



**Circle of Friends**

**English Past Exam Questions**

**Ordinary Level**

2013

Paper 2 – Section 1 – Question A

**A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS** – Maeve Binchy

Answer **all** of the questions.

1. (a) Describe the occasion when Clodagh helps Benny to organise an outfit for Benny's first dress dance. (10)
- (b) In your opinion, why is Benny's first dress dance so important for her? Support your answer with reference to the novel. (10)
2. Give one reason why you did or did not enjoy studying Maeve Binchy's novel, *Circle of Friends*. Support your answer with reference to the novel. (10)
3. Answer **ONE** of the following: [Each part carries 30 marks]
  - (i) 'Readers often find the male characters in *Circle of Friends* unappealing.'  
Do you agree with this statement? Support your answer with reference to at least one male character from the novel *Circle of Friends*.

**OR**

- (ii) If you could become one of the characters in the novel *Circle of Friends*, which character would you chose to be? Explain your answer with reference to the novel.

**OR**

- (iii) Some readers find Maeve Binchy's novel, *Circle of Friends*, more interesting because it is set in two very different places, Knockgleng and Dublin. Would you agree? Support your answer with reference to the text.

Paper 2 – Section 1 – Question C

**C CIRCLE OF FRIENDS – Maeve Binchy**

Answer **all** of the questions.

1. (a) Describe Benny's relationship with her parents. (10)
- (b) What makes Sean Walsh such an unappealing character?  
Support your answer with reference to the text. (10)
2. Explain what you find most interesting about Eve Malone. (10)
3. Answer **ONE** of the following: [Each part carries 30 marks]
  - (i) The young Benny enjoys a quiet country upbringing with her parents in Knockglen. As she grows up she learns many things about the real world. Based on your knowledge of the text, write about some of the realities of life that Benny has to face during the course of the novel.

**OR**

- (ii) Which one of following statements do you think best describes Maeve Binchy's novel, *Circle of Friends*?
  - It is a story about growing up.
  - It is a story about social class.
  - It is a story about romance.

Explain your answer with reference to the text.

**OR**

- (iii) You have been asked to give a talk to your class on the following topic: 'The Ireland we read about in Maeve Binchy's *Circle of Friends* is not at all like the Ireland of today.' Write the text of the talk you would give. You are free to agree or disagree with the statement. Your answer should be based on your knowledge of the novel.

2011

Paper 2 – Section 1 – Question A

**A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS** - Maeve Binchy

Answer **all** of the questions.

1. (a) What circumstances caused Eve Malone to go to live in the convent with Mother Francis? (10)
- (b) Do you think Eve Malone is a good friend to Benny? Give one reason for your answer. (10)
2. What is your opinion of Sean Walsh? Explain your answer. (10)
3. Answer **ONE** of the following: [Each part carries 30 marks]
  - (i) 'Benny is a very sensible girl.'  
Write a piece, based on this statement. You might refer to her decisions, her actions and her relationships with others, etc. in the course of the novel.

**OR**

- (ii) Write an article about Maeve Binchy's *Circle of Friends* for your school magazine in which you consider whether the novel is relevant to young people today.

**OR**

- (iii) The novel is set in two places, Knockglen and Dublin. Which of the two places made the greater impression on you?  
Give reasons for your choice based on your knowledge of the novel.

2009

Paper 2 – Section 1 – Question C

**C CIRCLE OF FRIENDS** – Maeve Binchy

Answer **all** of the questions.

1. (a) Describe what happens when Eve visits Simon Westward to ask for money to help pay for her college fees. (10)
- (b) Select one scene or moment in the novel that made you feel particularly sympathetic towards Benny. Briefly describe the scene, and explain your response to it. (10)
- (c) “Jack Foley is a very selfish character.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. (10)

2. Answer **ONE** of the following: [Each part carries 30 marks]

- (i) Choose **one** of the following issues that *Circle of Friends* made you think about:
  - *Friendship*
  - *Women’s rights*
  - *Disappointment*Explain how this issue affected **one** character in the story.

**OR**

- (ii) If you were asked to play the part of one of the characters from *Circle of Friends* in a new film adaptation of the novel, which character would you choose? Explain your choice by reference to the novel.

**OR**

- (iii) Based on your reading of *Circle of Friends*, do you think that Maeve Binchy is a good story-teller? Give reasons for your opinion.