

Junior Cycle English Higher Level



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How to Approach this Exam

- Familiarise yourself with the **sections** to be examined.
- Start by reading all **instructions** carefully.
- Use the **writing space** provided.
- Stick very closely to the suggested **timings**.
- **Stay on-task**: Address the question throughout your answer.
- Use **evidence** to support your answer.
- **Explain** your point of view.

Become Familiar with the Success Criteria

Reading

- Demonstrate an **understanding** of what you have read.
- Show an appreciation of **texts which you have studied**.
- Show an understanding of **key moments** within these texts.
- Display an appreciation of **language**.
- Prove that you have an appreciation of **various registers**.
- Identify and assess the **reader's experience**.

Writing

- Demonstrate your ability to write for a **variety of purposes**.
- Show your ability to **write effectively in a range of forms**.
- Respond **imaginatively**.
- Apply your knowledge of **language structures** – grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, sentence structure.

Marks will be awarded when you show a clear effort to engage with each of the learning outcomes above.

Your writing should show clear engagement with the task.

You will be awarded one of the following **descriptors**:

- Exceptional
- Above expectations
- In line with expectations
- Yet to meet expectations



Junior Cycle English

Higher Level

Final Examination Sample A

Sample A

Justice, Fairness, Equality

There are **three sections** in this examination.

Section A Reading Texts to Understand – Shakespearean Drama

96 marks

- **Question 1:** Identify who is speaking or being described and write their name in the space provided. See sample answer for solution.
- **Question 2:** Read the scene and answer a series of questions based on what you have read. Ensure all points you make are directly related to the question asked. Part (c) asks you to write the speech you would give if you were Hermione. Remember that you are pleading for your life, so it has to be dramatic.
- **Question 3:** This question requires imagination and creativity. Try to picture the performance taking place on stage. Give clear instructions. Read the sample answer and decide if it helps you to imagine this scene in action. Learn the elements of stagecraft identified in the various headings.

Section B Responding to Studied Texts

54 marks

- **Question 4:** This is a straightforward question. Place the correct term next to its description. See solutions for the answers.
- **Question 5:** You are expected to write about your studied play, which you must name clearly. Ensure that you are showing an awareness of the issues of justice, fairness and equality as identified in the question.

Section C Appreciating Register

30 marks

- **Question 6:** Read the article provided and answer the questions which follow. You should quote from the article in your answer. Remember to support any opinion expressed with some discussion.
- **Question 7:** You are free to choose any issue of injustice and write an article about this issue. Remember that the facts, figures and statistics do not need to be entirely accurate in an exam setting. Notice how the sample answer adopts a similar style and approach to the article provided in Question 6.

Section A Reading Texts to Understand – Shakespearean Drama

Question 1

6 marks

Who am I?

Queen Hermione

Who am I?

King Leontes

Who is this message from?

Apollo's Oracle

Question 2

50 marks

- (a) **Based on your reading of this extract, are you convinced of Hermione's innocence? Give reasons for your answer with reference to the above scene.**

Yes, I believe that Hermione is innocent. She reminds everyone that she is an honourable woman, saying that she is the daughter of a 'great king' and 'mother to a hopeful prince'. Hermione has to plead for her own life in court, which must be so embarrassing. She tells Leontes that her 'life stands in the level of [his] dreams'. I think here she is telling him that he is imagining the whole affair. Hermione knows that she faces death because of her husband's jealous fantasies. She says this in a very respectful way.

The second reason that I believe Hermione to be innocent is down to the results of the Oracle. We are told in a stage direction that the Oracle's message is sealed and opened for the first time in front of Leontes. It proclaims that 'Hermione is chaste'. Everyone else seems to believe the word of the Oracle apart from Leontes. It is starting to look like he is the one in the wrong and so I feel extremely sorry for Hermione.

- (b) **Do you think that women and men are equal in this world based on what you have read? What evidence is there to support your view?**

This does not seem like a world in which women and men are equal. Most of the characters in this scene are men: Leontes, his First Lord and the Officer. They seem to have the power.

Leontes does not appear to listen to Hermione; it is as if his word is final. She is standing in court, humiliated and no one is showing her any respect. Even though Hermione is not being shown respect, she calls Leontes 'Sir'. This shows that he is more powerful than her. I thought people were innocent until proven guilty but it does not look like a fair or equal place to me.

We are told in the introduction to this play that Leontes took Hermione's son away from her. She was thrown in prison and gave birth there. I do not think women should be treated in this way. If men and women were more equal, the things Hermione says to defend herself would be taken into consideration. I can imagine that she has to submit to her husband and that she has less say simply because of her gender.

- (c) **If you were Hermione, knowing that you were innocent of all accusations made against you, what would you say to defend yourself? Write your speech in the space below.**

You HAVE to believe me! I have already been punished for something that I have not done. I swear, on the lives of my children, that I did not betray my husband, the king.

I am a woman of honour. I have been faithful to Leontes since the day we met, all those years ago. He is the only man I have ever loved. And here I am, shamed and humiliated, having to beg for my own life.

If only you could see that I am loyal and true to you, Sir. I will do anything to prove it. In front of everyone here today, I swear – I did not have an affair. I did not betray you in any way.

What evidence do you have to prove that I am guilty? There cannot be a single shred of evidence against me because I have simply spoken in a friendly, civil manner to Polixenes. I have never once kissed this man or held his hand. I wouldn't do that to you! I wouldn't destroy our marriage, our children's lives or my honour.

I will get down on my knees and beg for you to show me mercy. (*Kneels before the king*)
You have taken my children away from me when I have done nothing wrong. This is insane!
You are being controlled by wild, jealous and unreasonable thoughts. One day you will realise the truth and you will be sorry.

Believe me, for I am innocent! I am innocent! (*Weeps*)

(d) Do you think Leontes is a fair person?

Tick the statement you agree with:

Leontes is a fair person

Leontes is not a fair person

Leontes is both fair and unfair

Give two reasons for your answer.

First reason

I think Leontes seems like a completely unreasonable person. His wife is in the dock, begging him to show her mercy and he does not even consider that she might be innocent. He is being so unfair to her. When she speaks he snaps at her, telling her to expect 'no less than death'. I would understand Leontes being upset if he had caught his wife in the act but he didn't! It seems totally unfair that Hermione should be in court in the first place. Even if she is guilty, she shouldn't have to face this kind of unfair treatment. It is cruel and unjust of Leontes to take both of his children away from their mother. This is the worst kind of punishment.

Second reason

The word of the Oracle is that Hermione is chaste. This means that she has not done anything wrong. Leontes, in an unfair manner, dismisses the Oracle. He says that 'there is no truth at all i' the oracle' and continues to seek revenge. He has made up his mind that Hermione is guilty and nothing will convince him otherwise. This shows that he rules by bias.

(e) Leontes ignores the word of Apollo's Oracle and continues with the court case, insisting that Hermione should be punished by death.

Find the lines and write them in the space below.

There is no truth at all i' the oracle: The sessions shall proceed: this is mere falsehood.
--

Why do you think Leontes does this?

I think that Leontes does not want to back down now because things have gone too far. It would be embarrassing for him as king to admit that he is in the wrong after everything he has done. I also think that if Leontes accepts the word of the Oracle, believing that 'Hermione is chaste' and 'Polixenes blameless' then he will also have to accept that he is a 'jealous tyrant'. No one would want a jealous tyrant as a king. I think Leontes' pride is hurt here.

- (f) **Do you think it is fair that Leontes should be in charge of this court? Justify your answer with detailed reasoning.**

It is completely unfair that Leontes is in charge of this court. He has the final say and that should not be allowed. Imagine if there was a court case these days because one person is accused of stabbing another person. The person who was stabbed could not possibly be in charge of that court case because they are too involved and will not allow the person accused to have a fair trial. It would be unheard of these days. Leontes is out for revenge and he is determined to get it. He does not seem interested in listening to Hermione or anyone else. So it is my opinion that he should not be the one who decides whether Hermione is guilty or how she should be punished.

Question 3

40 marks

You have won a competition to direct the courtroom scene at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

You are free to make any choices you wish regarding set design, character direction and all other elements of stagecraft.

Using the headings on the following pages, write your ideas for the production of this scene. You must quote from and refer to the scene in your answers.

- (a) **Positioning and movement**

Hermione

I would position Hermione on the right side of the stage, in front of the large pillar seen in the picture. She should fall to her knees when she shouts 'Apollo be my judge!'

I think that Hermione should be facing the audience so they can see the look of desperation, fear and humiliation on her face. Hermione's hands should be chained so that she can hardly move them.

Leontes

Leontes is not the one on trial, rather he is the one in charge of this court. Because of this I would ask the actor playing Leontes to move around the stage to show that he has power and freedom, while Hermione stands in chains.

- (b) **Tone of voice and expression**

Hermione

Hermione should be crying for a lot of her speech to show how upset she is. When she says 'My second joy/And first-fruits of my body, from his presence/I am barr'd, like one infectious' she should weep uncontrollably. The fact that she is not able to see her son is killing her.

I would encourage the actor playing the part of Hermione to vary the tone of her voice. She should shout to proclaim her innocence but whisper the lines 'no life,/I prize it not a straw' to show that she has nothing left to live for, she has given up.

Hermione's facial expression should show extreme grief and sadness. She is probably exhausted after giving birth, distressed and upset at the situation she finds herself in and so this should be reflected in her face.

- (c) **Costume and make-up**

I would dress Hermione in a nightgown to show that she has come from prison, the place where she has delivered her baby girl. The nightgown should be stained with blood and mud to show the conditions that she has been kept in.

Hermione's hands and ankles should be chained. These chains would make noise as Hermione pleads with her husband which will remind the audience that she is being treated like a criminal. I would make Hermione's face look extremely pale. She should have dirt on her face, hands and feet.

(d) Lighting

The lighting should reflect the mood of this scene; it should be quite dark. I think I would light the stage using candles. Low lighting would show Leontes in the sinister light that he deserves. Hermione should probably be lit from above to show her innocence.

(e) Sound effects

The sounds of the chains would be startling for the audience and would remind them that Hermione is being treated like a common criminal. I would add some soft music when Hermione speaks, to highlight the really sad nature of her lines. When Leontes dismisses the Oracle, I think everyone should gasp and the sound of a cymbal should be heard.

(f) Set design

I would keep the set really simple for this scene. I would build a box for Hermione to stand in but allow Leontes to sweep across the stage in an arrogant manner. The set design would be free from props because they would only take away from the main focus of this scene – Hermione's chance to defend herself and the verdict. The official should carry a scroll from the Oracle, which will be opened on stage.

(g) The element of my production that the audience will enjoy most is ...

I think Hermione's appearance will be shocking for the audience, it will be something they will remember and hopefully something they would find really effective.

(h) The audience will enjoy this because ...

Without a doubt, Hermione's appearance would really startle the audience. I don't think the audience would be able to take their eyes off Hermione. They would be shocked at the condition of Hermione's nightdress, covered with blood. I don't think the audience would expect a queen to appear in front of them in such a terrible state. If I were to see Hermione in this condition, I would feel great pity and sympathy towards her. I think I would leave the theatre feeling really emotional. I would find this image hard to forget.

Section B Responding to Studied Texts

Question 4

4 marks

Based on your knowledge and study of Shakespearean drama, match the term to its definition.

Description	Term
Stage direction used when a character leaves the stage	D: Exeunt
A character reveals their inner thoughts and feelings while alone on stage	B: Soliloquy
A character speaks to the audience	A: Aside
The audience understands events while many other characters do not	C: Dramatic irony

Question 5

50 marks

'Many of the plays we study show us worlds that lack justice, fairness and equality'

Consider whether the world of your studied play is just, fair and equal.

Write the title and name of the author of your studied play.

Title: *The Merchant of Venice*

Author: William Shakespeare

- (a) Describe the world of your studied play, discussing the issues of justice, fairness and equality in detail.**

During the 1600s, Venice was a major trading centre. It was a place where many people did business, since Venice controlled many of the most important trade routes by sea. The main players did business deals on the Rialto. This was an aspect of Venetian life which was really exciting and progressive.

Venice wasn't quite so liberal when it came to the way people treated others. If you were a Jewish person living or trading in Venice, you could be subjected to the same treatment as the Jewish moneylender of the play, Shylock. Shylock is treated in a cruel and unfair manner by many Christians, but in particular by Antonio – the merchant of Venice. Shylock remembers times when Antonio spat on his 'Jewish gaberdine' and called him a 'cut-throat dog'. This kind of treatment is appalling. Yet it was accepted in Venice. Nobody defends Shylock, even when Antonio 'did void [his] rheum upon [Shylock's] beard' and kicked him like a dog. Antonio's behaviour is motivated solely by prejudice against Shylock because of his profession and religion. As a Christian, Antonio hates Shylock for being Jewish. This is not a society where everyone is equal.

Shylock is not always fair in his treatment of those who borrow money from him. He charges a lot of interest on his loans; this is known as usury. Many people dislike Shylock for this reason. His own daughter despises him because she feels like a prisoner in her own home. She admits to Launcelot that 'our house is hell'. Shylock certainly appears to control her, giving a lot of orders before leaving her alone in the house.

I think that Venice is a male-dominated world. Men seem to have all of the control, making life particular unfair for many. This is in stark contrast to the world of Belmont, where Portia is mistress and does not have to answer to a man. She has staff who wait on her and carry out her wishes. However, Portia's father manages to control her from the beyond the grave. She cannot choose for herself who she would like to marry, since her father arranged a lottery to determine who her husband will be. Portia feels powerless and, realising how unfair the situation is, tells Nerissa that 'the will of a living daughter' is 'curbed by the will of a dead father'.

The world of this play lacks justice. Shylock enters into a legal contract with Antonio when the latter turns to him for a loan. Shylock makes it clear that if Antonio does not repay the loan, he will be legally entitled to his bond – his 'pound of flesh'. What Shylock does here is totally immoral and unfair to Antonio. When Antonio fails to repay the loan, Shylock takes the matter to court. The Duke gives Shylock several opportunities to show mercy and brands him an 'inhuman wretch' who is 'Uncapable of pity, void and empty/From any dram of mercy.' I think that the world Shylock inhabits lacks all sense of justice. For him, life has been cruel, unkind and unfair. However, this is his opportunity to get revenge, to achieve his own sort of justice. I think that if Shylock had been treated fairly by others he may not have been so intent on getting what he sees as justice for all the things that have happened to him in the past.

Portia, disguised as a judge, insists that Shylock is unable to seek his 'pound of flesh' from Antonio because their 'bond doth give thee here no jot of blood'. Shylock is disgusted. He does not get the justice he seeks. Instead, he is the one punished. He must give up all of his possessions and wealth. The world of Venice is an unfair place, because under Venetian law Portia forces Shylock to leave behind his Jewish faith and become a Christian. This means that Shylock has been stripped of his identity. I don't think the world of Venice at this time was a just, fair or equal place.

(b) If your studied play were set in another time or place, would things be different? Would people be protected from ill-treatment and injustice?

Without a shadow of a doubt, if *The Merchant of Venice* were set in Ireland in the twenty-first century, for example, the outcome would have been entirely different. To start with, the kind of treatment Shylock encounters would not be tolerated in our society. We have laws to protect people from sectarian or racial hatred. This is exactly as things should be, because nobody should have to endure cruel treatment. We all contribute to society and deserve fair and equal treatment. The law would protect Shylock from being spat at or kicked in the street.

Our laws would also prevent Shylock and Antonio from entering into a contract where they both agree to a forfeit such as Antonio's. People would be outraged to learn that the bank or credit union felt legally entitled to a 'pound of flesh' if their customer did not repay a loan. There is no way an issue like this would go to court.

Judges are not allowed to force a person to convert from Judaism to Christianity; every person has the right to practise their faith. Shylock's faith means so much to him. It is a huge part of his identity. He suffers for his faith. To take this away from him is extremely cruel and this would never happen nowadays. If the play were set in modern Ireland, Shylock could rest assured that, whatever else he might lose, he would not have to give up his religious identity.

Although people still make wills so that their next of kin can be made aware of their wishes, I do not think someone would set up a really complicated game to control who their daughter marries. This seems a highly unlikely scenario. Even if a father created a lottery system such as the process of choosing the correct casket in order to win Portia's hand in marriage, the daughter could refuse to go along with it. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia is very loyal to her father. She obeys his wishes and goes along with the lottery, despite disliking most of the suitors who arrive at Belmont in the hopes of marrying her. I don't think it is fair to put someone you love in such a position. Surely, if you want the best for your daughter, you should allow her to choose her own husband. It should be someone who makes her feel happy and loved, rather than someone who happens to choose the correct casket. I think most people in twenty-first-century Ireland would accept that their daughter will make her own decision.

It is very likely that Jessica would still act as she does in the play if she were living in a more liberal, modern society like ours. She lives with a father who seems to care more about his jewels, ducats and possessions than he does about his own daughter. Jessica is unhappy living with him and a lot of teenage girls might feel the same way about living at home with their parents. Most young people want to make their own decisions and crave freedom when they are not allowed to leave the house. If Jessica were a young girl in this day and age, she might have a boyfriend that her parents do not approve of. This could mean that she makes a decision to run away. I think that Jessica could behave in exactly the same way. It would break most parents' hearts, just like it devastated Shylock to learn that his little girl had run away, stolen from him and betrayed him.

Finally, Portia and Nerissa disguise themselves as young men in order to pass as legal professionals. They could not arrive at court dressed as women because women were not permitted to preside over court cases. Women worked and existed mostly within the domestic setting. They were not important or powerful. Over the centuries that have passed since

Shakespeare's time, we have seen great changes in the role of women in society. Now, women and men receive the same education and opportunities. There are many female solicitors, barristers and judges. Women make important decisions every day. Portia and Nerissa would not have to disguise themselves as men in order to be taken seriously. They would be shocked to learn that women often make more money than men in many households. I am proud of this difference and think Portia, in particular, would enjoy the many opportunities which would be available to her if the play's setting were different.

Overall, there would be significant differences to *The Merchant of Venice* if it were set in a modern time and place. Many of the injustices and inequalities simply would not exist. While the world of Shakespeare is often romanticised, I think the progress we have made since that time is something to be extremely proud of. I am glad that I do not live in a world dominated by racial prejudice.

(c) Imagine you have been given the power to make changes to the world of your play. What would you do?

I would start by making women equal to men. I think it is really important that the inequality that exists between men and women is done away with. While Jessica and Portia are brave and daring women, they are forced to hide their strengths.

Portia lies to Lorenzo, telling him that she needs time for quiet 'prayer and contemplation' while her husband is away. She then disguises herself in order to help Antonio, but also pulls the wool over Bassanio's eyes. Jessica must sneak away in the darkness, while her father is out. She is a strong woman who must have had to suppress this strength, keeping it hidden from her father for so long. In my mind, making both sexes equal would mean that women would finally be able to show their qualities and strengths. It would make the world a much fairer place.

I would make changes to Venetian law; first by insisting that the law should state that no person is permitted to behave in a way that could be deemed racist. Racist hatred would not be tolerated if I had the chance to change Venetian society for the better. This would be a really positive change that might bring about a shift in attitude towards Jews. It would mean that Jewish people living in Venice would feel safe. Anyone caught physically or verbally attacking another person because of their religious beliefs would be fined 3,000 ducats.

I would ban moneylending. I think it gets people into a lot of trouble and causes tension in the city. Shylock and other Jewish moneylenders would no longer take advantage of others if there were an all-out ban on the practice of usury.

Finally, I would insist that marriage may take place between two people who know each other for more than two months. In order to verify that both people know each other this length of time, they must register their intention to marry two months in advance. This would ensure that couples do not get married after a few days of knowing each other and may mean that both people are happy in the relationship.

There are many wonderful things about the setting of *The Merchant of Venice*, especially in the world of Belmont. I think with some changes it would be a lovely place to live.

(d) What lesson did you learn about justice, fairness and equality from your study of this play? Explain with detailed reference to the text.

I learned many lessons as I studied this play. It felt strange to take sides with someone who was able to 'whet [his] knife so earnestly' in preparation for killing Antonio, but I did see why Shylock was so eager to get justice. I was appalled at the way he had been treated, not just by the Christians but by his own daughter. I felt really sorry for Shylock when he realised that Jessica had stolen his 'turquoise', which his late wife, Leah, had given him 'when [he] was a bachelor'. He must feel so betrayed, especially when he learns that she ran away

with Lorenzo, who is a Christian and a friend of Antonio's. Shylock, having been tormented by Christians, has a deep hatred for them. Now he has reason to hate them even more, since he blames one of them for taking his daughter away.

Shylock's situation taught me that no matter how someone might have treated you, it is not right to seek revenge. Shylock thinks he is justified in behaving as he does, but his lack of mercy makes him just as cruel as those who hurt him in the first instance. While I think the punishment which Shylock receives is extremely harsh, I have to remind myself of what Shylock was prepared to do to Antonio. He would have killed him. This is taking 'justice' to the extreme. It is an important reminder that somebody who is treated like a devil might just start to behave like one.

I think that the punishment should fit the crime. Antonio did not deserve to lose his life for the sake of an unpaid loan. This is not justice. While I agree that Shylock should have been stripped of his belongings and wealth, I do not think it was fair to force him to become a Christian. I don't think that Venetian law would ever have forced Antonio to become a Jew. In this sense, the law has been applied in a way that is unfair and unequal.

The punishment doled out to Shylock shows Portia's biased attitude. She lectured Shylock, telling him that he was given the opportunity to show mercy but refused to do so. She says that as a result, he will have 'all justice'. But Portia is talking about justice as Christians would see it. She does not show any compassion towards Shylock, even though she is punishing him for failing to show mercy and compassion himself. To me, this is totally unfair. As a result of reading this, I have tried to be more aware and make a bigger effort to treat others in a fair way. I listen more to others and try to consider things from their point of view.

I learned that, regardless of someone's religion, race, nationality or gender, every single person deserves to be treated fairly, as equals. I know that life isn't always fair but I have learned to be grateful for living in a time and place where fairness and equality are valued.

When I saw Portia and Nerissa deliberating setting their husbands up, testing their love and loyalty to their wives by demanding their rings, I felt a bit uncomfortable. To me, it felt wrong. Portia and Nerissa almost took advantage of both men. I do not think this was fair or honest. I did not expect to feel strongly about a minor plot point such as this, but it made me realise that it is not right to take advantage of others.

Overall, *The Merchant of Venice* provides audiences with many opportunities to understand more about the very serious issues of justice, fairness and equality.

Section C Appreciating Register

Question 6

15 marks

- (a) **J. K. Rowling tweeted that the Irish were making history. How did Ireland make history in May 2015?**

Ireland made history in May 2015 by becoming the first country in the world to introduce same-sex marriage 'by popular vote'. This means that '62% of the Irish Republic's electorate voted in favour of gay marriage'.

- (b) **We are told that 'The huge Yes vote marks another milestone in Ireland's journey towards a more liberal society.' Explain what is meant by this statement.**

I think this statement means that Ireland is becoming a more liberal and accepting place. The 'yes' vote is proof of this. Ireland is a place where everyone is accepted.

- (c) **Do you agree that ‘we are a generous, compassionate, bold and joyful people’? Explain your view in detail.**

Yes, I think that people in Ireland are often generous and kind to others. There will always be people who are less than joyful or generous, but overall our society is made up of people who will help you out where possible. I know that I am treated with compassion and generosity when I go to school. Irish people are brave and have proved that they are capable of doing the right thing by saying ‘yes to inclusion’ and ‘yes to love’.

- (d) **The Yes campaign made use of social media to encourage people to vote. Outline and explain three benefits of conducting a campaign through social media.**

First benefit

By using social media, you reach out to the younger generations who might not be interested in opening the front door to speak to people campaigning. The younger generation may feel more directly connected to a campaign if it reaches them through social media like Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

Second benefit

The Yes campaign used social media to connect with those living abroad. Social media campaigns reach a wider audience, such as the Irish voters who might be working in other countries. The #hometovote hashtag and movement made this referendum really relevant as the ‘yes’ side encouraged ‘young Irish living abroad to get back to Ireland in time to vote’.

Third benefit

Social media reaches more people than any other outlet. People can ‘retweet’ and share various posts and links. People are more involved, as they are free to comment on various posts, express their views and get to grips with the views of others. The cost of running a campaign that reaches so many people so quickly is extremely low. Therefore it is really effective for campaigners to use social media to gain support.

- (e) **In your opinion, is this a well-written newspaper article? Give reasons for your answer.**

I think this is a really well-written and engaging newspaper article. I was interested in the quotes from various speakers such as Enda Kenny, Joan Burton and especially from my favourite author, J. K. Rowling. Rowling said that what Ireland did was ‘extraordinary and wonderful’ and I would have to agree.

The article is clear and concise. It is written in a very positive way with no reference to comments from the opposition. The journalist is reporting on a feel-good story and the tone of the article reflects that. Reading this article made me feel emotional and proud to be Irish.

Question 7

15 marks

Think of an issue of injustice, inequality or unfairness. This issue may be real or imaginary. Write an article intended for publication in a national newspaper in which you address this issue.

More Than 2,000 Children Homeless in Ireland

The homeless crisis is worsening with over 1,000 homeless families across the country. This means that there are over 2,000 children who do not have a safe place to live.

These figures are rising all the time, as the latest figures suggest that more than 6,000 people were homeless in 2016.

According to homeless charity Focus Ireland, 'Some people who don't have a home end up staying in emergency accommodation like hostels or bed and breakfasts. Others sleep rough on the streets.' A Focus Ireland spokesperson said that 'on average, 65 families became homeless each month from November 2014 to November 2015'. This year has seen an increase in this figure.

Minister for Housing, Simon Coveney has promised to deliver on the Government's plan to build 35,000 homes over the next four years. He has described the homeless crisis as a 'national emergency'.

Speaking outside the Dáil today, Minister Coveney said 'We can and we will find more suitable accommodation for families that are homeless.'

It comes just weeks after a wheelchair user was found sleeping rough on Banna beach in Kerry. It is reported that the man spent several days sleeping in the doorway of a boathouse on the beach. People are outraged to think that some of the most vulnerable people in our society have been forced to live in such a manner.

Many of the homeless charities are calling for more social housing to accommodate those in need. Particular concern has been shown for the number of children now deemed homeless. Tom Smith @Smithy_t tweeted 'We are a progressive nation. How can we sit back as more & more kids become homeless?!' and he retweeted a post from The Simon Community (@SimonCommunity), which shared a story of a 2FM listener who 'donates €5,000 prize to the Simon Community'. Others tweeted calling for more acts of kindness like this one.

People have called on the Government to make this issue of injustice a number one priority and to put extra pressure on the Minister to follow through on promises made to solve this crisis.

Saoirse French, *The Irish Bugle*



Junior Cycle English

Higher Level

Final Examination Sample B

Sample B

Appreciating Ourselves and Others

There are **four** sections in this examination paper.

Section A Interpreting and Responding to Poetry

70 marks

- **Question 1:** You are asked a series of questions based on a poem that you have not studied. You are required to address the question, explain your views and make reference to/engage with the poem. Notice how the sample answer for part (d) expands on the initial recommended step. Relevant detail such as this will be rewarded.
- **Question 2:** Here you are asked to identify and write about a studied poem. Choose a poem which is suited to the question asked. You must quote from and make reference to your studied poem.
- **Question 3:** Notice that this is essentially a question with three parts. Look at how the sample answer addresses each part of the question, developing a detailed discussion of each part. Since this is a long question worth 30 marks, you should plan your answer.

Section B Responding to Studied Texts

60 marks

- **Question 4:** You should write about two different texts which are relevant to the question topic. Look at how the sample answer makes links between both texts.
- **Question 5:** In part (b) you should demonstrate a clear effort to write creatively. You should choose a key moment which involves your chosen character. Combine imagination with knowledge of your studied text/character.

Section C Reading to Understand

20 marks

- **Question 6:** Make a clear effort to engage with the extract before answering a series of questions based on the piece of writing. Explain and discuss your viewpoint in detail. Notice how the sample answers address the question without repetition.

Section D Responding Imaginatively

30 marks

- **Question 7:** Choose the question which really appeals to you. It is important that you plan your answer in detail before you begin to write. Demonstrate your ability to write for a particular purpose and in a specific form. Look at the sample answer provided. Award this answer a descriptor and justify your choice.

Section A Interpreting and Responding to Poetry

Question 1

20 marks

- (a) In your opinion, what is the message of this poem? In explaining the poet's message, please refer to and quote from the poem.

I think the most prevalent message in this poem is that we should not be defined by anything superficial. The poem is a reminder that we do not need to worry quite so much about what is on the outside. Things like 'the size of clothes [we] wear' and the 'colour of [our] hair' are not as important as the memories captured in 'the photos' in our bedrooms.

I think this poem is setting out to redefine beauty. Beauty isn't just for those who are physically perfect. Instead, the poem insists that we are all beautiful. We are, in fact 'made of so much beauty'. The message of the poem is that our beauty comes from our tears, our laughter, our 'croaky morning voice', the people we love and the place that we 'call home'. It is a really powerful message and one that we could do with hearing more often.

- (b) The speaker in the poem offers a lot of advice. Who might need this advice and why would they need such guidance?

I think that someone with low self-esteem might be in need of such guidance. This person could be a teenager. The poem makes reference to 'the photos in your bedroom' and most teenagers I know have photos on their bedroom walls. Another reason I think a teenager might be in need of this advice is that we are young and have all our lives ahead of us, we have a 'future' to 'dream of'. A lot of us suffer with low self-confidence because it can be hard to be ourselves and accept who we are. I think the poem gives good advice to people who might be going through a bit of a tough time and need to be reminded of the positives.

- (c) Choose an image from the poem which appeals to you most of all. Is the image a positive one? Explain why you find the image appealing.

There are several images in this poem that I think are really well chosen but perhaps the most appealing is the image shared in the third stanza. The speaker says you are 'the smiles you try to hide' which helps me to visualise someone being paid a compliment and responding shyly, trying to hide their secret delight at hearing something nice. This image enabled me to share in the joyous and pleasing feeling of the person concealing a smile but I also found myself thinking of the many other scenarios which may have caused the person to smile in such a timid way. It reinforces the idea that we are beautiful, even in our moments of sorrow or embarrassment. It is an image charged with feeling and emotion.

- (d) You have been asked to devise a list entitled 'Five Steps to Positive Body Image'. In writing your list you may adapt some of the advice offered in this poem.

Five Steps to Positive Body Image

Step 1

Be nice to yourself! Praise yourself everyday, just for being you. Remember that you are good enough.

Step 2

Surround yourself with those who love you. Try to avoid superficial, negative or false friends. Be around people who appreciate you for who you are. Make friends with people who will have your back!

Step 3

Think positively. Try to fill your mind with positive thoughts. Whenever you feel self-doubt or insecurities creep in, fight back by remembering one thing about yourself that you like.

Step 4

Stop comparing! Don't compare yourself to others. Remember that you don't need to measure yourself against image-obsessed celebrities. You don't have to look a certain way, you can be happy and beautiful as you are.

Step 5

Take a break from magazines and social media. Sometimes magazines and social media just make us feel bad about ourselves. There can be so much negativity and judgement – avoid, avoid, avoid!

Question 2**20 marks**

'Many poems enable us to understand other people's feelings and experiences.'

Think of the poems that you have studied and choose one that helped you to understand the situation of a particular person or group of people.

Title: 'Base Details'

Poet: Siegfried Sassoon

(a) What sort of person is described in the poem?

The poem I have chosen describes soldiers fighting in World War I and the 'scarlet majors' who are in charge of them. Sassoon vividly describes the major and it soon becomes clear that he disapproves of this man's lifestyle. The major is described in a negative light. He is 'fierce, and bald, and short of breath'. This allows us to imagine the major's physical appearance. The word 'fierce' really catches my attention. We immediately get a sense of the major as a brutal and aggressive high-ranking officer. He has a 'puffy petulant face' and does not need to be fit like the soldiers. It is really obvious from Sassoon's description that he does not think highly of the majors in general.

(b) What central message does the poet convey?

Sassoon conveys a very important message throughout this short but effective poem. He condemns war and, in particular, he disapproves of the attitude of high-ranking officers like the one described in this poem. Having fought in the war himself, Sassoon is keenly aware of the reality of life at the front. He knows what it means to risk and sacrifice your life for your country. But he knows that for some, the lives of the ordinary soldiers are not important. The major calls the latest battle a 'scrap' which shows how dismissive and uncaring he is. I think the poet is demanding more respect for the lives of the ordinary soldiers who are risking everything, while the majors enjoy the comfort of 'the best hotel'.

Question 3**30 marks**

How does the poet succeed in introducing the situation of this person/group of people?

How does the poet develop a sense of understanding, acceptance or empathy among readers?

You should consider how the various poetic devices used by the poet enhanced your understanding of the person or group of people.

The poet introduces the situation by imagining himself as a scarlet major. In order for him to do this, he acknowledges that he would have to be 'fierce, and bald, and short of breath'. The

situation is that the majors play a big part in the way the war is being organised – after all, they are in charge. It is the major who will ‘speed glum heroes up the line to death’. This is a startling admission at the beginning of the poem. It tells us that there is none of the glory of war for these young men. They are not proud or willing heroes. They do not feel like heroes at all. While the majors get to make decisions which risk the lives of so many, the soldiers are like pawns in a game.

The soldiers are on the ground, putting up with terrible discomfort, awful weather conditions and are at risk of being killed every second of every day. The majors do not get involved, nor do they seem to care. They are ‘guzzling and gulping in the best hotel’ and are safe in the knowledge that their own lives are not at risk.

It is a terrible situation but Sassoon introduces it perfectly. His tone is very steady and his message is very effective. He does not introduce the situation by announcing his disapproval of the majors. Instead he makes it known in a subtle way as he pictures what it would be like for him if he were one of the men in charge. He realises he would have to be selfish, dismissive and cruel. As he fantasises about being one of these men who he clearly hates, we are given more detail about the situation and the huge differences between the majors and the soldiers.

We begin to share Sassoon’s feelings as the poem progresses. I think one of the huge turning points of this poem is when the major is given a voice. He dismisses the enormous loss of life as he recognises one of the names of the fallen soldiers. The major brushes it off, giving the soldier little thought as he says ‘Poor young chap’ but does not seem to mean it. It is as if he does not realise that this young man is someone’s son – despite knowing ‘his father well’. You would imagine that this man would have some sympathy but that does not seem to be the case. He regards the battles as nothing but ‘scrap’. I do not think this would be his view if he were out there fighting alongside the young men whose names are on his ‘Roll of Honour’.

Our sympathies and thoughts are with the soldiers. We can see that they are everything the major is not. They are brave. I do not like or empathise with the major. He is not bothered about the reality of war. It does not matter to him that, by the time the war is over, the young men who have been fighting will be ‘stone dead’. All that matters is that he is well looked after, well fed and can ‘toddle safely home and die – in bed’.

Sassoon engages our sympathy and our interest in a variety of ways, thus enhancing our understanding of war and those involved. My favourite technique is the use of rhyme, particularly in the lines ‘poor young chap This last scrap’. The rhyme here highlights the major’s dismissive and uncaring attitude towards the soldiers. The sarcasm in these lines shows that the majors are never genuinely concerned about anyone but themselves. They do not think that the soldiers’ lives are of value. Sassoon creates a rhythmical quality in this poem with the use of alliteration to enhance our understanding of the majors. This is a really effective technique. Look at the phrases ‘guzzling and gulping’ and ‘puffy petulant face’. It is almost humorous! Sassoon is mocking the majors which shows his level of disgust at their behaviour.

Finally, the poet uses wonderful imagery throughout the poem. This succeeds in giving us a real sense of who this person is. The major is ‘fierce’ – this image helps me to imagine the major roaring at the soldiers to stay awake, to follow orders or to shoot. I can hear the sound of his voice as he reads the ‘Roll of Honour’ in a routine sort of way. The image of the major’s petulant face makes me believe that his face would have been red and puffed up from too much wine and food. The last image of the major toddling home is almost carefree. Sassoon makes the point that this man has nothing to worry about. His experience of war is very different to that of the soldiers’.

Overall, this poem was successful in teaching me about the reality of war and those involved in it. Sassoon introduced and developed the reality of war for those soldiers who risked their

lives and for those majors who gave orders from a position of safety and comfort. The clever use of poetic devices made this poem both memorable and effective. Without doubt, it is a powerful and important poem which dispels the romantic notion of war as something to be glorified.

Section B Responding to Studied Texts

Question 4

30 marks

'Stories show us the importance of acceptance and understanding'

Examine how the theme of acceptance or understanding is explored in **two** of your studied texts. A text is any novel, play or film that you have studied as part of your English course.

In the boxes provided below, give the titles and authors of your chosen texts. Marks are awarded for giving full titles and names with correct spelling.

First text
Title: <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
Author: William Shakespeare

Second text
Title: <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
Author: Harper Lee

- (a) **At what point in both of your chosen texts did you become aware of the theme of acceptance or understanding?**

I became aware of the theme of acceptance and understanding very early on in both texts. Perhaps this is because both texts show a distinct lack of acceptance towards certain people within their societies. We are introduced to characters who live in a world that shuns them. Both texts continue to explore this idea as we learn more about the situation of those who have been shut out.

In Act I, Scene III of *The Merchant of Venice* we hear Shylock's account of how he has been mistreated by the Christians simply because of his Jewish faith. It becomes clear that this is not a world of acceptance and understanding. Shylock is scorned by others and this hatred runs far deeper than some sort of rivalry, it is vicious and cruel. We hear that Antonio has mocked Shylock in the past. He has spat on Shylock's beard and 'Jewish gaberdine', kicked him, and called him 'cutthroat dog'. This is the moment when I realised that Jewish people are not accepted or understood in the Venice depicted in the play.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, as Scout introduces us to the world of Maycomb, we get a sense of who is who. She speaks of the Radley household, and Dill's fascination with it. It is his idea to 'make Boo Radley come out'. This simple statement fills us with curiosity. Why would Dill be so excited about encouraging someone to just come outside their house? Isn't this something we see people do every day? From this moment, I was eager to find out more. Scout tells us that after an incident with the Cunninghams, Boo was not seen again for fifteen years. Rumour has it that Boo stabbed his father with a pair of scissors. We learn that 'the sheriff hadn't the heart to put him in jail alongside Negroes' so after some time he was

returned home and kept 'out of sight'. Scout's statement leads us to suspect that her world is not one of acceptance and understanding, just like *The Merchant of Venice*. Just as nobody has much interest in attempting to understand Shylock, it seems that nobody understands Boo, either. We get a sense that Boo is different. He is shut off from the rest of society. He is not accepted or understood. The sheriff's distinction between Boo and the 'Negroes' in jail is very telling. We get our first hint that one's treatment in this society depends on the colour of one's skin.

We also learn that the Ewell family have not been accepted into society, as they have been considered 'the disgrace of Maycomb for three generations'. It is Atticus, however, who later shows some understanding of Mayella's actions during the court case involving the Ewell family and Tom Robinson, a black man who is accused of rape. Atticus believes that Mayella may be a victim herself. She is the one who gives false evidence against Tom Robinson. Rather than put her down, Atticus simply tries to understand her motives. He shows pity towards her.

Atticus' sense of empathy and understanding extends throughout the novel. There are several examples which show Atticus as an accepting person. He does not judge or discriminate against black people, unlike practically everyone else in Maycomb. He teaches his children to show the same level of acceptance by telling them 'you never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it'. It is advice that encourages acceptance and understanding in his children.

The sad reality that people are not always understood or accepted within Venetian society is developed throughout the play. We hear a very moving speech from Shylock who recalls the reasons for Antonio's hatred. He says Antonio has 'disgraced [him], laughed at [his] losses and scorned [his] nation – and what's his reason? I am a Jew.' For no other reason, Shylock feels totally belittled and misunderstood. He asks 'if you prick us, do we not bleed?' showing, perhaps too late for Antonio and his friends, that Jewish people hurt when treated in this way.

Just like Shylock, there are many in *To Kill a Mockingbird* who are unwanted, rejected and suffer in a similar way – Boo Radley, the Ewell family, and every member of the black community. These people are greatly affected and terribly degraded because of the ignorance of others.

Both texts introduce and develop the theme of acceptance and understanding in a really interesting way. Shakespeare and Lee show us groups of people who are neither understood nor accepted by the majority of people within these societies. In doing so they are making us aware of the dangers of such attitudes.

(b) Which text do you feel had the most powerful message of acceptance or understanding? Explain your answer with detailed reference to the text you have chosen.

It is without hesitation that I would suggest that Harper Lee's novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, presents an extremely powerful message about acceptance and understanding. Tom Robinson is a black man accused of raping a white girl. Nobody in Maycomb would consider the possibility that this man might be innocent. The story highlights the absolute devastation which can be caused when we fail or refuse to accept others for who they are. Everyone knows that the Ewell family cannot be trusted. If they had made an accusation of this kind against a white man, their word would not stand up in court. Instead, the community ignore their usual disgust at the Ewells and target Tom Robinson. It is Atticus who accepts that Tom is telling the truth, and he shows his deep sense of humanity as he stands up for him.

Atticus Finch is a shining example of how people should be. He is a wise, proud and principled man. He teaches his children right from wrong, always showing each of them fairness and respect. He is a bit of a maverick and proves this by representing Tom Robinson during his trial. He teaches his children that real courage is not 'a man with a gun in his hand'. He tells them courage is 'when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what'.

Atticus gives Jem this advice so that he will understand and respect Mrs Dubose. It is ironic though, because Atticus knew that Tom Robinson was doomed – not because there was any evidence against him and not because he was guilty. Tom Robinson was doomed because of the colour of his skin. Atticus understood this and he accepted Tom's case believing that he was doing the right thing by standing up for someone who was innocent. For me, the most powerful message of acceptance can be seen here in Atticus' actions, and in his decision to stand by Tom. Sadly, Tom Robinson was found guilty and later on, shot seventeen times.

A powerful message regarding acceptance and understanding is conveyed in the way Atticus shows kindness towards Boo Radley. He encourages his children to leave Boo alone, reminding them that 'what Mr Radley did was his business'. Later on, when Boo saves Jem's life, Atticus addresses him as though he had seen him just yesterday. He accepts Boo and his situation without question. He shows understanding despite the fact that Boo's situation is unusual and must be quite difficult to comprehend. Atticus looks Boo in the eye and says 'Thank you for my children, Arthur'. He accepts him as an equal.

For me, the message of acceptance is extremely powerful in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. As the novel progresses, we go on a journey with Scout, whose eyes are opened to the realities of the world in which she lives. I learn, along with Scout, the importance of accepting those around you, especially when their situation might be difficult to understand.

Question 5

30 marks

(a) Describe how the characters in both of your chosen texts were affected by this theme.

The characters in both *The Merchant of Venice* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* are greatly affected by the theme of acceptance and understanding. It is true that many characters fail to accept others because of their prejudiced views while other characters suffer because of this lack of acceptance or understanding. This is certainly the case in both of my chosen texts.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock refused to show any understanding of Antonio's situation when he lost his ships, his cargo and the ability to repay Bassanio's loan. He insisted on taking his 'pound of flesh' and even came so close as to sharpen his knife, ready to take Antonio's life. Shylock is affected by the central theme because of this lack of understanding, compassion and mercy. He is unable to forgive Antonio. Shylock's lack of compassion and understanding has made him hungry for revenge.

This is similar to the jury's decision in the case of Tom Robinson. The jury is made up of prejudiced individuals who refuse to accept that Tom is innocent. Despite there being an alternative solution, both court cases turn out for the worst. In Tom's case, he is found guilty of a crime he simply did not commit. In Shylock's case, he is denied his chance to seek out the ultimate revenge and instead, he is punished. Once again, a lack of acceptance and understanding amongst Christians and Jews meant that Shylock was treated in a harsh and cruel manner. He is forced to forfeit all of his wealth and possessions but worst of all, Shylock is forced to give up his religion and convert to Christianity. They might as well have taken Shylock's life for he has lost everything. He is without his daughter, his faith and his money. In a similar way, Tom Robinson's wife and children are left without their father once he is found guilty. The people of Maycomb do not show sympathy or understanding towards a family who have suffered enormously.

Antonio is relieved that he has survived Shylock's wrath. Shylock solemnly accepts the judgement as a result of the court case. It is Portia to whom Antonio owes his life and his thanks. She has acted as judge without anyone knowing. Indeed, she appeared a very harsh and some might say, merciless judge. She shows little interest in attempting to understand Shylock's position as a victim of terrible treatment from Antonio and his Christian friends. She refuses to accept that Shylock deserves to be shown some mercy, despite lacking mercy

himself. She behaves in a way that is quite un-Christian. This is exactly like the people on the jury in Tom Robinson's trial. We have already learned that the people of Maycomb are devout but where is the compassion that Tom Robinson, a fellow human being, deserves?

Bob Ewell dies after an attempted attack on Jem Finch. Some might say that he gets what he deserves. Others are hopeful for Mayella's future as she no longer has to answer to a nasty, low-life anymore. Shylock's own lack of understanding means that he will end his days all alone. His daughter has left him and he has nothing left.

The characters in both texts have been greatly affected by what has happened to them. Perhaps if people had shown a sense of acceptance, understanding and compassion in the beginning, the outcome might have been more favourable and people might have been able to move forward in a positive way. Instead, we are left with a feeling of sorrow and despair.

- (b) Choose one of the characters mentioned in part (a). Imagine this person is confiding in you, seeking your advice and support. What advice would you offer your chosen character in their moment of crisis?**

You are free to write in the form of an essay, dialogue, speech, personal account, etc.

Chosen character: Portia

PORTIA

I need to speak to you. I'm having a difficult time deciding what I should do at the trial.

ME

You are going to act as a judge, preside over the proceedings. Isn't that right?

PORTIA

Yes, but I don't mean that part. I mean, how do I treat the Jew? Should I show mercy?

ME

Portia, my dear friend, you are the most merciful and compassionate person I know. You have always considered others before acting or speaking, for fear of offending someone. I have no doubt that you should do the same in this case. Remember, this is a man who has already lost his wife and his daughter. He deserves some compassion, surely?

PORTIA

Do you really think so?

ME

There is nothing else for it. Think about it, wouldn't you want a judge to show your husband, Bassanio the same mercy? It is, after all, the Christian thing to do. The Jew should learn the error of his ways, he should not walk out of the courtroom a free man. But, I beg you, do not fight fire with fire. We do not have to live our lives by the Old Testament. I have no doubt you will do the right thing.

PORTIA

I swear to you, I will ensure that his life is spared.

ME

Just think, if it were your father – what sort of outcome would you wish for? He is an old man. Regardless of what he has or hasn't done, he is Jessica's father. He was Leah's husband. She

was well respected in Venice. Everyone loved her. Some say that Shylock was a different person then, warm and kind. He doted on her. Yes, I admit he has become bitter and cruel since her death but the purpose of your venture and disguise is to free Antonio, to save your husband's best friend from sacrificing a pound of his very own flesh. Save Antonio. Let the Jew walk.

(Nerissa calls from the hallway that it is time for Portia to leave)

PORTIA

What you have said is very wise. I will think on it as I travel to Padua. We will write with news as soon as we have some.

ME

Look after yourself. And remember what I said – mercy.

PORTIA

Thank you! Goodbye.

Exit

ME

I truly hope she does the right thing. Without some compassion and consideration we are but animals.

Section C Reading to Understand

Question 6

20 marks

(a) What sort of issues are raised in this extract?

The issues surrounding body image, self-confidence, insecurity and bullying are all raised in this extract. It is clear that Julia has a lot of insecurities about her appearance. She admits that she is 'having a crisis about [her] body' and even says that she hates her 'whole body'. I think this is a serious issue and a very sad one. Julia should listen to Maria when she says 'there are so many more important things to be worrying about'. Yet, Julia seems to be very hard on herself.

Maria was bullied in her old school. She says that she 'spent pretty much every day' being 'left out of things, or being made fun of'. This must have been an ordeal. Bullying isn't always easy to spot. Being made fun of or left out of things means you are isolated and alone. The issue of bullying is raised in a serious way in this extract.

(b) Do you feel that these issues are relevant to young people today?

Circle:

Yes, I do

No, I don't

Explain:

The issue of bullying is extremely relevant to young people like me. If you were to ask any teenager they would know of someone who has been bullied. We have all witnessed it. Sadly, many people are affected by it. Bullying can be physical or psychological. Bullies can be physically threatening to you in school and sometimes people feel psychologically bullied even after they arrive home. The bully can send nasty text messages or write horrible comments about you on Facebook. I think some people become bullies to show off or to make everyone laugh, but they do not seem to care that someone is being hurt as a result.

Many young people experience insecurities and body image issues, just like Julia. This is something that is hard to avoid because everywhere we look, we see celebrities with their 'perfect' bodies, gorgeous hair, make-up and clothes. It is impossible to compete and yet we try! How can we compete with celebrities who have an army of stylists, plastic surgeons and Photoshop experts at their fingertips? The pressure of trying to achieve this notion of perfection can create huge issues amongst young people today.

- (c) **Based on what you have read, do you feel sympathy for Julia and Maria? Explain your feelings with reference to the piece.**

I really sympathise with both girls. Poor Julia seems to be trapped – she is so hard on herself and can't seem to give herself a break. Maria says lots of nice things about Julia, reminding her that she is smart, passionate and kind. Yet it seems as though Julia is too filled with self-doubt and insecure thoughts to listen. I really pity her because, from what Maria says, it sounds like she has so much to be proud of. She is lucky to have a loyal and caring friend.

Maria has been through a tough time but she seems strong enough to support her friend. I think she seems like a really nice person and maybe this is why she was bullied. Sometimes it is easy to pick on someone who will not or cannot fight back. I sympathise with her because she must have felt so alone when she was left out at her old school. The girls with the 'ugly souls' who were nasty to her must have made fun of her to make themselves feel good. I think this sounds awful but I am glad Maria left that school because at least now she doesn't have to see her tormentors every day and she has made a new friend in Julia.

- (d) **Do you agree with Maria when she says that everyone acts 'a little bit, every single day'? Give reasons for your answer.**

I think this statement is true for many people. A lot of us put on a front and pretend everything is okay when it is not. A lot of people hide who they really are. Some people act tough when, in fact, they are not tough at all. Others act like they are happy when they are not. I think Maria knows what she is talking about because she probably had to act like she was okay when she was being bullied in the past. However, I think it is important to remember that we do not have to act 'a little bit every single day'. The trick is probably to find people who accept you for who you are and then you won't have to act at all. Maria's point is that, even when you do not feel very confident, if you 'fake it', you will eventually trick yourself into feeling more sure of yourself. This is something that most people do every day in order to feel more confident.

Section D Responding Imaginatively

You may refer to and quote from the poem or novel in Section A and Section C when answering this section.

Question 7

30 marks

I have chosen to answer:

- A. B. ✓ C. D.

15 December

Dear Diary,

We had our carol service today. I managed to sit three rows behind ... them, I can hardly bear to even write their names in my diary. This is mine. Why should they taint it? They've tainted everything else in my life. I used to love school, but now it feels like a warzone. I'm constantly trying to dodge them. And I honestly thought I had done a good job today.

When Mr O'Brien made the announcement that all Third Years should make their way to the hall I started clearing my desk really slowly. I knew the others would be in a hurry to get the best seats. They always got their way. So I took my time. Ms Flynn was standing at the top of the room waiting to lock the door and kept scowling at me. She eventually said 'Maria, would you please hurry up? We're going to the hall not outer space!'

I hurried outside the room but walked slowly towards the hall. I regret now that I didn't just turn around and make a run for it. I mean, I've heard 'Silent Night' and 'Ding Dong Merrily on High' so many times before, it wouldn't have been a huge loss. Ms Flynn stood waiting at the door to the hall so I was forced to go inside. I took my seat, three rows behind ... them. I am always tense when they are close-by. I sat on the edge of my seat, determined not to make eye contact with them or anyone else. I just wanted to be as inconspicuous as possible. I wanted to be invisible.

The two girls next to me started giggling. They were drawing attention to our row and I wished they would stop. Soon, everyone in the rows in front turned around to see what was going on. That's when they spotted me. Carla (shudder) curled her lip. She looked evil. I would never admit this to anyone, but I was scared. I hate myself for being so weak and so frightened of her.

Mr O'Brien came over and separated the girls. He made sure that each of the girls swapped seats with someone else. It must have happened while I was distracted by the choir. Carla had swapped seats with one of the giggling girls and was now sitting next to me. She was staring at me, looking me up and down and laughing. When she had checked that none of the teachers were nearby she started whispering really nasty comments. 'Where did you get your shoes, Oxfam?' and 'Look at the size of your calves ... E-Nor-Mous!'

She started making barking noises, obviously (but not very originally) implying that I am a 'dog'. She has said it all before. It's not new to me, but it still hurts. The whole time, the others kept turning around and laughing.

It is impossible to escape her. No matter how much I try to fade into the background, she picks me out and finds something to make fun of. After the carol service, as we were walking back to class, she called out to Mr O'Brien, 'Hey Sir, do you like Maria's new glasses?' Mr O'Neill looked confused. The girls exploded with laughter. Mr O'Neill just told us to get to class. Once inside the classroom, Carla began complaining about the smell. Her sidekick, Danielle, threw something in my direction and said 'Manky Maria strikes again!' – cue the explosion of laughter. I sank into my seat wishing I could just disappear.

When I got home my mum was there. I wasn't expecting her to be home so early. She said she had taken a half-day so that we could put the Christmas tree up together. She was looking at me strangely, but didn't ask any questions. I thought this was odd.

When I went downstairs my mum sat me down. She had made a cup of tea and put biscuits out on a plate – I knew something was up when I saw the biscuits on a plate. She never does that. She said 'Maria, please tell me what's going on. You haven't been yourself for weeks and I'm really worried. Tell me what is happening and I will fix it. I'm your mum – I promise to make things better for you.'

I think the kind words are what did it – I broke down. I cried on my mum's shoulder like a baby. I told her everything. She looked at me with tears in her eyes, held my hand and said 'this ends now'. I hope so. I really, really hope so.

I'll let you know what happens, Maria xxx



Junior Cycle English

Higher Level

Final Examination Sample C

Sample C

A World of Difference

There are **four** sections in this examination.

Section A Comprehending and Appreciating Language **50 marks**

- **Question 1:** Ensure you refer to the reading comprehension in your answers to this question. Quote where possible to support your answer.
- **Question 2:** Show a clear understanding of each word by explaining what the word means and putting it into a sentence correctly.
- **Question 3:** Structure your answer as though you were writing a script. Imagine Aisling’s reaction upon hearing the good news that she has been offered a job. Feel free to use your imagination, adding detail that you have learned from the article.

Section B Responding to Texts – Register and Purpose **60 marks**

- **Question 4:** You are asked a series of questions based on the letter by Neven Maguire. Read the letter carefully and refer to it throughout your answers. Write your own letter as though you are Neven Maguire. Try to format your letter correctly and structure your letter using paragraphs.
- **Question 5:** You are asked a series of questions based on the speech by Ellen DeGeneres. Read the speech carefully and refer to it throughout your answers. Try to imagine the speech being delivered to an audience. Consider the meaning behind Ellen’s words.
- **Question 6:** You are expected to write about an issue that you feel is important. Choose something that you feel you can write about – do not choose a topic that you are not familiar with. Choose to write a speech, letter or blog. Consider the audience and register.

Section C Exploring Studied Texts – Character **30 marks**

- **Question 7:** You must write about a novel, play, film, documentary or short story that you have studied. Your answers will focus on a character who shows courage and bravery so it is important that you choose a text based on this. Refer to the text throughout.

Section D Reading Poetry to Understand **40 marks**

- **Question 8:** You are asked a series of questions based on the poem presented on this paper. Refer to the poem, its technique and structure, throughout.
- **Question 9:** Here, you are asked to imagine writing a poem of your own. This question really tests your knowledge of poetic devices and their effect on a poem.

Section A Comprehending and Appreciating Language

Question 1

18 marks

(a) Which of the following statements do you agree with most? Write the letter of your choice in the box.

- A. It is never wrong to do the right thing
- B. I really admire Aisling Lynam
- C. Everyone should be given a chance

C

Explain your chosen statement. I agree with this statement because ...

... irrespective of a person's strengths or weaknesses, everyone deserves a chance. I love this story because Aisling was one of those people who was given a chance when there were lots of employers who would not consider offering her a job. This is a form of discrimination. I think that everyone is equal and should be treated equally. In many cases, women are not given the same opportunities as men. Some people are not given a chance because of their race, class or background. Aisling just wanted 'to feel the same as everyone else'. She played her part in fighting for equal opportunities for those with intellectual disabilities.

(b) What is Aisling's message?

Aisling's message is that people in her position 'have a valuable role to play as part of the work force'. She wanted to be given a fair chance to work. Aisling wanted to change the fact that 'there were no opportunities' for her because of her intellectual disability. She wanted the chance to make a difference. Her message is simple – people with disabilities of any kind have a lot to offer and should be considered for employment. Woodies DIY 'hope Aisling's story sends out a positive message to other employers' as she is 'an asset to the store'.

(c) In your opinion, has the writer done a good job of communicating Aisling's message? Give one reason for your answer.

The writer communicates Aisling's message very clearly. We are given background information about Aisling and her struggle to find work. We find out that she has taken the initiative of sending 'a letter to several national papers last October' and so we are introduced to her story. By following Aisling's journey and seeing things from her point of view, we can empathise with her situation.

Details of the outcome of Aisling's letter are also covered as her mother is quoted in the article as saying that, because of her job and independence, Aisling has 'come into her own'. The writer also includes input from Aisling's new employer, Woodies DIY, who believe that giving her the opportunity is 'the least big business can do'. This shows that Aisling's message is supported by her family, a big business such as Woodies DIY and the media. I think Aisling's story and message is communicated in a very clear way.

Question 2

22 marks

(a) Aisling is described as 'amazing' by her colleagues.

In the space below, write one synonym of the word 'amazing'.

Wonderful

(b) Explain the meaning of each of the following words and write a sentence using each word correctly.

Your sentences should show an understanding of each word. You may not use a line from the article above.

Word	Meaning	Sentence
Several	When there is more than one Many, lots, numerous	There were several candidates running in the local election.
Yearned	To yearn for something is to really want it or to long for it Longed, craved	Chloe yearned for a life in the big city.
Asset	An asset is something valuable For example, a person's home could be considered an asset.	Evan scored three goals in the match proving that he is a great asset to the team.
Dedicated	A person who is devoted to something Committed, devoted	John is dedicated to his wife.
Vulnerable	When someone is an easy target Weak, defenseless	Mary felt vulnerable following the break-in at her house.

Question 3

10 marks

Woodies DIY reached out to Aisling Lynam to offer her a job after reading her letter in the newspaper.

Write the telephone conversation that you imagine may have taken place between Aisling and the manager of Woodies DIY.

Use Aisling and Manager to indicate who is speaking.

(Phone rings)

Aisling: Hello, Aisling speaking.

Manager: Hi Aisling, this is Amanda from Woodies DIY, Airside. I work in the Human Resources department and read your letter in the newspaper yesterday morning.

Aisling: Hello, Amanda. Thank you for calling. How can I help you?

Manager: I am hoping I can help you! We are looking for staff at our store here in Airside. I was wondering if you would like to come in to talk about working with us?

Aisling: I would love to!

(Aisling whispers excitedly to her mum, thrilled at the prospect of her first job.)

Manager: Great. We are looking for staff to work on the shop floor. That would involve helping customers, pricing items that are for sale and stocking the shelves. The hours are Monday to Friday from 12 pm until 4 pm. We can discuss all the details on Monday if you are free to come in to meet me. How does 10 am sound?

- Aisling:** I am available on Monday at 10 am. That suits fine.
- Manager:** Perfect! I'm looking forward to meeting you. Your letter was very impressive and you seem like a fantastic young lady. Do you have any questions?
- Aisling:** Will I bring anything with me on Monday, like a CV?
- Manager:** If you have a copy of your CV, bring that along. That is all you will need for now.
- Aisling:** Okay. Thank you so much, Amanda. This is the best news ever.
- Manager:** Oh, you are so welcome. See you on Monday! Bye.
- Aisling:** Bye!

(The manager puts down the phone, smiling. Aisling puts down the phone, rushing to tell her mum the good news)

Section B Responding to Texts – Understanding Register and Purpose

Question 4

20 marks

(a) Neven advises his sixteen-year-old self in several ways. He says:

- Love everything you do
- Follow your passion
- Work hard

Do you agree that Neven offers good advice to a sixteen-year-old? Give at least two reasons in explaining your point of view.

Circle:

Neven offers good advice

Neven does not offer good advice

First reason

As a teenager, I think it is very important to hear the advice that Neven has offered. We are always being told to work hard by our teachers and parents, but I think being told to work hard by someone who has achieved their dream and been successful is inspiring. It has reminded me to work hard to achieve my own goals and this is an important piece of advice.

Second reason

Neven writes about being the only boy 'taking home economics in school' which was not the most popular thing to do. Neven proved that his passion for cooking was more important to him than being popular. He followed his passion and as a result, I think he loves what he does. It is good advice to think about what you are passionate and enthusiastic about and really enjoy it. Doing something that you are good at and that makes you happy is important. This is great advice for young people like us sitting exams and moving closer to our futures.

(b) **What advice would you give Neven in order to improve his letter-writing technique? Explain how Neven could make his letter even better.**

Neven should try to structure his letter more carefully, for example his letter should include a date on the right-hand side. Since Neven is writing the letter to his younger-self, there is no need to formally sign off 'Neven Maguire'.

I think Neven’s letter should be a little bit more detailed. He mentions ‘travelling’ and staying ‘focused on what you want to achieve’ but does not go into any detail about these parts of his life. Maybe he should have planned his letter before writing it.

- (c) **Neven advises his teenage self to enjoy travelling. Imagine you are Neven Maguire. You are travelling to a place you have always wanted to visit. Write a letter home in which you describe your experience so far.**

Remember to structure your letter correctly according to the advice you offered in part (b).

San Francisco
United States of America

27 May 2017

Dear Mum,

How are things back home? I can’t believe I haven’t visited San Francisco before now! As you know, I’ve always wanted to come here. I had read so much about what the city has to offer – but I never imagined it would be this beautiful! You should see the Golden Gate Bridge – it is stunning. Yesterday, we cycled across it and then took a boat trip to Alcatraz. I took loads of photos and will upload some of them to Facebook, so you can have a look!

Have you been to visit Granny? I hope she is keeping well. She would love San Francisco. I think the trams would remind her of Dublin city back in the day, although the steep hills would be a nightmare for her! We are staying in a beautiful hotel with great views over the city. Tomorrow we are going to visit Yosemite National Park. I am so excited! I’ve always wanted to see it and can’t wait. I wish you were coming with me!

On Wednesday, we are travelling from here to Los Angeles. I can’t believe we will get to see Hollywood. This is the trip of a lifetime. It really is a dream come true!

I will send you an email when we get to LA. See you soon, Mum!

Love,
Neven

Question 5

20 marks

- (a) **Circle one of the following words which you feel sums up Ellen’s speech.**

Inspiring Funny **Sincere** Clever

- (b) **Name one technique that Ellen uses in this speech to engage her audience. Explain why this technique may have been effective.**

Technique	Explanation
Humour	Ellen engages her audience from the beginning by using humour in her speech. By making the audience laugh with her wit, Ellen has their attention. She accepts her surfboard award, claiming to be on her ‘way to the beach’.

- (c) **What advice would you give Ellen in order to improve her speech? Explain how Ellen could make her speech even better.**

I think Ellen’s speech is very well written and I can imagine, with the right tone of voice and emphasis, it could be delivered successfully. If Ellen had a little more time to make this

speech, I would love to hear more about what she means when she alludes to the times when she 'was the opposite of chosen'. She could be more detailed and clear at this point in her speech.

Ellen's casual way of communicating her message is appropriate because of the young audience in front of her. I would tell Ellen to continue to entertain and inspire young people in future speeches.

(d) Ellen uses her comedy award speech to speak about being different. What point do you think she is making?

I think Ellen is trying to speak to the young people who voted for her to win this Teen Choice Award. She must realise that teenagers are at a stage in their lives when they may hate being different, when they feel like they have to fit in. Many young people are being bullied because of their differences and Ellen reminds them that they are special, unique and important. She tells young people to be proud and 'embrace who you are'.

(e) Do you agree that 'you should be proud of being different, proud of who you are'?

I agree that we should feel proud of our individual differences but that can be hard when you are still figuring out who you are and who you want to be. Some people are still growing in confidence and I agree that they need to hear this message. Of course, we should be proud of who we are!

Question 6

20 marks

Neven Maguire and Ellen DeGeneres both speak about something that matters to them.

Select an issue or topic you feel strongly about and write a speech, letter or blog post about your chosen issue. You may consider writing about an issue which is relevant to:

- You
- Your community
- Popular culture
- The wider world

Chosen format: Blog post

Chosen issue/topic: The reality of life as a teenager in 2017

Welcome to my blog!

Okay guys, let's be honest – teenagers have a pretty tough time compared to when our parents were young! Although young people today have so many opportunities, we are also faced with countless decisions. Sometimes I feel under pressure with all the decisions I have to make. We learned in Business about something called an opportunity cost. This is when you choose something and then lose out on something else as a result. I don't know about you but I feel this can easily happen when making decisions about my future. If I spend more time training and playing sport, my studies will suffer because I am losing out on valuable study time. Do you ever wonder if this will affect you when it comes to exams and securing a college place? Isn't this the reality of our life right now?

Let's be realistic, teenagers are also very aware of financial pressure. We have grown up hearing words like 'recession' and we understand that while we are presented with all these opportunities, we are a country still struggling financially. I am aware that it costs a lot of money to raise a family. My parents do their best but I know that sometimes it is not easy to find the money for the things we need. Maybe this is something I shouldn't worry about

but I am almost a grown up myself and I can't help but think that I would like to be able to contribute more. Next year I will be sixteen and I would like to get a job. But in the meantime I have to try to find other ways of helping my parents out. I know I'm not the only one and so many teenagers reading my blog will identify with this kind of pressure and worry.

Peer pressure is a big problem in young people's lives today. There is increasing pressure to fit in and sometimes fitting in means participating in things that you are not quite ready for. Maybe some of you have noticed that recently some of your friends or classmates have started smoking or drinking. I think it's because, like most teens, they want to be cool and fit in more. Our lives are not straight-forward and sometimes it can be hard to do the right thing.

Some teenagers are placed under a lot of pressure by their parents. Have you ever noticed that achieving good grades and performing well in school and sport can sometimes overshadow your enjoyment of learning or playing? I don't think parents realise how much pressure they can put on their child. Some days it feels like it's all about getting As and scoring goals! Teachers can also contribute to this pressure. I think we need to remember that doing your best is important, it's about the taking part and not all about winning.

Not only do we see our peers in school, but now there are countless social networks that also dictate our lives outside of school. Bullying is something that can be done in many ways. A cruel comment online can do much more damage to your self-esteem than if someone said it to your face. It almost haunts you, because all your friends and people you don't even know can see it. You have to remember now that the whole world is watching and you don't want to become the target. We live in a society where we are constantly encouraged to comment. In my opinion a comment isn't a very positive word anyway and most comments are nasty and hurtful. People are free to comment online about what someone is wearing or what someone looks like. This is our reality!

I think, despite the tough reality of our lives as teenagers, the key is not to lose yourself and to stay true to who you are. Take the time to be carefree and don't let yourself get bogged down. We are still children in the eyes of the law so why are we letting ourselves get stressed with adult pressures? We should be enjoying the last years of our childhood and looking ahead with excitement to the future. I wonder what the reality of our lives will be in another few years.

Section C Exploring Studied Texts – Character

As part of your Junior Cycle English course you will have studied a number of texts such as:

- Novels
- Plays
- Films/documentary
- Short stories

Think about a character in one of your texts who showed **bravery** and complete the following task.

Question 7

30 marks

Write the details of your chosen text and character below.

Title: *E.T.*

Author: Stephen Spielberg

Character who shows bravery: Elliott

(a) Describe the situation your character faced that forced them to be brave.

In the film *E.T.*, Elliott shows extreme bravery by protecting the alien he found in his garden. This is an unusual and frightening situation for Elliott. He provides the small alien creature with safety and shelter. This means keeping E.T. a secret from his mother, which is a brave move. Elliott is aware that his mother is already struggling and does not want to cause her any more hardship.

Realising that E.T. means him no harm, Elliott makes it his mission to protect his new friend and to eventually help him find his way home. Elliott and E.T. form such a strong bond, that instinctively, Elliott realises that E.T. is becoming ill. Elliott knows and feels that something is wrong and desperately wants to help his friend.

Government agents have been tracking E.T., posing a threat to Elliott's secret but most importantly, threatening his new found friendship. They descend on the house, intent on capturing E.T. who is becoming increasingly unwell. Elliott knows he must act quickly in order to protect and save the alien's life. He must fulfill the promise he made to 'protect' and 'take care' of E.T.

(b) In what way did this character show bravery? Refer to the text throughout your answer.

When Elliott becomes aware that government officials intend to harm his friend, he springs into action. Knowing that 'they're just gonna cut him all up' Elliott needs to act fast. With the help of his brother Michael and his friends, Elliott takes E.T. in a stolen van and then by bicycle, to a forest.

Although they are being chased by government officials who are a lot more powerful, the children refuse to give up and surrender their extra-terrestrial friend. This is one of Elliott's toughest challenges as it would appear that they are doomed.

However, E.T. helps Elliott by allowing the boys' bicycles to take flight, leaving the government agents behind. Arriving safely at the forest, the boys see a spaceship landing. Everyone says goodbye before Elliott shares an emotional moment with E.T. As the spaceship takes off, Elliott looks on, knowing that his ultimate act of courage has been to part with his friend. Saying goodbye and letting go of someone you love for their own sake is a really brave thing to do.

(c) Imagine you are a journalist working for a local newspaper in the place where your text is set. You are interviewing the character named above.

Write the text of the most interesting interview question which you have asked your chosen character, along with their answer.

Journalist: Why was it so important for you to get E.T. home?

Elliott: E.T. was the first true friend I ever had. Kids my age used to pick on me but E.T. accepted me for who I am. I accepted E.T. for who he is. We just had a bond. And I knew that I would miss him but that bond wouldn't be broken if he returned home. I knew it was the right thing to do.

You should have seen him. He got really sick and I just knew he was going to die. I had to do something. I made E.T. a promise that I would take care of him and I had to keep my promise. So that's why it was so important to get E.T. back to his spaceship.

There were guys who wanted to hurt E.T. and there was no way I was going to let that happen. He wasn't safe here. It was too dangerous for him. I wanted him to stay more than anything but I knew if he stayed, he would die. The last thing E.T. said to me was 'I'll be right here' and he pointed to my heart. So I know I haven't

lost him. His friendship means so much to me. It's like E.T. helped my family, we're so much closer now.

You have written your article about your chosen character's act of bravery. What headline would you use? Write it in the space below.

<p>Out of this World</p> <p>The Incredible Story of a Boy Who Befriends an Extra-Terrestrial</p>
--

Section D Reading Poetry to Understand

Question 8

20 marks

(a) Point out two similarities and two differences between Mary and the speaker.

Similarities	Differences
<p>1. Mary and the speaker have the same 'mouse-coloured hair'.</p>	<p>1. The speaker has a different background and family life to Mary. We get the impression that Mary left school as her father 'didn't believe in high school education'. This is different to the speaker who comes 'from the library' with her 'arms full of books'.</p>
<p>2. When they were young, Mary and the speaker both lived in the same 'housing scheme' or estate.</p>	<p>2. When the speaker sees Mary 'Ten years later' she insists that she does not envy her old friend for the pregnant 'full-shaped vase that is her body' or her doting husband. This gives me the impression that, as an adult, the speaker's life is very different to Mary's. The speaker is holding a pile of books while Mary will be holding her baby.</p>

(b) Why do you think the speaker recalls the ways in which she and Mary were the same?

When the poet catches a glimpse of Mary on the bus several years later she can't believe how very different the paths she and Mary are on because of 'the choices' that 'got made we don't remember making'. The speaker knew that Mary had similar talents and intelligence, and that she showed great promise as a young girl. In her opinion, both girls should have had the same future. However, because of her background and family values, Mary did not get the same opportunities as the speaker did and so her life has turned out very differently. It is hard for the speaker to believe that the pregnant woman on the bus is the same girl who was so like her many years beforehand.

(c) Why do you think the poet might have been inspired to write this poem when she sees her old friend, Mary?

Seeing Mary must have brought back old memories for the speaker. For the first time, she might see just how easily her life could have turned out very differently. I wonder if she feels sorry for Mary and wrote this poem to show others that sometimes choices that are made for us by our parents or by society, shape our entire future. She tells us twice that she is 'coming from the library' when she sees Mary and so we imagine that the speaker has had

more opportunity to succeed in her academic life. Perhaps the poet feels there is an injustice in the limited opportunity which Mary has had because of her father's beliefs. While the poet has every opportunity to succeed academically, she may also feel a slight sense of envy upon seeing Mary with her husband. Perhaps the poet feels this kind of relationship is missing from her own life. Both girls have something that the other has missed out on and perhaps the poet wrote the poem once she realised that this was the case.

(d) What do you think the poet means when she uses the phrase 'same house, different homes'?

Although the poet and Mary both lived on the same housing estate, where all of the houses look the same from the outside, it is clear that they are very different on the inside. This is because each home is made up of a different family. Some parents are very strict with their children and insist that they go to school, in full uniform and work hard to complete their homework and household chores. This sounds like the kind of home the poet knows. I think she is making the point that although she and Mary appeared to have similar lives, they were really very different because of the homes they grew up in.

Question 9

20 marks

You have been asked to submit an entry to a poetry competition. The theme is 'A World of Difference'

(a) What title would you give your poem? Write it in the space below.

'Equal Measures'

(b) Choose three of the most effective techniques that you would use in your poem. Define each technique and explain how it will add to the impact of your poem.

The first technique I would include is

Onomatopoeia

This technique can be defined as ...	This technique will make an impact because ...
Words that sound like their meaning. Sizzle Crackle Thump	Sound is so important in poetry and I love the way onomatopoeic words have a particular sound effect. The sound of the word makes you think of the meaning of that word. I think this technique would make my poem really memorable.

The second technique I would include is

Metaphor

This technique can be defined as ...	This technique will make an impact because ...
Metaphors draw comparisons between two unrelated things, saying they are the same. It is symbolic language. 'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players'	Readers might think about the symbolism contained in the metaphor. I think any kind of metaphorical language allows people to interpret poetry for themselves, in their own way. It is interesting to imagine what a metaphor might stand for.

The third technique I would include is

Sibilance and alliteration

This technique can be defined as ...	This technique will make an impact because ...
<p>Sibilance is the repetition of 's' sounds, while alliteration is the repetition of the same letter or sound at the beginning of several words in a sentence.</p> <p>Sibilance: 'sweetest kisses'</p> <p>Alliteration: 'perfectly polished'</p>	<p>Sibilance and alliteration create memorable sound effects in a poem. Both effects are similar and offer a sense of rhythm and musicality. This is a beautiful effect which I know would enhance my poem.</p>



Junior Cycle English

Higher Level

Final Examination Sample D

Sample D

Journeys Big and Small

There are three sections in this examination.

Section A Reading Poetry to Understand

90 marks

- **Question 1:** Read the poem a few times before answering parts (a) to (f) of this question. Justify all suggestions and opinions by referring back to the poem and offer detailed reasoning for your answers.

You are asked to write about the imagery overall in part (c), while in part (d) you are required to write about one favourite image in more detail. Try to bring your own ideas and interpretations to this part of the question.

- **Question 2:** Select a suitable poem which you have studied in class. Ensure you make reference to the poem throughout your answer.

Always keep the question topic in mind – do not stray off topic.

Section B Responding to Non-Literary Texts

60 marks

- **Question 3:** You are asked a series of questions based on the extract taken from Tony Hawks' book. In order to answer part (b), you must be familiar with some of the features of travel writing. These are similar to biographical writing so consider some of these. Again, explain your ideas with reference to the text.
- **Question 4:** Show your understanding of the chosen words by explaining the meaning of each – it helps to put your word into a short sentence. Be creative with your tweet – have fun!

Section C Writing for a Variety of Purposes

30 marks

- **Question 5:** You must choose one of the three prompts provided to begin your story. Select the prompt that you are most drawn to and inspired by. Use the 'optional rough work' space to plan your story before you begin. Be creative but do not lose sight of the point of your story. Decide your ending before you begin.

Section A Reading Poetry to Understand

Question 1

40 marks

(a) Find the verbs in the poem to match the following meanings.

1. To travel without a purpose or for free	Bummed
2. To walk quietly or softly	Padded
3. To move quickly over a surface or through the air	Skimmed
4. To move something between your fingers nervously or absentmindedly	Toyed
5. To sit on something high or narrow	Perched

(b) Simon Armitage makes use of repetition in the poem. Find an example of repetition in the poem and write it in the space below.

'I have not' is used as the opening line in the first, second and fourth stanzas.

Do you think the poet's use of repetition is effective?

Tick: Yes ✓ No

Give reasons for your answer:

I think repetition is a really effective technique, since it draws our attention to the repeated phrase. In the moments of repeated phrasing, the speaker reveals some of the most interesting details about his life. Although he has not 'bummed across America' he has 'lived with thieves in Manchester'. Even though he did not parachute out of an aircraft, he did something worthwhile by helping a boy with a wobbly head while he kindly 'stroked his fat hands'. Each time the negative phrase 'I have not' is used, it is countered by a positive experience which the poet shares. The use of repetition forces the reader to reflect more on the experiences which the poet has had as opposed to those he missed out on.

(c) Using the following prompt, comment on the poet's use of imagery.

The poet makes use of imagery that I find interesting because...

The images used by the poet are striking and memorable. Some of the images are curious because they create a sense of atmosphere. I can imagine being inside the Taj Mahal, silently gazing in wonder at the magnificence of the place. The poet imagines this, too. He imagines padding through, without any shoes on, seeing his footprints 'against the marble floor'. The cool marble would be comforting beneath your feet on a hot day in India. Though the poet says he has not been to this place, he succeeds in bringing it to life through the sensory images which he creates. I find this impressive and interesting.

I love imagery that helps me to experience the moment which the poet describes. I think imagery is most interesting when we get to imagine the sounds, smells and sensations of a place or a moment. I can feel the pride, the 'tightness in the throat'. Just like Armitage, I can hear the sounds of the ripples as he skims his smooth stone through the water.

(d) Choose your favourite image from the poem and explain why you like it.

My chosen image:

'but I held the wobbly head of a boy / at the day centre, and stroked his fat hands'

I like this image for the following reasons:

I love the sweet image of the speaker in the poem, holding the hand of a boy who may have special needs. This image does more than just help me to visualise the act, it also makes me feel the warmth of the moment. This experience meant more to the poet than parachuting through the sky.

Although the speaker has not experienced the thrill of jumping from an aircraft and feeling the exhilaration of flying through the air, he has experienced the elation of helping someone in need. I think this image is beautiful because it perfectly captures a moment of great significance for both the writer and possibly the boy with 'the wobbly head'.

This is my favourite image, purely for the tenderness it contains. It would appear that the boy is the person benefiting from the care shown in this image, however the speaker is fulfilled by this moment of love.

My chosen image encouraged me to become a more reflective reader. It impacted greatly upon me and strikes me for its meaning and feeling. It made me realise that the speaker must be a person who is gentle, giving and caring.

- (e) **The poem 'It Ain't What You Do It's What It Does To You' reveals that the poet has been on a journey even though he has not travelled far.**

Do you agree with this statement?

Circle:

Yes, I agree

No, I disagree

I agree in part

Explain why you agree or disagree with the above statement:

The poet shows us that he hasn't had to travel the world to feel fulfillment and exhilaration. He is fulfilled by the caring, compassionate work that he carries out at 'the day centre'. The poet is clearly enthralled by the beauty and wonder of nature, marvelling at the 'flat stones' skimming the water and creating 'ripples'.

For me, the poet has travelled a personal journey of self-discovery and understanding. He seems to realise that life is fragile as he watches the stone skim the water. I think this is a metaphor for how life passes us by so quickly before, just like the stone, we 'sink'.

Although, he may not have travelled the world it does seem as though the poet has had an exciting, colourful life. He startles us by admitting that he 'lived with thieves in Manchester'. This makes me ask all sorts of questions about the man, the life he has had and the things he has done. For instance, I wonder if the poet was a thief himself. Did he learn the error of his ways? He certainly has not led a dull life!

Without a doubt, the speaker in the poem has been on quite a journey. He seems to appreciate the journey that he has been on, realising that he has learned a lot about himself along the way.

- (f) **In your opinion, is 'It Ain't What You Do It's What It Does To You' a good title for this poem? Give reasons for your answer.**

I quite like the title of this poem, as it sparked my curiosity from the very beginning. I wondered what 'it' was and learned that the poet is referring to life. Perhaps he is thinking of fate and destiny. This is a reflective poem and the title of the poem reinforces this idea.

By telling us that 'It ain't what you do it's what it does to you', the poet may be saying that the life you have been born into, the experiences you have along the way will shape who you become. It makes me think that life is so accidental and random. Regardless of where you go or what you do, whether you travel the world or stay in one place, life will have an effect on the person you are and how you see the world. This is a very deep and beautiful idea.

'Our journeys shape who we become'

Choose a poem that you have studied where the speaker has been on a journey or where they have had an experience that changed them.

Write the details of your chosen poem below and complete the tasks that follow.

Title: 'Mid-Term Break'

Poet: Seamus Heaney

(a) What journey/experience did the speaker have that changed them?

The poet experienced great loss for the first time when he was just a boy. This traumatic experience is revisited in this poem as he recalls the death of his four-year-old brother.

(b) Describe the journey/experience you have identified. Consider how the journey or experience affected the speaker in your chosen poem.

Heaney recalls waiting to be collected by neighbours from boarding school. The wait must have felt like hours as he did not know why he was being called home unexpectedly. He did not know it at the time, but tragedy had struck at home. He alludes to the dominant theme of death in the poem by comparing the sound of the bells that call 'classes to a close' to the knelling sound of a funeral bell.

For many of us, our first encounter with death is the loss of a grandparent or even a much-loved pet. Heaney's experience was very different because of the tragic nature of the loss of his young brother. Arriving home, Heaney is confronted with the startling, heart-breaking image of his father in the porch. The man who 'had always taken funerals in his stride' was in tears, hiding away from the neighbours who had come to offer support and condolences. Heaney quickly learns that this is how people cope with a death – people gather together, offering words of comfort. He does not feel ready for 'old men standing up to shake [his] hand', sympathising with him as though he were an adult. He cannot understand his grief. He has not journeyed on this path before.

The young Heaney simply cannot connect his brother's death with the boy he saw six weeks earlier. He refers to his brother's dead body as 'the corpse'. In many ways this shows that Heaney has not experienced such enormous loss before. He is disconnected from the reality of the situation. Losing someone you love is so difficult and there are no rules to follow when someone passes away. Heaney's innocence and naivety is evident in the first half of the poem.

It is only when Heaney sees his brother's dead body the following morning that he accepts what has happened. He comments that his brother lies in his coffin 'as in his cot'. He looks peaceful, as though he were sleeping. There is a calm and quiet sense of understanding in the final stanza of the poem, 'Mid-Term Break'. Heaney has journeyed along the path of loss, experiencing such grief and sadness for the first time. This poem marks the personal journey which Heaney has made into the reality of saying goodbye to his brother for good.

(c) Select three of the poetic techniques that are used in your chosen poem.

Identify the line or phrase where the poet uses each of the techniques that you have selected.

Explain why you like each technique.

1. Technique Rhyming couplet	2. Technique Assonance	3. Technique Onomatopoeia
Line or phrase '..the bumper knocked him clear /A four foot box, a foot for every year .'	Line or phrase 'At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived/With the corpse, stanced and bandaged by the nurses'	Line or phrase 'The baby cooed ' 'candles soothed the bedside'
Why I like it The most startling line of the poem is left until the very end. Heaney cleverly creates a rhyming couplet to draw the reader's attention to the tragic nature of the incident. His brother was four years of age when he was killed. This rhyming couplet is rhythmical, dramatic and has a lasting impact.	Why I like it Heaney makes clever use of assonance in this phrase which I found particularly meaningful. The short 'a' sounds create a rapid, abrupt sound effect and can really be appreciated when read aloud. The abrupt 'a' sounds remind us that the death of Heaney's brother was unexpected and sudden.	Why I like it Onomatopoeia is such a clever technique and I love Heaney's use of it in the description of the baby's sounds. Life for the baby is continuing as normal. The use of onomatopoeia makes us aware of the contrast between the baby and Heaney, who is struggling to process and accept his brother's death. Heaney is soothed by the candles and flowers which are placed beside his brother's bed. This word is soft and gentle and Heaney uses it to mark the moment when he began to accept and confront his enormous loss.

(d) Describe the tone, mood or atmosphere that the poet creates in this poem.

The reader is introduced to the sorrowful nature of 'Mid-Term Break' from the opening stanza. The dark and sombre tone of this poem is suggested early on as Heaney deliberately describes the 'knelling' sound of funeral bells. We get a sense that something is wrong. Heaney is not sick but we pick up on the tension in these lines because Heaney waits anxiously in the sick bay 'all morning' long. There is a tense atmosphere in the poem that continues into the next four stanzas.

The tense, dark and sorrowful mood is established further as Heaney encounters his father in tears in the porch of their house. We learn that Heaney's parents deal with grief in different ways, as his mother holds tight to his hand and coughs 'out angry tearless sighs'. The arrival of the ambulance, with the 'stanced and bandaged' corpse of Heaney's young brother, further heightens the dark atmosphere of this poem.

There is a shift in mood in the sixth stanza of this poem which almost separates it into two parts. The next day, when Heaney goes into his brother's bedroom he seems to be more at peace. The tension has been replaced by a feeling of calm. It is a new day. The soothing nature of the candles and snowdrops at the side of the bed impact upon the mood of the poem. While the tone is still one of sorrow, it is now more relaxed. Heaney's attitude has changed and he is in a better place of understanding and acceptance. The tone greatly affects the reader's experience of this poem, making us aware of Heaney's feelings throughout.

Section B Responding to Non-Literary Texts

Question 3

30 marks

(a) Basing your answer on the extract, identify each of the following:

Who is the writer? Tony Hawks	Who is the audience? Readers of his book and fans of his comedy
What is the format? Travel writing and autobiography	What is the topic? Hawks' experience of travelling from Limerick to Kerry with a fridge

(b) This extract features several qualities of good travel writing.

In your opinion, is this statement true or false? Write either T for true or F for false in the box provided.

Identify two qualities of good travel writing and briefly explain what makes each quality effective.

First quality and explanation

Hawks writes in the first person, offering a personal account of his travels through Ireland with a fridge. This means that the person narrating shares their experience, memory or viewpoint with the reader. Hawks offers his observations and descriptions of the events that occurred in great detail.

Why this is effective

Writing in the first person means that the writer's style and tone is original. Travel writing is somewhat autobiographical since it tells of a person's experience in a particular place. Hawks talks of his unpredictable mood and uses the personal pronoun 'I' throughout the extract (e.g. 'I was in a no-win situation', 'I had an idea'). His personal account of the key elements of his journey are really successful in engaging the reader.

Second quality and explanation

Hawks makes use of anecdote, grabbing our attention and engaging our interest from the beginning with a story of being caught in the rain without his waterproof clothing.

Why this is effective

When a writer includes an anecdote in their memoir or travel writing, it serves the purpose of entertaining and engaging the reader. Tony's anecdote about getting 'quite wet' by the rain, while struggling to find his rain jacket is entertaining. It makes the reader feel involved. It is

told in the humorous tone that dominates much of the extract. I think Hawks, as a comedian, makes use of hyperbole to great effect here, as he turns a little rain into a big drama.

- (c) Tony says that, ‘With age comes wisdom, circumspection, maturity and resourcefulness’. Based on your reading of the extract, do you think he displays these qualities?

Tick: Yes No ✓

Explain your point of view:

To start with, I think there are very few wise and mature adults who would take up a bet to travel around Ireland with a fridge. The fact that Tony Hawks is attempting to do so is my first reason for thinking that he does not display the qualities of a mature, cautious or wise individual.

Hawks seems to have a short temper, behaving in a somewhat irrational way when he cannot find his waterproofs, giving his rucksack ‘an almighty kick’ and sitting on the wet, ink-stained fridge only to stain the bottom of his pants with messages from well-wishers. This would make me argue that Hawks lacks a sense of maturity, in particular.

However, I feel that Hawks must be quite resourceful. It looks as though he is on his way to achieving his goal of travelling around Ireland with the fridge. He has not given up or opted for the easy way out, which is commendable.

Question 4

30 marks

- (a) The following words appear in the extract from *Round Ireland With a Fridge*. Write a definition of each word.

Word	Definition
Scarce	When there is a small amount of something, it could be described as ‘scarce’. <i>Kindness was in scarce supply.</i>
Irritable	When someone is annoyed or aggravated, they are irritable. <i>The baby was irritable while she was teething.</i>
Garments	A garment is an item of clothing. <i>The garments are made from pure silk.</i>
Bitter	A sharp taste may be described as bitter. A feeling of resentment or anger may be described as bitterness. <i>The coffee tasted bitter.</i> <i>After being hurt so often, Anne became bitter.</i>
Quaint	Something that is quaint may be charming or attractive in an old-fashioned way. <i>Olga lived in a quaint cottage on the edge of town.</i>

(b) Tony struggles to find his waterproof in the rain.

Select one word below that sums up your feelings on Tony's struggle.

Tick:

- Ridiculous
Childish
Funny
Unrealistic
Entertaining

Briefly explain your choice, with reference to the extract:

From start to finish, the way that Hawks deals with this situation is entertaining. Most people would try to shelter somewhere if they were caught without waterproof clothing, but Hawks turns the entire episode into a comedy routine. He shouts at the rain, pleading with it to stop. He rages by shaking his fist at the sky – not a very effective way of coping, but an entertaining one. There is a woman who crosses to the other side of the road when she sees him. I imagine many passers-by would have been amused to see this man, with a fridge, soaking wet, stained with ink, kicking a bag and shouting at the sky!

(c) Imagine Tony is making this trip around Ireland with a fridge today. He regularly keeps his fans updated by tweeting about his experience.

Write Tony's tweet on the day described in the extract. (Remember that a tweet can only be 140 characters long.)

@thefridgeman

I am fridge-freezing! It NEVER stops raining here. Tried shouting at the sky to make it stop – didn't work. Lost in Kerry – help! #drenched

(d) Do you think that Twitter is an effective way to communicate?

Circle: Mostly Yes Mostly No

Identify two advantages and two disadvantages of communicating digitally.

Advantages of Digital Communication	Disadvantages of Digital Communication
<p>1. People can communicate easily despite living in distant places. Skype, Facetime and Social Media mean that we can communicate through various devices without difficulty.</p>	<p>1. People have become over-reliant on many forms of digital communication. Often, this means that people choose to communicate digitally even when they are in the same building!</p>
<p>2. Communicating digitally means that we can store and save messages, emails, shared documents, videos, links and more. It is usually a reliable source of communication compared to a letter that involves the cost of postage and time. A letter may get lost in the post!</p>	<p>2. The whole world is now communicating digitally, it may mean that people are more at risk than they were in the past. Now, people with ill-intentions can locate and access others with ease. It means that people have become more vulnerable.</p>

Section C Writing For a Variety of Purposes

Question 5

30 marks

'There is always room for stories that can transport people to another place'

J. K. Rowling, author of Harry Potter

Using **one** of the quotes below as your opening line, write a short story about a journey, adventure or experience.

- 'I have lived with thieves in Manchester ...'
- 'Cars were scarce and the sky was as unpredictable as my mood ...'
- 'I had an idea. I knew exactly what to do ...'

I have lived with thieves in Manchester. I called them Mum and Dad. I remember the day they taught me the tricks of the trade.

'Bobby,' my father had said, having sat me down at the kitchen table with a cup of tea, 'it's time for your education to begin.'

I thought it was perfectly normal to share a cup of tea with your father, while he instructs you on the importance of swift movements when pick-pocketing someone on the train. Much like a game of football or a trip to the cinema, I believed 'lessons in crime' was something all kids did with their parents.

Dad talked me through everything. He told me where to go, what to look for, how to get away. Mum argued that the only way I would learn was by taking to the streets.

And so we left the house, locking the door and setting the alarm on the way out.

'Better not risk it,' Mum mumbled, stuffing the keys into her bag, as we wandered out into the cold weather.

I looked up into the sky and saw the black, black clouds. I felt a knot in my stomach. I so badly wanted to make my parents proud. They always said I was their 'surprise' baby. I struggled to impress them. They didn't really like that I spent most of my time reading books, always remembering to return them to the library when I had finished.

'Don't bother bringing them back, keep them if they mean that much to you.'

'But, Dad...,' I would begin, stuttering a little as I spoke, 'if I don't bring them back, I won't be able to borrow any more.'

'Exactly,' Dad replied, triumphant. His face was proud.

I had been hiding things from my parents for a while at that point. I knew what they did when they left for 'work', often leaving together but sometimes going it alone. They would compete with each other, Mum usually outdoing Dad, and rarely getting caught.

She was beautiful, my mum. Her eyes were kind and when she smiled they would light up so much you felt warm just looking at her. People trusted my mum. I trusted her. I don't know why I thought I should be any different to those from whom she stole. The kind eyes were all part of the reason she was such a successful thief. Like most of what I knew about my mother, the kindness in her eyes was a lie.

Those people were strangers. They had no idea what she was up to. And she had no idea what I was up to.

I had taken to studying hard for my exams. I wanted to be the first person I knew to go to University. I longed to be surrounded by books and to meet people who hadn't heard anything about my family or their antics.

So, the day we went out for a 'practical introductory lesson', I felt anxious. I didn't want to disappoint them. I tried to remain as inconspicuous as possible, walking calmly from the train and avoiding eye contact with those around me.

Outside the train station, I made my first mistake.

I began to empty my pockets, eager to show my parents the loot that I had managed to pick. I had a watch, a wallet, a mobile phone, a packet of mints and two train tickets. I also found a receipt for 'one of those funny restaurants' as my dad said. My heart sank when I saw the receipt. I had hoped it would be at least a £20 note.

My dad took his cap off and quickly placed it over the stolen goods I was holding out with an expectant look on my face. He did not utter a word but made that grinding motion with his teeth that I knew spelled trouble. I had messed up.

The only thing worse than my dad's threatening mouth movement was my mum's indifference. She hardly looked in my direction, preferring the look of her cigarette and chipped, red nail polish. She knew I would fail. She didn't need to see it with her own eyes.

'Alright,' she sighed, stubbing her cigarette out on the ground with her red-soled shoe too high for comfort, 'let's hit the old dears in Marks.'

'These old dears are our golden ticket. Your mum knows how to work them, they fall for it eeevery time... Paid for most of our Christmases, that lot.'

I nodded. In Marks I tried to concentrate, observe the actions of my parents as they put on their best performance alongside one of the 'old dears' about whom my father had been speaking. I couldn't help but think of Mrs Molloy, the old lady who I often met at the library. She loved the 'whodunit' crime and mystery books. Sometimes I would sit on the floor in that section, hoping to bump into her, knowing that she would always have some Cornish fudge in her handbag. What would she do if Mum had asked her for help, claiming to have been robbed herself with no money to get home? Mrs Molloy would have believed my mum. She would have offered her money, the bus fare and something to buy tea for the 'little ones'.

My stomach churned. I couldn't watch. While the elderly lady showed sympathy towards my mum, Dad was pilfering her handbag.

'That's how it's done,' they announced in unison when we were safely out of earshot.

'I don't think I'm much good, Mum,' I had replied, sheepishly. I just wanted it to be over. I wanted to go home.

'Well, go home then.'

She sounded pleased at the thought of being rid of me. I'm sure of it.

In one final attempt to impress them, I decided to try snatching a handbag from a lady passing by. I knew I was small enough to escape through the crowds once I had the bag in my hands. My parents had impressed upon me the importance of 'crafting the theft' so that no one suspected a thing.

'Never do anything that could cause a scene,' Dad had repeated, like a mantra, over and over again.

In a moment of madness, outside Marks I decided to ignore this advice. I told myself that the only reason Mum and Dad didn't grab and run is because they didn't have my skill. Mum couldn't run in those heels and Dad probably wouldn't have even bothered. I would show them. I knew I could impress them if I could pull this off.

I grabbed the patent leather handbag. I pulled and pulled until the strap broke and I had the bag in my grasp. I could hear the gasps of people all around me, the screams of the lady I had targeted. There was such a commotion and I had caused it. I made to run but was stopped in my tracks. Someone held me up by the coat, and as they did so the watch, mints – even the stupid receipt I thought must have been £20 fell to the ground.

‘What’s going on here?’ The policeman’s voice was deep and I suddenly became aware of the thudding sound coming from my chest.

‘Officer,’ a familiar voice, ‘I saw everything, Sir’.

Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you! My mum will know what to do.

‘Yes, this boy snatched this lady’s handbag. I saw him earlier on, stealing from people on the train. Someone ought to stop him!’

Was I hearing this right? My mother ... My own mother ... Surely, this is one of their schemes, an act to get me off the hook?

‘What’s your name, boy?’ the policeman demanded. ‘Where are your parents?’

‘There,’ I pointed to my mum and dad.

They turned to look behind them as though I were pointing at someone else.

‘Don’t be ridiculous. Right, come with me,’ the policeman opened the door to a squad car and I was pushed into the back seat.

The last memory I have of my parents is the look on their faces as the car pulled away. I watched my mother, smoking her cigarette, with those chipped red nails, until they were out of sight.



Junior Cycle English

Higher Level

Final Examination Sample E

Sample E

Family and Relationships

There are **four** sections in this examination.

Section A Appreciating Language and Purpose **35 marks**

- **Question 1:** Read Joe Biden’s memo carefully and answer the questions that follow. Justify all answers with valid, detailed reasoning and examples.
- **Question 2:** You are asked to write an email in response to Joe Biden’s memo. Consider your **audience** – your boss, Joe Biden. Pay attention to the structure of your email. Your email should sound both heartfelt and professional.

Section B Exploring Shakespearean Drama **70 marks**

- **Question 3:** You are asked three questions based on the extract from *The Taming of the Shrew*. Examine the questions before reading the extract. The questions concentrate on the sisters’ characters, motives and relationship. Make use of the extract, quoting from it throughout your answers.
- **Question 4:** Clearly identify the Shakespearean play you have studied. Refer to your studied play throughout this question.

Section C Theme and Imagery in Poetry **50 marks**

- **Question 5:** You must answer a series of questions based on the poem ‘Handbag’. Concentrate on the image of the speaker’s mother derived from the items contained within the bag. Again, you must provide evidence and valid reasoning for your viewpoints. Focus on the poetic devices used by the poet to convey her message.
- **Question 6:** Choose a suitable poem that describes a family. Concentrate on the method used by the poet to describe the family, discuss language, style and technique. Remember to quote from the poem throughout your answer.

Section D Understanding Audience **25 marks**

- **Question 7:** Read and evaluate the review of the film *The Jungle Book*. Consider whether you would like to see the film for yourself after reading it. You must demonstrate your understanding of the term ‘target audience’.

Section A Appreciating Language and Purpose

Question 1

20 marks

- (a) Do you agree with Joe Biden’s message that family is more important than work? Write Y for Yes or N for No in the box provided.

The reason I think this is ...

I wholeheartedly agree with Joe Biden’s message. Family matters more than anything, because they are the people you should be able to rely on and value. Ask a person who might have lost their job which matters most – work or family? They will tell you that nothing is more important than family, especially in difficult times. Joe Biden seems to realise, and I would agree, that you might only get one chance to attend a family event, like a wedding or a bar mitzvah. I think this is a very important message and one which more employers should heed.

- (b) Joe Biden uses the term ‘obligations’ a number of times in his memo. Explain this term in your own words.

Someone who has an obligation has a sense of duty or commitment (e.g. ‘It is your obligation to be there’). If you are ‘obliged’ to do something, you feel you have to do it (e.g. ‘You are obliged to attend’).

- (c) Think of three adjectives you would use to describe Joe Biden, based on his memo.

1. Understanding
2. Thoughtful
3. Sincere

- (d) In his memo, Joe Biden says ‘if I find out that you are working with me while missing important family responsibilities, it will disappoint me greatly’.

Why do you think he would feel this way?

Given that Joe Biden places great value on family, it is unsurprising that he would feel this way. I do not think he wants to be the reason for his staff missing out on important family occasions. If I were in Biden’s shoes, I would also be disappointed to learn that one of my staff had come to work when they should have been comforting their dying parent or when they could have been celebrating a wedding or a birth. It is clear that Biden values and appreciates family, as he spreads the message that others should share in these values, too.

Question 2

15 marks

Imagine you work for Joe Biden. You decide to write an email to the Vice President in response to his memo.

Write your email in the space below:

To: jbiden@vicepresident.com

Subject: Family Obligations

Dear Vice President Biden,

I wish to thank you for your recent memo, addressed to all staff on 7 November. It came as a surprise to me to read a memo with such warmth and sincerity.

Your direction regarding family obligations was well received amongst all staff members. We see ourselves as a team, a family of sorts. It is wonderful to know that you understand the demands that many of us face on a daily basis. Family responsibility is something many of us struggle with, often missing family events for fear of requesting time off. It is rare that an employer is so considerate when it comes to such matters.

Your memo has had a positive impact, greatly boosting staff morale.

Thank you for your kind words.

Warm wishes,

Lily Peace

Section B Exploring Shakespearean Drama

Question 3

30 marks

- (a) Based on the above extract, which of the following words do you think best describes the relationship between Bianca and Katherina?

Tick: Loving Bitter Complex

Explain:

It is obvious that the relationship between the two sisters is fraught. The scene opens with a stage direction revealing that Katherina leads Bianca in, 'her clothing torn and her hands tied'. Katherina seems to envy her younger sister. It is Katherina's urge for revenge that forces her to tie her sister up and treat her as a 'bondmaid' and 'slave', proving that this is a very bitter relationship indeed.

The relationship between the two sisters is dominated by bitterness, jealousy and hatred because of Katherina. Baptista, the girls' father asks 'Why dost thou wrong her that did ne'er wrong thee?', revealing that Bianca is innocent and good. This relationship is a bitter, twisted one because of Katherina's feelings towards Bianca.

(b) **Baptista says to Katherina, ‘Why dost thou wrong her that did ne’er wrong thee?’.**

Why do you think Katherina treats Bianca badly?

It appears that Katherina is jealous of the attention that Bianca gets from male suitors. My feeling is that Katherina was in love with one of the men interested in marrying her sister. If it weren't for Katherina's nasty behaviour and treatment of Bianca, I would feel sorry for her.

Katherina questions her sister about two of her suitors, Hortensio and Gremio. Bianca seems surprised as she asks 'Is it for him you do envy me so?', which proves Katherina's motive for revenge and cruelty is her jealousy of one of these men. We also learn that Katherina is Bianca's 'elder' sister so perhaps Katherina feels that she should be married first.

(c) **You are auditioning for the part of Bianca, Katherina or Baptista. Which part would you like most?**

Circle: Bianca **Katherina** Baptista

How do you plan on impressing the casting director?

I would perfect key elements of my performance, concentrating on my tone of voice, facial expression and movement across the stage during the audition. Katherina is a formidable character whose anger only increases throughout this scene. I would hiss in a frightening, cruel way as I demand the truth from Bianca. I would roar and shout as I vow revenge. My face would be contorted so as to show my true, cruel nature. All the while, I would pace around the stage, slamming my hand against the wall and then moving closer and closer to Bianca in a threatening, powerful pose.

Question 4

40 marks

‘Family and relationships often influence the decisions we make’

Write about a time when a character made a decision that was motivated by family or a relationship.

Your answer must be based on the play you have studied by William Shakespeare.

Title: *Romeo and Juliet*

Character: Juliet

(a) **What decision did your chosen character make?**

Juliet was faced with what seemed like an impossible situation. Romeo, the man she loves and intends to marry, has killed her cousin, Tybalt. With the help of Friar Laurence, the lovers decide that Romeo must leave Verona after their secret wedding.

Unaware of Juliet's marriage to Romeo, Lord Capulet insists his daughter should marry Paris. Juliet loves Romeo and must avoid marrying Paris. Juliet takes a potion, making her appear dead for forty-two hours. This way, everyone will believe she has died. It is Juliet's first brave and bold move.

After hearing the news of Juliet's death, Romeo returns to Verona. Next to Juliet's 'dead' body, Romeo decides he cannot live without her and meets 'his timeless end' by drinking poison. When Juliet awakens from her potion, she cannot bear the sight before her eyes. Staring at the dead body of her 'star-cross'd' lover, Juliet is faced with the toughest decision of her life. In a bold move, she stabs herself with 'a happy dagger' belonging to Romeo and dies.

Juliet's decision to kill herself in such a deliberate and violent way at the end is something she does without hesitation. She does not consider alternative options, feeling it is the only thing she can do. She cannot conceive a life without her true love. Without Romeo, she has no relationship and no marriage. She is alone. Juliet's ultimate decision to kill herself is motivated by Romeo's death and the end of her relationship.

(b) In what way do you think this decision was motivated by family or a relationship?

The Montague and Capulet families are bitter rivals, both clinging to an 'ancient grudge' which means that Romeo and Juliet are forbidden from even speaking to one another. It is this long-standing family feud that forces Romeo and Juliet to marry in secret, hiding their relationship for fear of the consequences. Juliet would not have felt trapped by this entire situation had the families been able to get along. Juliet's decision to take a potion and feign death was entirely motivated by her father's desire for her to marry Paris. She felt she had no way out.

As well as the feud which exists between both the Montague and the Capulet families, it is fair to say that Juliet's father does not listen to his daughter. He does not care to hear that Juliet does not wish to marry Paris. It was typical at the time for fathers to make decisions such as this for their children without considering what might make their child happy. Juliet's father tried to make her decisions for her, but the ultimate decision belonged to Juliet. She chose to end her life, believing the alternative was too awful. Both families realised the error of their ways following the death of their children, which shows that the whole situation could have been avoided. It is regretful that both Romeo and Juliet's decisions were prompted by the attitude and outlook of their respective families.

(c) In your opinion, did the character make the right choice?

I think that Juliet made the wrong choice because her life was just beginning. Although her life would have been changed forever following the death of the person she loved, Juliet may have found some happiness and peace as the years passed. Retrospectively, I wish Juliet had been honest with her parents earlier on in the play, revealing the truth about her marriage to Romeo.

While I think that Juliet's decision to take her life was hasty and tragic, I understand the strength of her love for Romeo. She could not live without him. For her, it felt like the only option. The entire situation is disastrous and makes for a very sorrowful ending to the play.

(d) Which of the following statements about your studied play do you agree with most?

Tick:

Family is highly valued within the society of my studied play

Shakespeare explores the theme of 'relationships' in my studied play

I learned an important lesson about family after studying this play

I agree with this statement because ...

Shakespeare explores the tragic nature of relationships, 'for never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo'. He subtly forces us to question the role parents play in their children's relationships and marriages, with Lord Capulet forcing his daughter to marry against her will. The inability of both sets of parents to accept the genuine love shared between Romeo and Juliet is what forces them to marry in secret and hide the truth. Shakespeare's theme of 'relationships' enables us to reflect and learn from the mistakes of the lovers and their families.

Section C Theme and Imagery in Poetry

Question 5

30 marks

- (a) Based on two of the items she kept in her handbag, what do we learn about the speaker's mother?

First item:

Lipstick and Coty powder

What it says about the speaker's mother:

The speaker's mother carried lipstick and foundation powder in her handbag, which suggests she was a glamorous lady who took pride in her appearance. These items are typically associated with 'womanliness' as the poet suggests.

Second item:

Letters she carried all through the war

What it says about the speaker's mother:

We learn that the speaker's mother carried letters from her husband throughout the war. This tells us that this woman lived through difficult times and must have experienced great hardships – parting with her husband who must have left to fight in the war, never to return. The letters were obviously of great sentimental value to the speaker's mother. She kept her husband's letters close to her, which shows how much she loved and missed him.

- (b) Select two poetic techniques that the poet uses to tell the story of her mother and father in wartime. Give an example of its use in the poem.

Technique	Quote from poem
Alliteration	'crowded with letters she carried' 'look of those letters,'
Repetition	'leather' 'letters' 'handbag' 'powder'

- (c) In your view, what is the overall theme of this poem? Explain your answer with reference to the poem.

I would suggest that love and loss are the central themes in this poem. The poet writes with great tenderness about her parents, their shared love and the loss experienced by her mother. She celebrates their relationship throughout the poem, acknowledging the deep sense of grief and sorrow that her mother experienced after the death of her husband. The smell of the bag, the 'leather and powder' really affects the poet who may be dealing with the loss of her parents, whom she loved.

Question 6

20 marks

'Every family has a story to tell'

Think of a poem you have studied that features a family story, situation or relationship.

Poem: 'Morning Song'

Poet: Sylvia Plath

Introduce the family in this poem and briefly describe their story. Support your answer with quotations.

'Morning Song' was written following the birth of the poet's first child. It marks the beginning of family life for the poet. At first, the experience of motherhood is strange and unfamiliar. The poet struggles to feel comfortable in her role as mother. Plath compares her newborn baby to a 'New statue in a drafty museum'. It is as if the mother and father are standing in awe of their child, comparing her to a fantastic, flawless piece of art.

Plath celebrates her new family in this poem. Her maternal instincts are strong by the end of the poem, as she listens carefully to the 'moth breath' of her newborn baby. She tells us that with just 'one cry' she stumbles instinctively from her bed to her baby. In the end, both parents have been changed by the birth of their child. Their family life has begun!

How does the poet tell the story of this family? (Consider style and technique.)

The poet makes use of beautiful and effective poetic devices to tell the story of the beginning of her family. I love the use of metaphor in 'Morning Song'. My favourite is when Plath uses a metaphor to compare the vulnerability of her child to the statue in a 'drafty museum'. It reminds us of how precious the child is and how daunting it must be for new parents to face this huge responsibility.

Plath also makes use of interesting imagery and sound to tell the story of her family. Images such as the 'midwife' slapping the soles of the baby's feet, the arrival of morning as daylight 'swallows' the 'dull stars' of night are two examples of where the poet brings the story to life. Plath uses a simile to describe the sound of the baby's clear vowels which 'rise like balloons'.

The use of language, descriptive detail and poetic devices enhance the story of the arrival of Plath's first child, making it a memorable, touching poem.

Section D Appreciating Audience

Question 7

25 marks

(a) Who do you think reads film reviews and why?

Who

Film fans and those who are planning on going to the cinema to see a specific film

Why

People might like to know what to expect from a film before going to see it. It is expensive to go to the cinema and sometimes it is difficult to choose which film to see, so reviews can help in the decision-making process. They offer information about the plot, script, performances, special effects and so on. Many film fans are interested in this information and find it useful.

(b) Do you think Brogen Hayes does a good job of reviewing the film for her audience? Justify your answer with valid reasoning.

Brogen Hayes offers lots of information about the film itself, outlining the plot at the beginning of her review. This is useful for those who have not seen the original film, or those who may need to be reminded of the premise of the film *The Jungle Book*.

Readers are given information about the all-star cast, with names like Idris Elba, Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson voicing some of the central animal voice-over roles. Hayes assesses these performances along with the dialogue, music and technical elements of the film.

Overall, this review is clear and detailed. It should provide readers with enough information for them to decide if this film is for them or not. It is given a rating of 3.5 out of 5 which may not be enough of an endorsement for those looking for encouragement to see this film.

(c) Would you want to see *The Jungle Book* after reading this review? Give at least two reasons for your answer.

I would love to see the film because I am a huge fan of Idris Elba. I am curious to know what his 'fearsome' performance is like in this film. I think the line-up is amazing, with a wonderful cast of A-list actors. I find it particularly interesting when Hayes alludes to Scarlett Johansson's 'mesmerising' performance and feel eager to hear this for myself.

I would also like to see *The Jungle Book* because I loved the original Disney animated film as a child. The music is my favourite of all Disney films so I am looking forward to evaluating the inclusion of 'some of the songs from the animated 1967 Disney movie' for myself.

Overall, I would be delighted to see *The Jungle Book* based on Hayes' review.

(d) Who is the target audience for this film, in your opinion?

In my opinion, *The Jungle Book* is targeted at fans of the original film. This means that the age and gender of the target audience could vary greatly. Hayes makes the point that this film is 'both scary and fun, with morals for both kids and adults throughout'. Since the film appeals to both adults and children alike, parents may be happy to accompany their children to see *The Jungle Book*.

However, I feel that the 'intimidating and fearsome', 'eccentric' characters along with the 'Godfather' King Louie may mean that this film is more appropriate for an adult audience. Probably, children going to see this film should be accompanied by an adult and the film has enough to entertain both age groups.

Sample F

Happily Ever After

There are **three sections** in this examination.

Section A Reading Comprehension Strategy

60 marks

- **Question 1:** There are two parts to this question. Quote from what you have read and, most importantly, give valid reasons for your answers. Support your opinions with evidence.
- **Question 2:** This question focuses on language and vocabulary. In your own words, you should write a meaning for each word in the table. If you do not understand one of the words, do not panic. The words in the table are taken from the extract, so locate the word and read the sentence again.
- **Question 2:** Imagine Aloma and Tom's conversation when it was time for him to leave. Notice how the sample answer provided is structured in the form of a dialogue. This is exactly what the examiner will be looking for, so avoid lengthy paragraphs and instead try to capture the voices of Aloma and Tom.

Section B Responding to Studied Texts

70 marks

- **Question 4:** You must only answer on the play you have studied by William Shakespeare. Avoid summarising the plot, focus only on the situation and complications in part (a), the resolution in part (b) and your own response in part (c). You should refer to and quote from the play in your answers.
- **Question 5:** You are asked to write about revenge, tragedy or forgiveness in one of your studied novels. You should only write about one of these themes – avoid summarising the entire plot. Your response should be concise and to the point. Address the question from the very first line.

Section C Reading Texts to Understand

50 marks

- **Question 6:** All questions are based on the letter. In part (c) you are asked to imagine how the boy felt as he left for university. Remember to use the reading material, basing your answer on what has been revealed in the letter.
- **Question 7:** Here you must write a letter of your own. Model your letter on the one you have read in Question 6. As this letter is intended for publication in a newspaper, you do not need to include your full name or address.

Question 1

20 marks

- (a) The author tells us that without her husband ‘there was no joy’ in Christmas. Based on what you have read, do you think her Christmas was joyful in the end? Give reasons for your answer.

Circle:

Yes

No

Reasons why:

Despite the great sorrow which the author feels, I believe she experienced a new sort of joy at Christmas. This is because of the kindness of her ‘Christmas angel’, who somehow brought a sense of hope and happiness to the household.

I can imagine the joy the author felt at the sight of the Christmas tree, decorations and beautifully presented Christmas dinner. She recalls ‘the best Christmas dinner [she] ever had’ as her heart felt full. It must have meant so much to the author to see her children busily decorating the house and helping to prepare dinner. She feels thankful for Tom who helped to fill Christmas with joy.

- (b) Which of the following statements do you agree with most? Explain your chosen statement in the space below.

(i) There is always hope, even in the worst circumstances.	(ii) Having someone who cares for you makes all the difference.	(iii) Family is the greatest gift of all.
--	---	---

My chosen statement is ...

Having someone who cares for you makes all the difference.

I agree with this statement because ...

As we have seen in the extract, the kindness and care shown by someone in times of need can really help. There are times in life when we will fail and when things go wrong. It is during such challenging moments that we need the support of those around us. Many of us will know what it is like to feel insecure or upset and having someone who cares for you really does help to lift your spirits.

Question 2

18 marks

The author tells us that ‘Tom was just amazing’.

In the space below, write one synonym of the word ‘amazing’.

The author tells us that ‘Tom was just amazing.’

- (c) In the space below, write one synonym of the word ‘amazing’.

Wonderful

- (d) Explain the meaning of each of the following words and write a sentence using each word correctly. Your sentences should show an understanding of each word and should not be taken from the extract above.

Word	Meaning	Sentence
Dependent	Reliant on someone or something.	Young children are very dependent on their parents.
Transition	The process of change.	The transition from primary to secondary school is straightforward for most students.
Despair	Terrible sadness or lack of hope.	A feeling of despair came over me when I found out that I was not picked for the team.
Exhausted	Extremely tired.	After walking for hours, Declan had never been so exhausted in his life.

Question 3

22 marks

The arrival of a stranger brings hope and happiness to the author’s home at Christmas.

Write the conversation between the author and her visitor, Tom, when it is time for him to return home after Christmas.

Aloma: (Helping Tom to the car with his bags) I can’t thank you enough.

Tom: There is no need. Maybe you and the kids will come to Seattle for a vacation?

Aloma: That sounds lovely, it could be our turn to look after you and return the favour.

Tom: You are welcome any time. Remember, it gets a little easier every day. Just take things one day at a time.

Aloma: I will. (Hesitates slightly) You know, Tom, I called you my Christmas angel, my saviour. I don’t know how we would have made it through Christmas if it wasn’t for you. You brought laughter and light to my family and I will always be grateful to you for that. (Handing Tom a small package) This is just a small token of our thanks – something to remember us by.

Tom: Aloma, you shouldn’t have.

Aloma: Just something small to show our appreciation. Go on, open it.

Tom: (Carefully opening the brown paper) The photograph we took of the kids underneath the tree? I will treasure it! And I’ll always remember this Christmas. Thank you, Aloma. When the kids wake up, give them a hug from their Uncle Tom. (Gives Aloma a kiss on the cheek)

Aloma: Goodbye, Tom. Have a safe journey home!

Tom: (Waving) Until you visit – so long!

(As Tom's hired car pulls out of the driveway, Aloma smiles.)

Section B Responding to Studied Texts

‘Everyone involved in a play, from the actors to the audience members, should feel moved by the ending.’

Consider the ending of the play by William Shakespeare which you have studied as part of your Junior Cycle English course.

Question 4

60 marks

Write the details of your chosen text in the box below:

Title:

Romeo and Juliet

(a) Write about the situation at the beginning of the play and outline at least one of the complications facing the characters involved.

In the opening scenes of the play we are introduced to the central plot surrounding Romeo and Juliet’s forbidden relationship. Romeo Montague meets Juliet Capulet when he attends a masked ball hosted by the Capulet family. When he sees her he declares ‘I ne’er saw true beauty till this night’. The pair fall instantly in love.

In any other play this might prove a hopeful and pleasing start to a romantic relationship. However, for Romeo and Juliet things could not be more complicated since their families share an ‘ancient grudge’. Juliet’s Nurse tells her that the young man she has kissed is ‘the only son of [her] greatest enemy’. The love between Romeo and Juliet will never be accepted because of the hatred that exists between both families. Juliet is devastated that she has fallen in love with ‘a loathéd enemy’.

The audience witnessed a fight between the Montagues and Capulets on the streets of Verona in the opening scene. This means the audience is aware that a relationship between a Montague son and Capulet daughter will enrage members of both families, worsening the tension between them. Romeo and Juliet’s love is forbidden so the only way they can be together is by keeping their relationship a secret.

(b) How was the situation in your studied play resolved at the end?

The Montague and Capulet families resolve their differences by putting the feud aside at the end of the play. This resolution comes at a great cost however, as both families have suffered immeasurable tragedy. As we were made aware in the prologue, both Romeo and Juliet take their own lives and ‘with their death bury their parents’ strife’.

Unaware of Juliet’s plan with Friar Lawrence, and believing she is dead, Romeo drinks poison, bringing about the ‘untimely death’ which he prophesised in Act 1. When she awakens, Juliet cannot bear the thought of living without her true love and fatally stabs herself with a ‘happy dagger’. The actions of the young lovers, and ultimately their deaths, bring about reconciliation and an end to the feud. Both families realise how senseless their rivalry has been.

(c) Did you find the ending of the play moving? Explain your answer with reference to the play.

The ending of this play is tragic because of the untimely deaths of Romeo and Juliet. I found it very emotional, particularly since the entire situation could have been avoided. It was also touching to witness the true love which the couple shared as neither could live without the other. Romeo insisted he 'still will stay with thee' when he sees Juliet in her family tomb. His final act before death is to kiss his wife, and I think this is truly moving. I felt great sorrow at the dreadful outcome of my studied play.

Question 5

10 marks

'There are three kinds of big endings. Revenge. Tragedy. Forgiveness.' – Jeanette Winterson, Writer.

Could this statement be applied to the ending of the novel which you have studied as part of your Junior Cycle English course?

Title:

To Kill a Mockingbird

Author:

Harper Lee

Discuss whether revenge, tragedy or forgiveness feature in the ending of your novel in the space below.

To Kill a Mockingbird ends when Scout finally achieves her goal to 'make Boo Radley come out'. The circumstances surrounding the encounter between Scout and Boo are tragic, in my opinion. Bob Ewell attacks Scout and Jem as they are walking home past the Radley house in the dark. It is Boo who saves their lives. The tragedy is that Bob Ewell's actions throughout the novel not only turn his own daughter, Mayella, into a liar but now turn Boo into a murderer as he stabs Bob to protect the children. Since Boo is already so fragile both Atticus and Heck Tate agree to protect him because 'it's a sin to kill a mockingbird'. Despite this, I regret that Boo was caught up in Bob Ewell's evil plan.

The outcome of the novel also involves tragedy for the black community, as Tom Robinson is found guilty of raping Mayella Ewell, a crime he did not commit. It is a tragedy that, because of the colour of his skin, 'Tom was a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth'. Tom is later shot dead when, according to Atticus, he got 'tired of white men's chances and preferred to take his own' by attempting to escape from prison. His wife and children are left alone, while Tom's otherwise good name is disgraced. Atticus is also defeated and described in more fragile terms as a 'feeble' man by Scout at the end. Readers cannot deny the tragic elements that contribute to the overall outcome of the novel.

Question 6

26 marks

(a) In this letter, the author expresses his gratitude for his mother's support throughout his life.

How has the boy's mother contributed to his success?

The author's 'love of history' was fostered by his mother who 'would always make time to read [him] a Horrible Histories' despite being busy. She clearly instilled a passion for History in her son, as evidenced by the fact that he will now study this subject at university. The author also acknowledges his mother's encouragement and reassurance, as she believed that he 'deserved' his place at Oxford. It is clear that the author's mother made a significant contribution to his success, in particular when he calls her his 'motivator, counsellor and biggest fan'.

(b) Based on your reading of this letter, select three adjectives to describe the mother to whom the letter is written.

Supportive
Patient
Encouraging

(c) Describe how the boy may be feeling as he begins his journey away from home to study at Oxford University.

I'm sure that some of the boy's previous feelings of 'self-doubt' occupy his mind as he travels away from home. He is open about his initial feelings of inferiority and insecurity in the early stages of his application to Oxford University, but tells us that his mother reminded him that he 'deserved' his place and to 'shake off' any negative attitude. Without his mother by his side, it is likely that the author feels apprehensive. Despite this, I think he will be feeling a sense of excitement as he begins this new chapter in his life. I believe he will be determined to make his mother proud.

Question 7

24 marks

The letter you have read appeared in a newspaper as part of a series entitled ‘The letter you always wanted to write’, where readers were invited to have their letters published.

Think of a letter you always wanted to write. Your letter could:

- thank someone for their love and support
- set the record straight
- voice your opinion
- reveal a secret
- say sorry.

Write your letter to the person of your choice in the space provided.

26th May 2018

A letter to ... my brother

Do you remember when we were little, how every Christmas Eve you would sleep in my bed? It was mainly because neither of us could sleep with anticipation. We would whisper to each other, hushing every so often to listen for sleigh bells. I would tell you stories that made us laugh so much we had to bite the blankets for fear of being heard. We knew that Santa only came to well-behaved, sleeping children.

Unlike other homes, our stockings were hung at the bottom of the bed – the stockings on the fireplace were just for decoration. Every year, at the crack of dawn, one of us would waken and stretch a foot to where the bulging stockings overflowed with gifts. We were so close then that we wouldn’t dare go downstairs alone. We would dance on the landing floor, urging our parents to hurry as they stretched sleepily into their dressing gowns. Our excitement could be measured in the strength of our squeeze as we held hands while entering the living room.

After that, Christmas Day became a blur of visiting aunts and uncles, eating turkey sandwiches and cycling new bikes in our new clothes. We were the best of friends.

Christmas is different now that we are teenagers. We don’t listen out for the sounds of sleigh bells or tell stories late into the night on Christmas Eve. But I want you to know that I feel lucky to have shared those times with you. Though my stories may not be as good as when we were five years old, I am still, and always will be, your big sister, ready to hold your hand.

With love,

Your Sis x

Sample G

The Power of Words

There are **four sections** in this examination.

Section A **Reading Texts to Understand**

55 marks

- **Question 1:** You are asked a series of questions based on a speech from the film *Rocky Balboa*. Pick out the key words in each question and keep these in mind as you read the speech. Underline any quotes which you may wish to include in your answers. Remember that you should address each question and make your point as clearly as possible. Use quotation to support your answer. Explain your response in your own words.
- **Question 2:** You are asked questions that focus on language in the speech. Examiners will not expect a dictionary definition of ‘colloquial language’, but you should explain the term clearly in your own words.

Section B **Interpreting and Responding to Poetry**

55 marks

- **Question 3:** Here you must answer a series of questions based on a poem that you have not studied. Quote from the poem in your answers and remember to explain each point you make. In part (b) you are asked about the poet’s use of language. It is important to examine the use of poetic devices in your response. Note how the sample answer provided makes reference to ‘the power of words’, which is the theme of this examination paper.
- **Question 4:** You are expected to write an informal letter. Pay attention to structure by placing your address and date on the right-hand side of the page. Your tone should be somewhat friendly or familiar.

Section C **Responding to Studied Texts**

30 marks

- **Question 5:** You are asked to write about a powerful message in one of your studied texts. Choose between a studied play, novel or film. You should only write about the powerful message – avoid summarising the entire text. Your response should be succinct and concise. Address the question from the very first line.

Section D **Reading Comprehension Strategies**

40 marks

- **Question 6:** You are asked a series of questions based on the speech by John F. Kennedy. Remember to pick out the key words in each question and keep these in mind as you read the speech. Underline any quotes which may be used to strengthen your answers. You should familiarise yourself with effective speech writing techniques which you will name and discuss in part (b). Remember to address each question and make your point clearly using quotation.
- **Question 7:** You are asked to write a talk. Consider audience, content and expression. Aim to engage with your audience, making use of some of the techniques identified in the previous question.

Section A Reading Texts to Understand

Question 1

30 marks

(a) Is this an effective speech, in your opinion? Give two reasons for your answer.

Circle: Yes [Circled] No Partly

First reason:

This speech is convincing and sounds realistic. It is clear that this is a father who really wants to motivate his son, telling him to ‘go out and get what you’re worth’. I can imagine the father delivering these lines with passion as he succeeds in teaching his son an important lesson.

Second reason:

The father speaks in a determined and convincing way throughout, making this a very effective speech. He is persuasive, insisting that ‘winning is done’ by ‘moving forward’ no matter how life knocks you back. That father’s meaning is clear – never give up, despite the difficulty which you may face.

(b) What is the father’s message? Consider what you learned from reading the speech.

The father’s message is centred around his belief that ‘nobody is gonna hit as hard as life’. He tells his son to fight back and take responsibility for himself instead of ‘looking for something to blame’. I think he wants his son to realise that persisting through the tough times in life makes him a winner.

(c) In your view, which of these words best describes the speech? Explain your choice.

Tick the word you have chosen:

Harsh	
Motivating	[Tick]
Inspiring	

I think this because ...

This is a highly motivating speech, in my opinion. It would appear that Rocky’s son was allowing other people to get to him, perhaps he was even doubting himself by believing others who said ‘you’re no good’. The father convinces his son that he should rely on himself and find the strength to carry on. I can picture the son going into the boxing ring ‘willing to take the hits’ but ready and motivated to get up and fight back.

Question 2

25 marks

(a) Explain the term ‘colloquial language’.

Informal, ordinary language that people use on an everyday basis.

(b) Find two examples of colloquial language employed by the father in his speech.

First example:

‘You, me or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life’

Second example:

‘You ain’t where you wanna be’

(c) Explain whether you think the use of colloquial language makes the speech more or less effective.

The inclusion of colloquial language gives the speech a realistic quality. It becomes more believable as we can imagine the delivery of the father's words. He is speaking from the heart in a way that is familiar to his son, and this makes his message more effective.

(d) Write about the use of metaphor in the father's speech. You are advised to choose one metaphor from the speech in your answer.

We are told that 'life will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it'. Here, the father uses a metaphor to emphasise the difficulty which we will all experience in life. He compares these difficulties to a fight and insists his son should fight back since 'the world ain't all sunshine and rainbows'. The metaphor is an effective way for the father to open his son's eyes to the reality of life.

Question 3

35 marks

(a) What is your understanding of the central theme and meaning of this poem? Make reference to the poem throughout your response.

I think this poem is about the distance that can exist between two people. This theme is explored as the poet encourages the reader to 'picture the space' separating two people as 'far, far away'. This could suggest the distance between people who live far away from one another or who may have lost contact for some reason. The poet explores the way this gap can be closed when both people communicate effectively. This draws our attention to the power of words which can succeed in bringing people together.

(b) Do you think the poet uses language to good effect throughout the poem? Comment on the poet's style, technique and word choice.

The poet skilfully uses language throughout this poem, alluding to the union of two people towards the end. There is excellent use of rhyme and alliteration throughout the poem, giving it a sense of rhythm and musicality. The end rhyme of 'grace' and 'space' really stood out to me. The alliterative 'points as people' and repetition of 'A' and 'B' give the poem a memorable quality.

The inclusion of words like 'vectors' and 'mathematical' might appear out of place in a poem, but here these terms work to great effect. The poet uses an oxymoron to describe how the points move 'with mathematical grace'. This reference may be unexpected but it provides insight and an alternative way of imagining the beginning or renewal of a relationship.

(c) Did you enjoy reading this poem? Write about how the poem made you feel.

This poem was really thought-provoking and I found it intriguing. It helped me to imagine two people forming a relationship in an unusual way – by imagining their bond strengthening in mathematical terms. It made me feel that we all have a place in the universe and that some people are meant to be together. 'Filling the Void' highlights the importance of communication and shows how words can bring people closer together.

Question 4

20 marks

Imagine you are the person addressed in the poem 'Touching the Void'. You have been won over by the poet's words and decide to reach out to them.

Since you are feeling nervous, you decide to express how you feel in a letter. Write your letter in the space below.

123 Main Street

'Not so far away'

11th February 2018

Dear B,

I can't believe it has been so long since we last spoke. You were right, there has been a huge void in my life since we saw each other. I don't know where to begin – how do I put things right? I still don't understand how on earth we fell out because of something so silly.

Like you, I want to fill the void. I want us to be close again. Your poem meant the world to me and I cried when I read it. Do you think we can put it all behind us and be friends again? Here are the words stretching from A to B – can you forgive me?

Your hopeful friend,
A

Section C Responding to Studied Texts

‘Powerful messages are conveyed through powerful words in our studied texts.’

Consider the way in which a powerful message is explored in one of your studied texts.

Remember that a novel, play or film which you have studied as part of your English course may constitute a ‘studied text’.

Title of chosen text:

The Merchant of Venice

Name of author:

William Shakespeare

Question 5

30 marks

(a) What powerful message is conveyed in the text which you have named above?

The most powerful message conveyed in the play is that people should be treated with respect. There is a lack of equality amongst many of the characters in the play. We quickly learn that in the world of Venice, Jews suffer at the hands of the Christians. Shylock, the Jewish moneylender, recalls being kicked ‘as you spurn a stranger cur’, called names like ‘cutthroat dog’, and ‘spet upon’ simply because he is Jewish.

The man responsible for this downright disrespectful, prejudiced behaviour is Antonio, a Christian merchant. Antonio, believing Shylock is ‘rotten at the heart’ feels no remorse, proudly announcing ‘I am as like to call thee so again, to spet on thee again, to spurn thee too’. This lack of regard for others, and in particular, the disrespect which Antonio shows Shylock is the cause of much of the conflict in the play.

(b) How does the author manage to convey this message to you? You must reference and quote from your chosen text in your answer.

Shakespeare conveys the message through Shylock’s monologue in Act 3, Scene 1. The audience can’t help but sympathise with Shylock, despite his faults and wrongdoings. We realise that treating others as though they are inferior and somehow undeserving of our respect can be extremely damaging.

Shylock reminds us that people are equal, despite their apparent differences. In a moving speech, Shylock asks ‘if you prick us, do we not bleed?’ It becomes clear that Shylock has suffered so terribly that he now seeks revenge. Shylock insists that ‘the villainy you [Christians] teach me, I will execute.’ Through this speech, I realised that unless people treat others fairly and with the respect that they deserve then the cycle of violence and hatred will continue.

I saw how Antonio almost paid with his life for his despicable actions before Portia intervened. I watched as Shylock sharpened his knife preparing to take his ‘pound of flesh’ with a thirst for revenge. Ultimately, it was the long-suffering Jew who paid the price for his behaviour. Shylock was left with nothing at the end, even losing his identity as he was forced to leave behind his Jewish faith and become a Christian. Shakespeare shows that there are often severe consequences when people are treated with hatred and disrespect.

Question 6

20 marks

(a) Do you think John F. Kennedy's description of the rocket which he plans to send to the moon is clear and effective? Refer to the first paragraph in your explanation.

John F. Kennedy describes the rocket in great detail, telling us that it will be 'giant' in size at over '300 feet tall' and as long as a 'football field'. He creates an image of a powerful vessel made with precision, capable of 'carrying all the equipment needed' to reach 'an unknown celestial body'. The reader, or listener, can clearly picture the rocket which will be used to reach the moon.

(b) John F. Kennedy makes use of various techniques in his speech. Find two of these techniques and write them in the space below, give an example of both.

Technique	Example from the text:
Use of reference to and quotation from the explorer, George Mallory.	'Because it is there.' John F. Kennedy offers George Mallory's reason for climbing Mount Everest as a reason to explore space.
Use of humour to engage the audience.	John F. Kennedy tells his audience to 'stay cool for a minute', which is met with laughter.

Explain how the techniques you have chosen strengthen Kennedy's speech.

When John F. Kennedy refers to George Mallory's quest to conquer Mount Everest, it is a reminder to the American people that they should have the same spirit and interest in space exploration. The reference to George Mallory, who many people admire for his bravery, makes this speech more emotive.

Through humour, the audience feel included and engaged. When a speaker succeeds in making their audience laugh, it is easier to convey a message. I think that Kennedy addresses the main issue which some people might have with space exploration in a casual and funny way. Undoubtedly, this would help to put peoples' minds at ease should they be concerned about the costs involved in sending astronauts to the moon.

(c) Imagine you are a member of the audience listening to the above speech. Choose the word that best describes how you would feel. Explain your choice in the space provided.

Tick the word you have chosen:

Excited	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bored	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doubtful	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain your choice.

I would feel thrilled at the prospect of space exploration, believing that my country would send a rocket to the moon in my lifetime. It would be so exciting to witness 'the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked'. This is especially true in an era of limited global travel and connectivity. Kennedy's words leave no doubt that during the decade enormous possibilities like space travel would be realised.

Question 7

20 marks

You have recently noticed cruel and offensive comments on social media aimed at a student in your class. The principal of your school has been made aware of the issue.

You have been asked to give a talk to your class about the impact of their words, in an effort to make students more aware of the things they say to or about others.

Using the prompt below, write the text of the talk you would give in the space provided.

Your words have the power to hurt or to heal. Use them wisely.

My fellow students, I cannot emphasise enough the importance of thinking before speaking, before making comments to someone's face, behind someone's back or online. A 'throwaway' comment from you could be so damaging and upsetting for another person. After all, none of us really know how someone feels inside or what they might be going through.

Raise your hand if you have ever been on the receiving end of a nasty comment.

(Pause to look around the room)

Believe it or not, I did not expect so many of you to raise your hands. Take a look around this room – nearly every person here has been the target of this kind of treatment. Perhaps the comment which you found hurtful was not intended to cause you pain. Perhaps the person simply failed to consider your feelings. I am here to encourage you all to think of the power of your words. With just a few carefully chosen words, you have the power to lift others up, to make them feel good about themselves. You also have the power to do harm by putting someone down. It is time to decide what you want to do with the words you use. Do you want to cause the same hurt that you have felt in the past, or do you want to be the reason someone smiles? I think we all know the right answer.

Finally, I'm going to share my grandmother's favourite phrase with you. Many of you will be familiar with it: 'If you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all'. This is the wisest way to use your words.

And remember - think before you type!

Thank you for listening.