



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2023

English - Higher Level - Paper 1

Total Marks: 200

Wednesday, 7 June – Morning, 9.30 – 12.20

- This paper is divided into two sections, Section I COMPREHENDING and Section II COMPOSING.
- The paper contains **three** texts on the general theme of **BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**.
- Candidates should familiarise themselves with each of the texts before beginning their answers.
- Both sections of this paper (COMPREHENDING and COMPOSING) must be attempted.
- Each section carries 100 marks.

SECTION I – COMPREHENDING

- Two Questions, A and B, follow each text.
- Candidates must answer a Question A on one text and a Question B on a different text. Candidates must answer only one Question A and only one Question B.

N.B. Candidates may NOT answer a Question A and a Question B on the same text.

SECTION II – COMPOSING

- Candidates must write on **one** of the compositions 1 – 7.

Do not hand this up.

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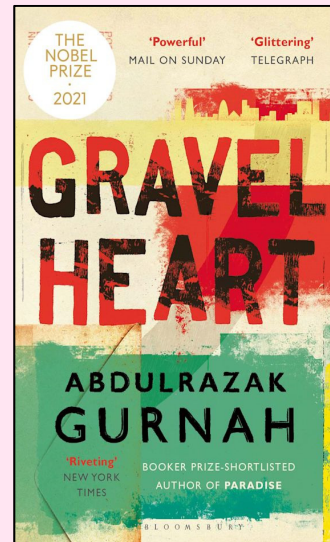
TEXT 1 – BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: VILLAGE AND CITY

This text is based on an edited extract from *Gravel Heart*, a novel by Abdulrazak Gurnah, 2021 Nobel Prize winner for literature. In this extract Salim, from a small island village in Zanzibar, comes to stay with his uncle in London to further his education. He doesn't know how to belong in this strange city and feels cut off from the world he has left behind.

When I went to live with Uncle Amir in London, it was his wish that I should study for a career in business. "In your circumstances, it is the perfect option and it will allow you to work anywhere in the world. Make money! Think of the outcomes: accountancy, management, consultancy, and at the end of it all plenty of money in the bank."

It would have sounded cowardly to tell him that I should have preferred to study literature. By the time I left for London, I had worked my way through most of my father's books, had made good progress through the school library shelves, had borrowed and exchanged books with friends, and I thought of myself as someone with proven credentials as a future student of literature. When I came to London I realised how unimpressive my credentials were, how much there was to read, how much there was to work through. Uncle Amir had different plans for me and I did not have the courage to say anything about how I might have preferred to proceed with my life.

I was moved by the pleasure they took in my arrival. They both beamed smiles at me and Auntie Asha spoke to me as if I was a diffident younger brother who needed to be brought out of himself. I was too flustered to take in everything immediately, but I noticed the amplitude of space and the expensive furnishings. Auntie Asha took me upstairs to show me my room which was luxurious: a large bed, a dark wardrobe the depth of a coffin, a wide desk, a chest of drawers, a bookshelf, a comfortable reading chair, and still enough space in the middle for a rug. A whole family lived in a room of this size where I had come from. My suitcase, which I

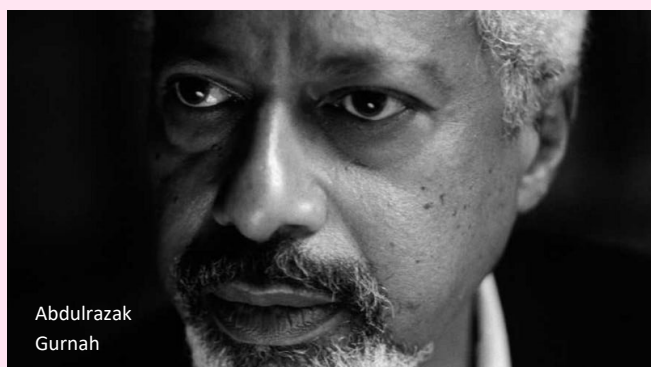


had bought new just before I left, looked cheap and flimsy and tiny on that rug, like a cardboard box. I sat on the bed when I was left alone, looking around the room, gazing out of the darkened window then at the clean bare desk with its angled lamp, and I smiled. That is the desk where I will sit and write to Mama about the wonders I encounter and I won't allow the thought of my ignorance to discourage me. I allowed this resolution to overcome the slight feeling of panic I sensed at the edge of my mind. What was I doing here?

Dear Mama,
I hope you are well. It is now October and I started college last week. London is full of people from everywhere in the world. I just had not expected to see that, Indians, Arabs, Africans, Chinese, and I don't know where all the European people come from but they are not all English. When a double-decker bus goes by and you see the faces through the window, it is like a glimpse of a page in an illustrated children's encyclopaedia under the title People of the World. Everywhere you go,

you have to push your way through crowds and hold on to your possessions. To be honest, I think I'm scared of that press of people. It gets so crowded on the underground that I feel as if I can't breathe. Trains that travel under the ground! We are so backward! You just cannot imagine how enormous the city is. Love, Salim.

London terrified me so much. The streets confused me. The buses and taxis and cars roared past and churned up my gut. The rush of people and vehicles muddled my sense of direction and panicked me. I felt as if the city despised me, as if I were a tiresome and timorous child who had wandered unwelcome out of the dust and rubble of his puny island shanty into this place where boldness and greed and swagger were required for survival.



*Dear Mama,
I stood on ice today. I woke up in the morning to a deep hush, and went to the window to look out at the back garden, and everything was changed. All the neighbouring roofs were covered with snow and everywhere looked so clean. The pavements were covered too, which was beautiful to walk on at first, crunchy and almost silent, but the snow soon became dirty and perilous from so many feet and from the wash of cars driving by. But that first moment when I stood on ice, I will never forget that. The crisp air made breathing easier. I think today was the happiest day I have had here. Love, Salim.*

I learnt to live in London, to avoid being intimidated by crowds and by rudeness, to avoid curiosity, not to feel desolate at hostile stares and to walk purposefully wherever I went. I learnt to live with the cold and the dirt, and to evade the angry students at college with their swagger and their sense of grievance. I learnt to live with the chaotic languages of London which did not speak to each other. I tried but could not join in the city's human carnival. I feared the silent empty streets at night and always hurried home.

N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

- (i) Based on your reading of TEXT 1, explain three insights you gain into Salim's character. Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) To what extent do you agree with Uncle Amir's view that making money is an important consideration when choosing a course to study in college? Develop three points to support your response. (15)
- (iii) Features of both narrative writing and descriptive writing are used effectively by Abdulrazak Gurnah to capture the world Salim encounters in this passage. Discuss this statement, supporting your response with reference to four language features in the text. You may include features of narrative writing, features of descriptive writing, or both in your discussion. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

Imagine you are Salim and you have been in London for over a year. Write a new personal **letter** to your mother in which you: describe a number of experiences you have had that you believe will fascinate your mother, reflect on both the positive and negative insights you have gained into human nature as an outsider in London, and consider some of the ways you believe your experience in this city has altered you as a person.

TEXT 2 – BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: THROUGH WORDS AND PICTURES

Text 2 consists of two elements. The first is an edited text by Henry Eliot entitled, *This Must be the Place* which focuses on literary locations. The second is an iconic photograph, taken in 1907 and published in *Time* magazine’s 100 most influential, historical pictures. Both elements illustrate how we can experience different worlds through words and pictures.

As a child I once found a set of old photographs of my home, with unknown people posing. I stood in the exact same spots, imagining a shiver of communication. I have since had the same experience surveying the fields of Waterloo from Napoleon’s headquarters, or looking up at the empty sky above Ground Zero. Sharing the same airspace as another, from another time, standing on the same patch of the planet, is a profound feeling. It is similar to the effect of reading a novel: your imagination bridges the gulf between someone else’s experience and your own, and expands your understanding in the process.

That’s why I get a particular thrill from visiting literary locations. Reading is a creative collaboration, so being in the environment that inspired a novelist enhances both the place and the novel: the setting is overlaid with the events of the book and the book becomes more tangible and memorable as a result. Lyme Regis, in Dorset, for example, is famous for its ancient harbour wall, the Cobb. I am particularly fond of a set of precarious steps on the Cobb, known as “Granny’s Teeth”.

They recall that dramatic moment at the centre of Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*, when Louisa Musgrove runs up them so as to be caught by Captain Wentworth: “He put out his hands; she was too precipitate by half a second, she fell on the pavement on the Lower Cobb, and was taken up lifeless!”

London, where I live, is especially rich in literary associations and sometimes they overlap, creating unexpected contrasts. The top of Primrose Hill, for instance, is the location of both the Twilight Bark in *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* and where the last Martians are torn apart by dogs in HG Wells’s *The War of the Worlds*.

Reading certainly enriches the places you know,

and it can overpower less familiar settings.

I don’t know Paris or St Petersburg as well as I know London but since visiting those cities I have read Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time* and Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, and my sense of both places has radically altered. In my mind the streets of Paris now ring with carriages ferrying beautiful people between glittering salons and St Petersburg is sweating in claustrophobic self-recrimination. In many ways the worlds of these books have become more vivid than my own fading memories.

Conversely, I had read Kafka’s *The Castle* and Steinbeck’s *East of Eden* before I visited Prague or the Salinas valley in California, so from the start both locations were deeply coloured by my experience of those books. Prague was mysterious and impenetrable, with streets and cemeteries huddled around the castle on the hill, whereas Salinas was epic and open, a great canvas on which narratives might play out.

Of course, there are many locations around the world that I have never visited and yet they still form strong impressions in my mind. One of the joys of reading is that it gives us this strong physical sense of a place we may never visit. For example, I know how it feels to walk the dark corridors of Gormenghast Castle; I know the dust of its rooms, its towers and courtyards and its fields of stone in the sky, because Mervyn Peake’s prose is so evocative, but I will never visit because it’s a pure fantasy.

Often, I select my next book based on where I am. In 2015, on a sailing holiday in Greece, I read the *Argonautica* by Apollonius; it was wonderful to read about Greek heroes, clashing rocks, harpies, monsters and armies sprung from dragon’s teeth with the gentle sound of lapping waves and a soft pine-and-salt tang in the air, just as Apollonius would have known.



This photograph, taken in 1907 by Alfred Stieglitz, shows people on board a ship, migrating for work.

N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

- (i) Based on your reading of TEXT 2 on page 4, explain three insights you gain, from Henry Eliot, into how reading novels can be an enriching experience. Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) Do you think that *Between Two Worlds* (the theme for this paper) would be a good title for Alfred Stieglitz's photograph above? Develop three points to support your response. In your response you should consider the subject matter and visual aspects of the photograph. (15)
- (iii) Features of both personal writing and informative writing are used effectively by Henry Eliot (in the written text) to explore the relationship between works of fiction and the worlds in which they are set. Discuss this statement, supporting your response with reference to four language features in the text. You may include features of personal writing, features of informative writing, or both in your discussion. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

You have been asked to write a **personal reflection** for an educational history magazine. The reflection should recall an experience you had of visiting a place of historic interest. In the reflection you should: outline the expectations you had before your visit to the place of historic interest, describe some of the thoughts and feelings you had in response to this place during the visit and, argue the case for making trips to historic places compulsory for students in Irish schools today.

TEXT 3 – BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: HUMAN AND TECHNOLOGICAL

TEXT 3 consists of two edited articles on the subject of Artificial Intelligence (AI) published in July 2022: an introduction from Patricia Scanlon, Ireland’s first Artificial Intelligence Ambassador, published in *The Irish Times* and a feature by Ben Spencer printed in *The Sunday Times* magazine entitled, “I’m better than the Bard.”

Patricia Scanlon:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is driving the fourth Industrial Revolution, building on the impact of steam power, electricity and digital technology.

Every time you speak to Siri, use predictive text or scroll through recommendations on your Netflix or Facebook newsfeed, you are interacting with AI. It is widely used in the world today but many people are still unclear about what AI is and isn’t.

One definition of AI is the ability of a machine to perform tasks that require human intelligence. Science fiction is littered with tales of intelligent machines, from *2001: A Space Odyssey* to *Star Trek*. In these storylines the machine has intelligence equal to or surpassing humans; consciousness and the ability to learn, solve problems and plan for the future. This form of AI is known in the scientific community as “generalised”.

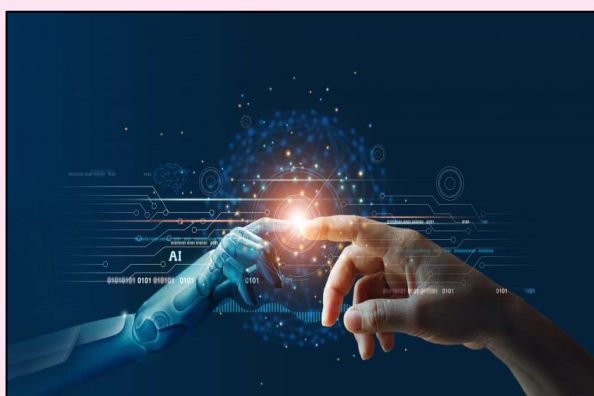
Some scientists believe it could be decades before generalised AI becomes a reality, while others doubt it ever can. Super AI, where AI surpasses complex human intelligence, is still purely speculative.

AI systems we interact with today are capable of performing a single or limited number of tasks. Within their field, these systems are powerful, can replicate human performance and in many cases even outperform humans. But it is worth noting that once these systems are presented with a situation that falls outside their learned space, they fail.

AI will continue to transform how we live and work into the future. That’s why ethical approaches to AI are needed and are in the process of being regulated via the EU Artificial Intelligence Act for the benefit of society and to build trust in AI.

Ben Spencer:

Artificial Intelligence is very good at imitation, but could it one day surpass our abilities as writers, as artists, as journalists? These questions have dominated discussions about AI for decades. George Orwell and Roald Dahl were obsessed with the idea that machines would one day replace them.



In 1949 the neuroscientist Geoffrey Jefferson, in a lecture at Manchester University, said: “Not until a machine can write a sonnet or compose a concerto because of thoughts and emotions felt, and not by the chance fall of symbols, could we agree that machine equals brain.” Alan Turing, the renowned codebreaker, said in a published response that the true test of artificial intelligence lies in whether humans can distinguish robot from human.

Does modern AI pass the test?

In the past five years AI has been revolutionised by a series of new machine-learning models – most notably GPT-3, made by OpenAI (founded by Elon Musk and developed with Microsoft investment). I assumed that a Shakespearean sonnet would be the simplest for a computer program to impersonate because it follows strict rules: 14 lines, each of 10 syllables in iambic pentameter; a consistent rhyming pattern.

So how did it do?

The words GPT-3 produced were pretty convincing: “Thou art the sun to my day, the stars to my night/The hope to my despair, the faith to my doubt/The love to my heart, the breath to my life.” The metaphors make sense and it’s quite poetic, but it is 17 lines long, the metre is all wrong and it doesn’t rhyme. It is not a sonnet.

GPT-3 is a hugely efficient wordsmith, good at writing the next sentence, but it has no ability to reflect on what it has written as a whole. That means it is very good at producing a short extract of about 200 to 300 words, but beyond that loses track of what it has said and meanders.

I experimented with using GPT-3 to produce a news report on Covid booster vaccines. At first glance the output was fairly convincing, listing the pros and cons of tweaking vaccines to match new variants. It even included a quote from a US health official. Yet the quote was made up.

Mike Sharples, Professor of Educational Technology at the Open University, stresses

that this is where the danger lies: “It has no knowledge of ethics (morality), of decency, of the law.”

Julian Togelius, an AI researcher at New York University, said of GPT-3: “It performs like a clever student who hasn’t done their reading, trying to chance their way through an exam. Some well-known facts, some half-truths and some straight lies are strung together.”

Professor Sharples puts it a different way. “You’ve got this dangerous situation, where you’ve got machines that can get basic facts wrong, or invent studies to prove their point. They are amoral. To be truly intelligent, truly useful and truly ethical AI needs to merge two functions, it needs to combine the ability to reflect and the ability to perform.”



N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

- (i) Based on your reading of both articles in TEXT 3, explain three insights you gain into the world of Artificial Intelligence. Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) Do you find yourself in agreement with the view expressed in both articles in TEXT 3 that an ethical (moral) approach to the development of Artificial Intelligence is needed? Develop three points to support your response. (15)
- (iii) Features of both persuasive writing and informative writing are used effectively in TEXT 3 to give a clear and engaging perspective into the world of Artificial Intelligence. Discuss this statement, supporting your response with reference to four language features. You may include features of persuasive language, features of informative language, or both in your discussion. You may refer to either or both of the writers in your response. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

It is Science Week and you have been asked to write an **article** for your school’s website about the increasing role played by technology in schools. In your article you should: describe some of the positive ways technology is utilised in schools today, discuss whether or not, in your view, technology can be a negative influence in schools, and speculate about the role you think technology will play in schools in the future. Your article may be serious or humorous or both.

SECTION II

COMPOSING

(100 marks)

Write a composition on **any one** of the assignments that appear in **bold print** below.

Each composition carries 100 marks.

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

1. In TEXT 2, Henry Eliot describes Prague as “mysterious and impenetrable”.

Write a short story which features a confused character in a mysterious setting.

2. TEXT 1 gives us the protagonist’s view of the city of London as he encountered it.

Write a feature article, for a popular magazine, describing your hometown, city, village or area, in which you consider some of the following: the place, its people, values, atmosphere and general way of life.

3. In TEXT 1, Salim makes a resolution and refuses to be discouraged.

Write a personal essay in which you reflect on an occasion or occasions when you made a resolution and refused to be discouraged.

4. TEXT 3 expresses concern about a world that, “has no knowledge of ethics (morality), of decency, of the law”.

You are taking part in an international debating competition where the motion is: “Society today lacks ethics (morality), decency and respect for the law.” Write your speech for or against this motion.

5. In TEXT 1, Salim tells us that he did not have the courage to challenge his uncle’s plans for him.

Write a short story that features a complex relationship between two characters, where one character disagrees completely with the views of the other.

6. In TEXT 2, Henry Eliot describes how he gets, “a particular thrill from visiting literary locations”.

Write a personal essay in which you describe and reflect on some of the things that bring excitement and wonder into your life.

7. TEXT 3 refers to George Orwell and Roald Dahl who were, in different ways, influential writers in the twentieth century.

Write a discursive essay about the impact of influential individuals in today’s world. Your chosen individuals may have positive or negative impacts or a combination of both.

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Acknowledgements

Text 1: Gurnah, Abdulrazak. *Gravel Heart*. London. Bloomsbury Publishing. 2017

Images: www.bloomsbury.com/uk/gravel-heart-9781408881309/; <https://www.rte.ie/culture/reviews/2017/0708/888755-reviewed-gravel-heart-by-abdulrazak-gurnah/>

Text 2: Eliot, Henry. 'This must be the place'. *The Guardian Review*. April 2021

Image: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Steerage#/media/File:Alfred_Stieglitz_-_The_Steerage_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Text 3: Scanlon, Patricia. 'It could be decades before science fiction-inspired tales of intelligent machines become a reality' *The Irish Times* 2022; Spencer, Ben. 'I'm better than the Bard' *The Sunday Times, Culture*. 2022

Images: www.technotification.com/2021/06/4-ways-artificial-intelligence-helps-sales-teams.html;
<https://myhomeworkwriters.com/artificial-intelligence-be-unbiased/>

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Leaving Certificate – Higher Level

English

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