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# Introduction

This book is a **practical guide** to Junior Cycle Higher Level English. It covers all areas of the course, focusing on **how to achieve high scores in each element of assessment**.

It will help you to **prepare** for your assessment by:

- **Focusing** your revision on the **23 Learning Outcomes** you have achieved in English.
- **Demonstrating** how to write excellent **sample answers** to exam questions.
- **Guiding** your **revision** of key elements of **fiction, drama, media, poetry and non-fiction prose**.
- **Explaining** a variety of **questions** you could face, and offering **clear hints** on how to approach them.
- **Dealing** with the **final assessment** as well as your **classroom-based assessments** and written task.

## How to use this book

**Read** each section **carefully**. The **focus** of the section in the **title** relates to **key skills** you have developed during the course of your Junior Cycle. The **introduction** to each section explains this focus for you. In addition, you should closely examine the **aims** at the start of each section. They will help to remind you of the **purpose** of the **chapter** and how it relates to the **assessment**.

You will also notice that at various points in each unit you are given **text box reminders** to help reinforce important points:

1. **Exam Focus** – essential practical **advice** on **managing** your **performance** of key exam tasks.
2. **Key Point** – reminder of **crucial elements** in the key skills examined in Junior Cycle English.
3. **Learning Outcomes** – specific focus on tasks are related to the **23 outcomes** for assessment

Each section explains what is required by giving **worked sample questions, hints and answers**. You should **read** these several times to help you understand what you are expected to do for a particular type of question.

Finally, it's over to you to use the sample exam questions at the end of each chapter as a focus for **your own practice** as you attempt your own answers.



## Learning Outcomes

There are 23 **Learning Outcomes** eligible for assessment as part of the Junior Cycle English **final written exam**. A number of other Learning Outcomes are assessed as part of the classroom-based assessments.

The chart below indicates some instances where the Learning Outcomes are explicitly addressed in this book. Learning Outcomes for final written assessment are indicated

by a  **L.O. R 1**

LO	Text	Placement
R1	Read texts with fluency, understanding and competence, decoding groups of words/phrases and not just single words.	Chapter 2 Chapter 5 Chapter 6
R2	Read for a variety of purposes: learning, pleasure, research, comparison.	Chapter 3 Chapter 6 Chapter 7
R3	Use a wide range of reading comprehension strategies appropriate to texts, including digital texts: to retrieve information; to link to previous knowledge, follow a process or argument, summarise, link main ideas; to monitor their own understanding; to question, analyse, synthesise and evaluate.	Chapter 3 Chapter 4 Chapter 9
R4	Use an appropriate critical vocabulary while responding to literary texts.	Chapter 1 Chapter 2
R6	Read their texts for understanding and appreciation of character, setting, story and action: to explore how and why characters develop, and to recognise the importance of setting and plot structure.	Chapter 1 Chapter 6
R7	Select key moments from their texts and give thoughtful value judgements on the main character, a key scene, a favourite image from a film, a poem, a drama, a chapter, a media or web-based event.	Chapter 1 Chapter 4 Chapter 6
R8	Read their texts to understand and appreciate language enrichment by examining an author's choice of words, the use and effect of simple figurative language, vocabulary and language patterns, and images, as appropriate to the text.	Chapter 3 Chapter 4 Chapter 6 Chapter 7
R9	Identify, appreciate and compare the ways in which different literary, digital and visual genres and sub-genres shape texts and shape the reader's experience of them.	Chapter 2 Chapter 4 Chapter 7 Chapter 10
R11	Identify and comment on features of English at word and sentence level using appropriate terminology, showing how such features contribute to overall effect.	Chapter 3 Chapter 4 Chapter 10

## 1

# Making Sense of Drama: Shakespearean Drama

aims

In this section you will:

- Learn the meaning of **key words** used to discuss **drama**.
- **Identify** and **explain** key words **using examples** from a **play**.
- **Reflect** on **sample questions** from Junior Cycle English exam papers.
- **Read hints** outlining **how** to approach **typical drama question**.
- **Explore sample answers** to Junior Cycle English questions.
- **Practise reading** questions, **planning** and **writing** your own answers.

## Appreciating character, setting, story and action

Storytelling has always fascinated us. From your favourite childhood bedtime fairytale to the latest Netflix TV drama, the promise of a story well told will always be appealing. Over your three years in Junior Cycle English, you have explored stories in the form of novels, films, short stories and drama. Elements common to all forms of storytelling include:

<b>Character</b>	A person in a play, poem or story.
<b>Setting</b>	The time and place where a drama or story is set.
<b>Story</b>	A tale made up to entertain or amuse.
<b>Action</b>	The pattern of events in a plot.

In this section you will revise these **key ideas** by looking closely at **dramatic** storytelling. The **unseen** and **studied extracts** we will discuss here have one thing in common: they were all written by the master storyteller **William Shakespeare**. We will **outline** the **main elements** of all **drama** and show you how to discuss Shakespeare's plays using **suitable vocabulary** in the correct way.



All students of Junior Cycle Higher Level English **MUST** study a **Shakespearean play**.

 **L.O. R 4**

Use an appropriate critical vocabulary while responding to literary texts.



In the exam, your knowledge of **drama** will be tested in different ways:

- **Reading an unseen extract** from the text of a play.
- Answering **short questions** on the script:
  - **matching** terms
  - **multiple-choice** questions
- **Composing a sentence or short paragraph** of your own.
- **Responding to pictures** in the form of still images of key moments in the play.
- **Writing in various styles** to display your **understanding** of the **story or characters**.
- **Applying your knowledge** of key ideas to the **play you studied** in class.
- **Developing your response** in **longer answers** on studied plays.

## Areas to revise

<b>Characters</b>	Key people who change or develop over the course of a story or play.
<b>Themes</b>	Main ideas explored in the drama or story.
<b>Conflict</b>	Tension in a situation between characters in a drama or story.
<b>Key scenes</b>	Significant action in a particular place at a certain time.
<b>Stagecraft</b>	Areas or skills used to tell a story on stage, e.g. acting, props and lighting.
<b>Personal response</b>	Your own reaction to a key scene or character.

## Characters

Most drama questions focus on the **people portrayed** on stage in the play. Read character questions carefully. Underline or **highlight** key words in the question.

Next, **pick out words** or **phrases** in the extract that tell you something useful about the **personality** of the character.

If a question focuses on **one** particular **character**, then you should pay attention to:

- **What** he or she **says**
- **What others** say **about them**
- The **actions** they **perform** while on stage.

The text in *italics* is referred to as **stage directions**. This gives us some idea of when movement or actions should happen. Sometimes the stage directions reveal how a character is feeling at a particular moment.



Remember to read both **dialogue** and **stage directions**. Both can reveal a lot about character.



### L.O. R 6

Read texts for understanding and appreciation of character, setting, story and action:

- to explore how and why characters develop
- to recognise the importance of setting and plot structure



## Sample questions, answer and hints

Read the text below and the extract from Shakespeare's play, *Henry V*. Then answer the questions which follow.

Note: Underlined words are explained on the following page.

### *The background*

King Henry has just ascended to the throne of England. During his youth, he spent some time in France where he enjoyed sport, dancing and going to parties. Now he has inherited the crown he must devote himself to serious issues. His political advisers have told him that he has a justifiable claim to the kingdom of France.

### *The characters*

**King Henry V** – newly crowned English king

**Exeter** – Duke of Exeter, uncle to the king

**Ambassador** – messenger from the French prince

**Dauphin** – Prince of France and heir to the throne

In this scene, King Henry meets with an ambassador for the Dauphin, the eldest son of the French king and heir to the throne, according to French claims.

**King Henry:** Call in the messengers sent from the Dauphin.

*Exeunt some attendants*

Now are we well resolv'd; and, by God's help  
And yours, the noble sinews of our power,  
France being ours, we'll bend it to our awe,  
Or break it all to pieces!

*Enter ambassadors of France*

Now are we well prepar'd to know the pleasure  
Of our fair cousin Dauphin.

**Ambassador:** Your Highness, lately sending into France,  
Did claim some certain dukedoms in the right  
Of your great predecessor, King Edward the Third.  
In answer of which claim, the Prince our master  
Says that you savour too much of your youth,  
And bids you be advis'd there's nought in France  
That can be with a nimble galliard won;  
You cannot revel into dukedoms there.  
He therefore sends you, meeter for your spirit,  
This tun of treasure; and, in lieu of this,  
Desires you let the dukedoms that you claim  
Hear no more of you. This the Dauphin speaks.



**King Henry:** What treasure, uncle?

**Exeter:** Tennis-balls, my liege.

**King Henry:** We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us;

His present and your pains we thank you for.

When we have match'd our rackets to these balls,

We will in France, by God's grace, play a set

Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.

And we understand him well,

How he comes o'er us with our wilder days,

Not measuring what use we made of them.

But tell the Dauphin I will keep my state,

Be like a king, and show my sail of greatness,

When I do rouse me in my throne of France;

And tell the pleasant Prince this mock of his

Hath turn'd his balls to gun-stones, and his soul

Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance

That shall fly with them; for many a thousand widows

Shall this his mock mock of their dear husbands;

Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;

And some are yet ungotten and unborn

That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn.

So get you hence in peace; and tell the Dauphin

His jest will savour but of shallow wit,

When thousands weep more than did laugh at it.

Convey them with safe conduct. Fare you well.

*Exeunt ambassadors*

Dauphin: French prince

nimble galliard: lively dancing

revel: party

meeter: more suitable

tun: cask

hazard: danger or part of a tennis court, scores in tennis

### Question 1

In the case of each of the following, write the letter corresponding to the correct answer in the appropriate box.

(a) As a young man in France, Henry spent time:

- A. Playing games and socialising
- B. Studying mathematics
- C. Fighting duels

A.

(b) The ambassador offers King Henry a present of:

- A. Precious jewels
- B. A box of tennis balls
- C. The deeds to some land

B.

(c) Which one of the following best describes Henry's tone in the lines:

'We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us;  
His present and your pains we thank you for.'

- A. Grateful
- B. Happy
- C. Sarcastic

C.

(d) Which one of the following is the best explanation of the lines:

'some are yet ungotten and unborn  
That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn.'

- A. The Dauphin is angry because he didn't get what he wants.
- B. People who are not even born will live to regret the Prince's disrespect.
- C. A wicked spell has been cast on the unborn children.

B.

(e) Which one of the following is the best explanation of the lines:

'Convey them with safe conduct.'

- A. Show them the way out.
- B. Escort them and protect them on their journey.
- C. Make sure they behave themselves.

B.



Write for a variety of purposes,  
for example to:

- analyse
- evaluate
- imagine
- explore, etc.

## Question 2

20 marks

Look carefully at this **still image** from a film adaptation of *Henry V*.

Based on your reading of the extract on the previous pages, **identify** and **explain two ways** in which this **image portrays** the character of Henry.



Allow 12 minutes for 20-mark questions.

### Sample answer

This **image** portrays the **character** of Henry initially through the **setting** and **action**. It was taken outdoors in a rural situation but the location is no ordinary field, it is a **medieval battlefield**. The men on horseback carry **props** – they are **armed** with swords and carry **long shields** to protect themselves from attack. They are led by Henry whose threat to carry out ‘wasteful vengeance’ on the Dauphin and his subjects has obviously led to savage warfare. Henry **dominates** the centre of this image on his white charger and is literally shown **leading** his army into battle.

The photograph **illustrates** what Henry had in mind when he promised in his speech on pages 3–4 to:

‘Be like a king, and show my sail of greatness,  
When I do rouse me in my throne of France.’

His **posture** with the sword held aloft in his right hand reflects the **aggression** expressed in his speech to the ambassador. Also, the image of a young king risking life and limb to fight in the **front line** expresses the **courage** of a character who is not afraid of conflict or intimidated by his enemies.

### EXAMINER’S COMMENT

- Clear **focus** on how the **image** portrays **character**.
- Candidate analyses impact of setting, **action**, **props** and **posture**.
- Points supported with **evidence** from image and text.

**MARKS AWARDED:** Ex. 20/20 (90–100%) Distinction

  
exam  
focus

- On **longer questions** you will be expected to write **several paragraphs**.
- **Highlight the key words** in the question and use them to **plan your answer**.
- **Always use quotation marks** for the **title of a play** and for **quotations** from the extract.
- The **key skill** here is to **explain, analyse and discuss**.
- **Demonstrate your appreciation** of **character, setting and story** by **explaining** clearly and concisely.
- **Focus** on the question and **always give reasons** to back up your ideas.

- Answer each question below with **several short paragraphs**.
- Use each paragraph to **develop one main idea** relevant to the question.
- **Read the hints** provided and use them to **practise** by writing an answer of your own.

### Question 3

20 marks

King Henry is insulted by the message he receives from the Dauphin. Why is he so upset?

#### Hints: Question 3

- You are asked to **identify why** the king feels **insulted** by the Dauphin. The Dauphin has sent both a verbal message through his ambassador and a physical gift.
- King Henry is **insulted by the words** of the Dauphin's, **and by the gift** of a 'tun' of tennis balls.
- In your answer you should **pinpoint the precise words** which so **offended** King Henry. Your second paragraph will **link these words to the 'gift'** of the tennis balls. Look again at 'The background' paragraph for further **clues** as to why this **present combined with the words** of the message would have angered the new king at this time.
- Finally, you should give some thought to the fact that the **Dauphin is a prince** while **Henry is a king**. The **difference between** their respective **ranks** is also relevant to this question.

### Question 4

20 marks

If you were directing the actors in this scene, what advice would you give to the actor playing King Henry about how to deliver his speeches here?

#### Hints: Question 4

- Answering the second question requires you to have a good understanding of the **character of King Henry**. We know from the background information that he is a **new ruler** whose **reputation** from the playboy lifestyle of his youth

may be a source of **embarrassment** to him. The introduction also reveals a man **under some pressure** to claim authority over a 'foreign' land.

- His **initial lines**, directed to his court before the ambassador enters, are full of **resolute conviction** that either France will come under his control or he will destroy it. Advice to an actor should concentrate on **how these lines must be delivered**. Aspects of performance include **strength, tone and pace** of the **speaking voice, posture, facial expression and movement**.
- The second speech is much longer and a good answer will focus on **how the character develops** as the king becomes **more threatening**. Should the actor **remain in the same position**, or what **movements** would you recommend? For all directions given to the actor, you must **explain why** these are appropriate. Quote from the text of the play the words or lines that support your view.

### Question 5

30 marks



Allow 20 minutes for 30-mark questions.

Imagine the scene where the ambassador returns to France. Write the dialogue between the ambassador and his master, the Dauphin.

### Hints: Question 5

- The last question often carries more marks, as you are being asked to **write** a short piece **continuing the story**. Here your **ability to comprehend the dramatic situation** is being tested, along with the **skill of writing** a short piece of **dialogue**. If the instructions are open-ended, then **any style of dialogue** is acceptable.
- Do not feel that you are expected to continue the Elizabethan register of Shakespeare. A modern, **colloquial conversation** between the ambassador and his master would be suitable, as long as you **capture the difficulty faced** by the **ambassador**. He must **bring bad news** to the Dauphin and **diplomacy** would prevent him from telling the full truth.
- The scene you write will be short as you have very little time, but it could be either serious or comical in tone, and the only real restriction is that it should **include** at least the **characters** of the **ambassador** and the **Dauphin** formatted correctly as **dialogue**.

## Suitable vocabulary

**Learn** the words below and study the **definitions**. You must use the **correct vocabulary** when commenting on drama.



The style of a good answer depends on using the **best language in appropriate ways**.

### Catastrophe

The death of the hero or heroine in a drama.

### Comedy

A story written to amuse the audience by highlighting the foolishness of people.

<b>Conflict</b>	The tension in a situation between characters in a drama.
<b>Dialogue</b>	Words spoken by characters in a poem, story or drama.
<b>Hero/heroine</b>	Central character in a story – usually a noble person who saves the day.
<b>Irony</b>	Contrast between what a character says and what is actually the case.
<b>Mood</b>	Feeling or state of mind created by a story or scene.
<b>Plot</b>	The pattern of events in a story.

## Conflict

All drama relies on conflict to **generate** and **sustain** the **interest** of the audience. This conflict usually makes the audience feel **tension**. Dramatic scenes usually involve conflict like the clash between King Henry and the French ambassador in the extract on pages 3–4. Sometimes, however, the **conflict** is not simply between two opposing individuals or groups but **within the mind** of a single person. The following exam question illustrates this well, as there are a number of ways in which the struggle between opposites is dramatised here.



### Sample question and answer

Read the extract below from *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare. Answer the question which follows.

#### *The background*

The Prince of Aragon (Don Pedro) and his soldiers return victorious from war and visit the house of Leonato, Governor of Messina. There, Leonato's daughter Hero is wooed by the prince's friend Claudio and their wedding is planned. Due to a wicked plot by the villain Don John, Claudio calls off the wedding at the last minute.

#### *The characters*

**Beatrice** – friend to Hero

**Claudio** – nobleman

**Benedick** – gentleman and best friend of Claudio

**Hero** – noble daughter of Leonato

Benedick and Beatrice are discussing Count Claudio and Hero, Claudio's bride to be. Mistakenly, Count Claudio thinks that Hero has been unfaithful to him and cancels their wedding. Beatrice weeps for her cousin Hero who, she strongly believes, has been wronged.