember, be realistic and sensible and before you know it, you'll be ready to show off your new look in this summer's slinkiest, skimpiest fashions.</p>	<p><i>Light-hearted tone.</i></p> <p><i>Conclusion, ends on an upbeat, positive note.</i></p> <p><i>Approx 400 words</i></p>
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# 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. See the end of the interview with Drew Barrymore for another example.

<p>In a recent interview for 'movies.ie', Jane Smith caught up with Drew Barrymore to talk about voicing the pampered pooch in "Beverley Hills Chihuahua", working with animals, and her thoughts on the Oscars...</p>	<p><i>Gives background to interviewee and name of publication.</i></p>
<p>JS: What a fun movie, well done! I must ask you, as an actress, did you find it difficult to voice a talking dog in this film?</p>	<p><i>Abbreviations given for names of interviewer and interviewee.</i></p>
<p>DB: "Well that was easy for me because I have three rescue dogs so the panting and barking was my favourite part of it. But I did kind of channel to my dogs and tried to imagine how they think and feel."</p>	<p><i>Light hearted questions – appropriate for an interview of this type. The subject is not a serious one.</i></p>
<p>JS: What are your dogs' names?</p>	<p><i>Short questions.</i></p>
<p>DB: "Flossie, Templeton and Vivien. Vivien came almost three years after Flossie and Templeton, who are brother and sister. She is the ultimate diplomat. Flossie and Templeton were rescues at six weeks old."</p>	<p><i>Longer answers.</i></p>
<p>JS: What kind of dogs are they?</p>	<p><i>Longer answers.</i></p>
<p>DB: "I don't know. They're certainly not pure breed. I love mutts. I like their personalities. Vivien's an Australian Border Collie mutt from the pound. She went right up to Flossie and got on her back in the submissive position and started licking her face. With Templeton she got up and started chewing on his leg and wrestling with him. She understood that Flossie needed to remain the queen and that Templeton would remain the playmate."</p>	<p><i>Longer answers.</i></p>
<p>JS: Are most of your friends four-legged or famous?</p>	<p><i>Longer answers.</i></p>
<p>DB: "(Laughs) Some of the people I'm friends with are in the business, but my best friend is a make-up artist. I have friends who aren't in this industry but that's also what I live and breathe a lot of the time so of course you do end up with similar people.</p>	<p><i>Longer answers.</i></p>
<p>JS: Do you remember your first pet?</p>	<p><i>Longer answers.</i></p>
<p>DB: "My first animal was a grey cat that I named Gertie because my godfather Steven Spielberg got her for me and I named her Gertie after my name in ET. She didn't have much personality</p>	<p><i>Longer answers.</i></p>

<p>though. I was much more the whip-cracking joker in that film. Gertie wasn't like that."</p> <p>JS: Do you think you'll ever complete your journey and win an Oscar?</p> <p>DB: "I don't like to talk about things like that. I think it jinxes it."</p> <p>JS: What would you choose, an Oscar or a husband for life?</p> <p>DB: "You cannot say that. You just cannot ask that question."</p> <p>"Beverly Hills Chihuahua" is in Irish cinemas from Jan 16th.</p>	<p><i>Says where and when film can be seen.</i></p> <p><i>Approx 400 words.</i></p>
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**Sample Interview 2, taken from a website.**

<p><b><u>Love at First Bite</u></b></p> <p>Stephenie Meyer talks about vampires, teen love, and her first novel, 'Twilight'</p> <p>By Rick Margolis -- School Library Journal, 10/1/2005</p> <p>RM: Were you surprised when Twilight was purchased for over \$500,000, and its film rights were sold?</p> <p>SM: It felt very strange, like some sort of practical joke for quite a while. And now, I still don't believe it. It's kind of surreal to me every time I hear somebody say, "Wow, I really loved it."</p> <p>RM: How would you describe the story?</p> <p>SM: I have a hard time with that. Because if I say to someone, "You know, it's about vampires," then immediately they have this mental image of what the book is like. And it's so <i>not</i> like the other vampire books out there—Anne Rice's and the few that I've read. It isn't that kind of dark and dreary and blood-thirsty world. Then when you say, "It's set in high school," a lot of people immediately put it in another pool. It's easy to pigeonhole with different descriptions.</p> <p>RM: When you were a teen, did you fall hard for somebody, like Bella falls for Edward?</p>	<p><i>'Snappy' title.</i></p> <p><i>(Excuse the pun.)</i></p> <p><i>Name of interviewer, name of publication.</i></p> <p><i>Relaxed, chatty tone.</i></p> <p><i>Short question.</i></p> <p><i>Longer answer.</i></p> <p><i>Refers to interviewee's personal</i></p>
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<p>SM: Yes, I did once, and it wasn't one of those happy things.</p> <p>RM: Was it difficult to portray vampires sympathetically?</p> <p>SM: They ended up being vampires in the way they are because I have strong opinions on free will. No matter what position you're in, you always have a choice. So I had these characters who were in a position where traditionally they would have been the bad guys, but, instead, they chose to be something different—a theme that has always been important to me.</p> <p>RM: <i>Twilight's</i> emotional intensity reminds me of Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters.</p> <p>SM: I love Austen and the Brontës. L. M. Montgomery's <i>Anne of Green Gables</i> books were also a big influence on me, and Orson Scott Card is one of my favourite authors. Shakespeare is a big influence. I'm always coming back to things he has done.</p> <p>RM: How did you juggle writing a novel with raising three young sons?</p> <p>SM: I did a lot of writing at night, because after they were in bed was the best time to concentrate. But during the day, I really couldn't stay away from the computer; so I was up and down a lot. I'd sit down and write a few lines, and then I'd get up and give somebody juice, then sit down and write a few more lines, and then go change a diaper.</p> <p>RM: What are you working on these days?</p> <p>SM: Right now, I'm actually working on sci-fi. But again, it's sci-fi for people who don't like reading sci-fi.</p>	<p><i>experiences.</i></p> <p><i>Short answer indicates the topic is best left unexplored.</i></p> <p><i>400 words approx</i></p>
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## ADVERTISEMENTS

An advertisement may well be shorter than some of the other writing tasks but that does not mean it is the easiest option. In an advertisement, each word must work for you. Your job is to capture and hold your jaded reader's attention. People skip over ads in magazines and newspapers; how will you make yours stand out?

- An advertisement is meant to grab the reader's attention immediately.
- Decide what type of customer you are trying to attract. This will dictate the tone of your advertisement.
- Start with a strong headline if possible, making a bold statement and arousing curiosity.
- You may wish to ask a provocative question, 'Have you had enough of boring TV programmes?'
- Introduce your product in an appealing way.
- Use bullet points to list the attractive features you have on offer.
- Elaborate on these points in the next part of your ad. Explain the benefits of these features in more detail.
- Be clear and be positive.
- Use plenty of adjectives.
- Make sure your grammar and spelling are correct.

**Sample Advertisement - taken from Discover Ireland.ie**

**You are asked to write an advertisement promoting Ireland as a fun place to visit.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Discover Ireland.ie</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Right Here, Right Now</b></p> <p><b>Take Your Pick From Thrilling Water Sports to High Culture</b></p> <p>Ireland's got a lot up its sleeve when it comes to things to do!</p> <p>Did you know that we're now one of Europe's top destinations for whale watching, or that surfing dudes flock to our beaches to catch sky - high waves, or that you can clip - clop along country roads in your own horse drawn caravan?</p> <p>If you don't like getting intimate with the great outdoors, you can occupy yourself with a diverse range of sightseeing attractions from ancient monuments to multi - media interpretative centres, top theatres and art galleries and some of the most memorable festivals around the world!</p> <p>And if you are looking for a special gift, take a look at our Irish Crafts Section for details of shops, galleries and studios recommended by the Crafts Council of Ireland.</p> <p>It's all on your doorstep, so what are you waiting for - there's more to life than work, so let's play!</p>	<p><i>Sense of immediacy added by words, 'Right Here, Right Now'.</i></p> <p><i>Mentions variety, appeals to many different types of tourist.</i></p> <p><i>Rhetorical questions, one of the features of persuasive writing. Draws the reader in.</i></p> <p><i>Something for everyone, positive, upbeat tone.</i></p> <p><i>Lists more available options – short and to the point.</i></p> <p><i>Makes visiting Ireland sound fun. Challenges reader to discover it for themselves.</i></p>
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