



Composition (Personal Writing)

English past Exam Questions

Higher Level

2013

SECTION II

COMPOSING

(100 marks)

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

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. In Text 2, William Trevor expresses his views on heroes.

Write a speech in which you argue for or against the motion, *We live in an un-heroic age.*

2. "...the storyteller's connection to his audience." (TEXT 1)

Write a personal essay in which you explore the storytelling evident in music and song and its impact on you as a listener.

3. "...they make manipulation a virtue." (TEXT 1)

Write a short story in which a central character is either manipulated or is manipulative.

4. In TEXT 2, William Trevor mentions "the art of the glimpse".

Write a descriptive essay based on a variety of glimpsed moments.

5. In TEXT 3, Belinda McKeon refers to the tension between the everyday treadmill and the gilded promises of Grand Central Station.

Write a personal essay about the tension you find between the everyday treadmill and the gilded promises of life.

6. "...a more ordered idea of urban existence." (TEXT 3)

Write a feature article for a popular magazine in which you discuss the competing attractions of both urban and rural lifestyles.

7. In TEXT 3, the writer refers to two short stories on the theme of reunion.

Write a short story about a reunion.

2012

SECTION II

COMPOSING

(100 marks)

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

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. “Yet the outside world had its continuing marvels...” (TEXT 1)

Write a personal essay on what you consider to be the marvels of today’s world.

2. “Memory is a ghost train too.” (TEXT 3)

Write a feature article for a newspaper or magazine on the role played by memory and the past in our lives.

3. “... an inferior rock band howling for fame.” (TEXT 3)

Write a short story inspired by the phrase, “... an inferior rock band howling for fame”.

4. “... another book which I have read with enormous interest ...” (TEXT 2)

Write a persuasive speech about the importance of literature in people’s lives.

5. “... all the time in the world...” (TEXT 3)

Write a light-hearted and entertaining article, intended for publication in a magazine aimed at young people, in response to the phrase, “...all the time in the world”.

6. “... shaped our national identity...” (TEXT 2)

Write the text of an address you could deliver to an international gathering of young people outlining what you believe helps to define Ireland’s distinctive national identity.

7. “When I was eighteen, I couldn’t wait to get out of that town ...” (TEXT 1)

Write a short story in which a young character is eager to leave home.

2011

**SECTION II
COMPOSING (100 marks)**

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

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. "There are people and possessions I could live without. But a cat is indispensable."
(TEXT 1)

You have been asked to speak to your class about what you think is indispensable in your life. Write the text of the talk you would give.

2. "I don't discriminate..." (TEXT 1)

Write an article for a serious newspaper or magazine on the twin issues of discrimination and tolerance.

3. "...the waiting had been magical..." (TEXT 2)

Write a story to be included in a collection of modern fairytales.

4. "...a thin girl...flips the key-guard of her phone and scrolls her texts." (TEXT 3)

Write an article for a popular magazine in which you outline your views about the impact of technology on the lives of young people.

5. "My favourite T-shirt..." (TEXT 1)

Write a personal essay about your clothes, what they mean to you and what they say about you.

6. "...the dust and seep of the city..." (TEXT 3)

Write a descriptive essay about twenty-four hours in the life of a town or city.

7. "The man above remained rigid, and yet his mystery was mobile." (TEXT 2)

Write a short story in which a mystery is solved.

2010

**SECTION II
COMPOSING (100 marks)**

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

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. "... it was terrific theatre ..." (TEXT 1)

Write a personal essay about your experience (as performer and/or audience member) of the dramatic arts: plays, musicals, concerts, comedy, etc.

2. "You're a new neighbour, aren't you?" (TEXT 3)

Write an article (serious and/or light-hearted) for a popular magazine on being a good neighbour.

3. "Isn't that funny, and sad, too?" (TEXT 3)

Write a short story suggested by the above quotation.

4. "... a certain freedom ..." (TEXT 1)

Write a personal essay about your understanding of freedom and why you think it is important.

5. "But there is hopeful news as well ..." (TEXT 2)

You have been elected by your classmates to deliver a speech at your school's graduation ceremony. Write the text of the speech you would give, encouraging your audience to be optimistic about the future.

6. "We have everything we need to get started ..." (TEXT 2)

Write a practical Guide for Young People containing helpful advice and useful information for life after school.

7. "What a strange meeting!" (TEXT 3)

Write a short story in which two unusual or eccentric characters meet for the first time.

2009

SECTION II
COMPOSING (100 marks)

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

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. "...a living classroom..." (TEXT 1)

Write an article (serious and/or light-hearted) for a school magazine about your experience of education over the last number of years.

2. "...a good deal of humming and ha-ing..." (TEXT 2)

Write an opinion piece for a popular magazine entitled "Indecision – my own and other people's".

3. "...the decisive moment..." (TEXT 3)

Write a short story in which the central character is faced with making an important decision.

4. "...science and research..." (TEXT 1)

Write a persuasive speech in praise of science and technology.

5. "...a respected figure." (TEXT 2)

Write a newspaper article on some of today's respected public figures, exploring the qualities that make them worthy of respect.

6. "...the dreamtime of my own imaginings." (TEXT 2)

Write a personal essay on the topic of daydreams.

7. **Write a short story in which a photograph, or a set of photographs, plays a part in the plot. Your story may be prompted by one or more of the photographs in TEXT 3.**

2008

SECTION II
COMPOSING (100 marks)

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

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. "...advised adults to treat adolescents with sympathy, appreciation and respect..." (TEXT 1)

Write a magazine article (serious and/or light-hearted) in which you give advice to adults on how to help teenagers cope with the "storm and stress" of adolescence.

2. "...the new global society." (TEXT 1)

Write a speech in which you argue for or against the necessity to protect national culture and identity.

3. "...17-year-old male protagonist with a darting gaze..." (TEXT 1)

Write a short story in which the central character is a rebellious teenager (male or female).

4. "I have a beautiful view..." (TEXT 3)

Write a personal essay in which you describe a place that you consider beautiful.

5. "...fake, or worse..." (TEXT 2)

Write the text of a talk you would deliver to your classmates on the topic: *Appearances can be Deceptive.*

6. "I was happy..." (TEXT 2)

Write an article for a school magazine in which you explore aspects of life that make you happy.

7. "...my camp, my small launch, my treehouse." (TEXT 3)

Write a short story in which setting/location is a significant feature.
(Your story may be prompted by one or more of the locations depicted in Text 3 or by any other setting of your choice.)

2007

SECTION II
COMPOSING (100 marks)

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

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. “... the idealism and tangled passions that raged in my teenage heart.” (TEXT 1)
Write a personal essay on the idealism and passions of youth.
2. “And yet what romance existed in the old cloth-capped world ...” (TEXT 2)
Write a speech in which you attempt to persuade an audience that the past should not be glorified.
3. “I tune in to conversations around me.” (TEXT 2)
Write a short story suggested by the above sentence.
4. “...the needs and desires of customers...” (TEXT 2)
Write a magazine article (serious or light-hearted) entitled: “The Modern Shopping Centre”.
5. “...make us want to change the world.” (TEXT 1)
Write the text of a talk, serious or humorous, to be given to your peers, entitled: “How I intend to change the world!”
6. “...the first and most important stage in encouraging viewers to imagine...” (TEXT 1)
Write an article for a popular magazine on the importance of the imagination.
7. **Write a short story prompted by one or more of the images in TEXT 3.**

2006

SECTION II
COMPOSING (100 marks)

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

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. “Let’s stop all this pretence! Let’s tell each other the unvarnished truth for a change!”
(TEXT 3)

Write a personal essay in response to the above statement.

2. “Maintaining this sprinter’s pace at marathon length was painful...” (TEXT 2)

Write an article for a magazine for young adult readers in which you give them advice about how to cope with the pressures of modern living.

3. “It was mad...Ridiculous.” (TEXT 1)

Write a short story suggested by the above title.

4. “...Someday I hope to come up with a get-rich idea...” (TEXT 2)

Write a magazine article (serious or light-hearted) in which you outline a get-rich idea of your own.

5. “What seems to be the problem...?” (TEXT 1)

Write the speech you would deliver to a group of world leaders in which you persuade them to deal with one or more of the world’s problems.

6. “Imagine it’s St. Valentine’s Day...” (TEXT 3)

Write an article for a popular magazine on the importance of romance in our lives.

7. **Write a short story prompted by one or more of the images in TEXT 3.**

2005

**SECTION II
COMPOSING (100 marks)**

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

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. "... my take on recent history ..." (TEXT 2)

Write a personal essay in which you discuss your views on a recent event or series of events in the world.

2. "... celebrity culture has gone too far ..." (TEXT 3)

Write a speech in which you attempt to persuade an audience that today's obsession with the lives of the rich and famous has gone too far.

3. "...ordinary people surviving as best they can." (TEXT 2)

You are responding to a radio competition to find an ordinary person whose life story will inspire others. Entries should include an account of the person's life and the reason(s) why it is inspirational. Write your competition entry.

4. "... the hope that things will be better for the next generation." (TEXT 2)

Write an article for a newspaper or magazine, outlining your vision of a better future.

5. "She was expected to carry on as she was he was always expected to take over the family business." (TEXT 1)

Write a personal essay on the part which other people's expectations play in our lives.

6. "She engaged in none of the banter that other customers seemed to like." (TEXT 1)

You have been asked to give a talk to your class on the importance of not taking life too seriously. Write the talk you would give.

- 7 (a). **Write a short story suggested by one or more of the images in TEXT 2.**

OR

- (b) **Write a short story suggested by the pair of images (the two houses) in TEXT 3.**