



Pre-Baccalaureate Examination

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 1

DATE: 22-01-2019

LENGTH OF EXAMINATION: 4 HOURS

PERMITTED EQUIPMENT: None

**SPECIAL REMARKS: Answer ALL THREE questions.
There is a choice of questions in Question 3.**

Each of your answers will be marked equally for content (i.e. the knowledge and understanding you show of texts) and expression (i.e. the ambition shown in your use of language and the accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar).

Question 1 – 30%

Write a critical commentary on the following two poems, comparing and contrasting them with regard to content and style.

The Wound in Time

It is the wound in Time. The century's tides,
chanting their bitter psalms, cannot heal it.

Not the war to end all wars; death's birthing place;
the earth nursing its ticking metal eggs, hatching

5 new carnage. But how could you know, brave
as belief as you boarded the boats, singing?

The end of God in the poisonous, shrapneled air.

Poetry gargling its own blood. We sense it was love
you gave your world for; the town squares silent,

10 awaiting their cenotaphs. What happened next?

War. And after that? War. And now? War. War.

History might as well be water, chastising this shore;
for we learn nothing from your endless sacrifice.

Your faces drowning in the pages of the sea.

Carol Duffy, (Born 1955)

Play the Game

Twenty-Two stalwarts in stripes and shorts

Kicking a ball along,

Set in a square of leather-lunged sports

Twenty-two thousand strong,

5 Some of them shabby, some of them spruce,

Savagely clamorous all,

Hurling endearments, advice or abuse,

At the muscular boys on the ball.

Stark and stiff 'neath a stranger's sky

10 A few hundred miles away,

War-worn kaki-clad figures lie,

Their faces rigid and grey

Stagger and drop where the bullets swarm,

Where the shrapnel is bursting loud,

15 Die, to keep England safe and warm

For a vigorous football crowd!

Football's a sport, and a rare sport too,

Don't make it a source of shame.

To-day there are worthier things to do.

20 Englishmen, play the game!

A truce to the League, a truce to the Cup,

Get to work with a gun,

When our country's at war we must all back up

It's the only thing to be done!

Jessie Pope (1868-1941)

Question 2 – 30%

Write a critical commentary on the following non-literary text. Explain the writer's purpose, and show how he seeks to persuade the reader to accept his point of view.

We are losing our collective mechanism for survival

Mesmerised by the unpredictability of our times, we wait to see whatever will happen next – and thus do nothing to prevent it. In the state we're in, the worst possible adage is that seeing is believing.

Do we have to see children being tear-gassed on the US-Mexico border before we
5 believe that a slide into authoritarianism is under way?

Do we have to see images of a sterile, lifeless, pitilessly overheated Mars before we can imagine what we are doing to our own planet?

Do our neighbours in Britain have to actually experience all the suffering before they can believe in the consequences of Brexit?

10 Do we have to return to sectarian violence on this island before we remember its horror? Do we have to actually see open fascism in Europe before we can grasp its presence as a living possibility?

I keep thinking about two Irish plays. In the epilogue to Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*, John De Stogumber, the priest who helped to have Joan burned at the stake, says
15 that he needed to see the girl die in agony before he understood what he was doing: "I had not seen it, you know. That is the great thing: you must see it. And then you are redeemed and saved."

The bishop, Pierre Cauchon, asks him: "Were not the sufferings of our Lord Christ enough for you?" De Stogumber confesses that they were not, that he had "seen them
20 in pictures and read them in books, and been greatly moved by them, as I thought. But it was no use . . ." He needed to see the suffering with his own eyes. And so Cauchon asks him: "Must then a Christ perish in torment in every age to save those that have no imagination?"

The other play is John Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*. It enacts for us
25 the difference between a story and an event. The people in the remote west of Ireland

pub are thrilled by Christy Mahon's account – more vivid and dramatic every time he tells it – of how he killed his father.

They find it romantic, sexy, heroic. And then his Da arrives, undead but with a gaping wound in his head.

30 Christy “kills” him again, this time in front of the same people who have glamorised his great deed. They are sickened and repelled and frightened by it. Christy can't understand this complete turnabout: why did they love him when he described the killing but hate him now that they've seen it. And in Synge's great line, **Pegeen Mike** tells him why: “There's a great gap between a gallous [ie brave] story and a dirty
35 deed.”

That's the gap we are in danger of falling into. Are the images, the stories, the pictures of suffering and disaster not enough for us? Do we have to crucify Christ in every generation before we can understand our own capacity for cruelty?

Do we have to commit the dirty deeds before we can be repelled by them? Do we
40 need to experience ever more droughts and storms and floods and wildfires before we acknowledge the extreme urgency of controlling climate change?

We have never been so utterly in need of the historical imagination.

The English Conservative politician **George Walden** said “A country losing touch with its own history is like an old man losing his glasses, a distressing sight, at once
45 vulnerable, unsure and easily disoriented.” And we are now so easily disoriented. We have created, in the digital world, an enormous disorientation machine, a great system for blurring the distinction between the real and the unreal. In its endless present tense, the past fades and the future is blurred.

History does not tell us what will happen in the future. But it tells us what can happen.

50 It is our store of concrete possibilities – concrete in the sense that they have actually been realised. If we lose touch with it – or more insidiously turn it into a series of *gallous* stories – we lose our sense of danger, and there is nothing more perilous than losing your sense of danger. But we also lose something else: the sense that nothing is inevitable.

55 History tells us what can happen and it also tells us about our collective capacity to avoid disasters if we see them coming. Within it, we get to reimagine the worst so that we don't actually have to experience it.

60 The capacity for foresight is what allowed our species to survive and thrive. Unlike
other species, we can build and share mental maps of what may happen. Unlike them,
we can keep records of what has happened over many, many generations and use
them as guides to the landscape of likely consequences.

Yet here we are acting collectively as if we had never developed this unique capacity.
Paradoxically, life in a virtual world has made us even more literal-minded: we don't
65 believe what we have not yet fully experienced.

When you don't believe what you have not seen, you end up not even really believing
what is in front of our eyes. We are seeing the beginnings of dark stories whose
endings we can change only if we fully imagine them.

(868 words)

Adapted from an article by Fintan O'Toole, *The Irish Times*, Ireland, December 2018

Question 3 – 40%

Answer ONE of the following questions. These questions refer to the theme you have studied, *Women in Society*. In your answer, you should make detailed references to two texts that you have studied; you may make brief mention of others, where relevant, if you wish.

1. "Be the heroine of your life, not the victim."
Nora Ephron, author – Commencement Address, Wellesley College Class of 1996.

Evaluate the women in your texts as heroines or victims.

OR

2. How do the women in the texts you have studied behave when faced with pressures, both psychological and social or a combination of both?