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# Introduction

aims

- Recognising and understanding the different genres of language used in the examination.

## Language genres

To prepare for Leaving Certificate Higher Level English, you are expected to be familiar with these five broad language genres.

### Informative writing

*Found in newspapers, reports, etc.*

- Factual, direct, using verifiable data
- Clearly organised, accessible language

### Argumentative writing

*Found in newspapers, discussions, etc.*

- Logical, using valid evidence
- Reasonable, rational language

### Persuasive writing

*Found in speeches, opinion pieces, debates, etc.*

- Presents a strong view or opinion
- Emphatic, often emotional language

### Narrative writing

*Found in novels, plays, films, etc.*

- Story-telling based on plot, characterisation and conflict
- Fictional language, structured and atmospheric

### Aesthetic writing

*Found in poetry, short stories, diaries, etc.*

- Appeals to our appreciation of beauty
- Poetic imaginative language, often using rich imagery

key  
point

There is no single exclusive style of writing. Different language **genres usually overlap**. Persuasive writing, for example, is similar to argument and often includes elements of informative language.

# English (Higher Level) Paper 1 Overview

Paper 1 accounts for 200 marks (half the overall examination total).

You are required to:

- choose one of the three texts in **Section A** (50 marks – 45 minutes)
- choose one question from **Section B**. However, you cannot answer the Section B question that accompanied the Section A text you have chosen (50 marks – 40 minutes)
- answer one question from **Composing** (100 marks – 75 minutes).

The time limit for Paper 1 is  
**2 hours and 50 minutes.**



- Read the questions carefully to discover the various tasks in each question.
- All parts of the tasks need to be addressed in order to achieve a high mark.
- Plan your answer before you begin your response.

# 1

## Paper 1: Comprehending A

aims

- Understanding the different types of 'Comprehending' questions (information retrieval, personal opinion and style).
- Developing the thinking and writing skills that are essential for successful answers.

### Comprehending A at a glance

The total marks awarded for Paper 1 is 200 (half the overall total for the exam). This includes 100 for Section 1 (Comprehending) and 100 for Section 2 (Composing). The Comprehending A section (worth 50 marks) tests your ability to read, understand, analyse and respond to a particular text. This section consists of three parts.



Choose **one** of the three Comprehending A texts and allocate your time carefully:

- Reading the text – allow about **6–8** minutes
- Answering part (i) – allow **10–12** minutes
- Answering part (ii) – allow **10–12** minutes
- Answering part (iii) – allow **15–18** minutes

### Parts (i) and (ii)

Parts (i) and (ii) are each worth 15 marks. In these two questions, you might be asked to **summarise** (in your own words) or **give your opinion on key aspects of the text**.

**Possible questions include:**

- Your impressions of places, settings and atmospheres.
- An outline of the writer's own views.
- Your observations about a character, relationship or ideas in the text.



Three short paragraphs (based on three relevant, supported points) should be sufficient for an answer to part (i) or (ii). Focused, succinct answers are required.

- Compare or comment on visual images.
- The overall impact of the text (or particular parts of the text).
- Personally respond to the text.

### Part (iii)

Part (iii) is worth 20 marks and often refers to the writer's style. Allow about 15–18 minutes to write three or four succinct paragraphs based on three relevant, supported points – and aim for at least 200 words.

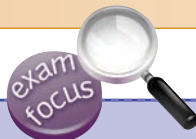


Read the questions first, identifying the specific type of question (information retrieval, personal opinion, style or a mixture of these). Keep this in mind as you read through the extract.

## Responding to Comprehending A questions

It's essential to **study the wording** of questions carefully before you begin writing. Highlight the key words in the question so that you are clear about the task.

<b>Outline</b>	Briefly describe only the main points or facts about something.
<b>Comment on</b>	Give a critical, analytical response on subject matter and/or style of writing.
<b>Explain</b>	Clarify by giving details and/or reasons.
<b>Discuss</b>	Examine and distinguish the positive and negative points of something or someone.
<b>Identify</b>	Find one or more examples.
<b>Evaluate</b>	Consider something carefully and decide how significant/insignificant it is.
<b>Define</b>	Specify exactly what something means.
<b>Analyse</b>	Consider and question closely in order to explain.
<b>Illustrate</b>	Show by giving more information or examples to explain or prove something.
<b>Compare and contrast</b>	Examine similarities and differences. You may also be asked to refer to some of the prescribed texts studied for Paper 2.
<b>Develop your own point of view</b>	Support the points you make through further – and more detailed – discussion, using suitable reference.



Neat, legible handwriting will help to make a positive impression on examiners. Corrections should be made by simply drawing a line through the mistake.



## Being scared isn't easy – but it's fun!

**When she's not stuck at her desk, the best-selling thriller writer Patricia Cornwell is a scuba diver and helicopter pilot.**

I'm always scared when I learn a new sport but my number one rule in life is that I will not be ruled by fear. If I'm afraid of something I'm going to figure out a way to deal with it. Since I was a little kid I've loved fast, powerful machines but the truth is I find all my hobbies – scuba diving, helicopter flying and motorcycling – nerve-racking. I'm terrified.

During my scuba diving training, the dive master made me sit on the bottom of the bay and take my mask off, then put it back on.

I could not do it. The water went rushing up my nose. I thought I was going to drown; I started to bolt up to the surface and he grabbed my ankles to hold me down. It was just an awful experience.

Even now when I dive, I hope the weather gets bad so I don't have to go. I get into the water and have to settle for a minute because my heart starts racing. But you cannot dive if you get hyped up – you have to calm down. And when you do, you might have the dive trip of your life.

The first time I flew a helicopter solo, my knees were knocking together – literally – I had to start singing to myself. Then all of a sudden it was like, 'Oh my God, this is the most fun thing I have ever done. I am flying, I'm alone and it's just me doing this.'

The most frightened I have ever been was flying a helicopter. We were north of Florida, and we got caught in weather we weren't expecting – an unpredictable storm was moving in. We got trapped in fog, flying at 100-something feet in a wooded area, and couldn't see. It was raining like a monsoon and I really thought this was going to be it; any minute we were going to hit a power line and come down. It was terrifying. Just when we thought it was hopeless, all of a sudden this little grass strip opened up under us and we landed.

If I hadn't learned to deal with fear, I would have been crippled by it. If you don't confront your fear, it wins. Which is why I'm a totally different person since I took up my extreme hobbies. It's made me more confident, bolder, keener to try other things.



You don't need to do what I do – unfortunately it's expensive to fly a helicopter. But you could do a helicopter tour and enjoy the ride. Scuba diving is more accessible. You can go out on a charter boat with a group of people and down you go.

It's as simple as this: if an opportunity presents itself, don't walk away from it. If someone says it might be cool to learn to snorkel, or ride a motorcycle, and you light up like a Christmas tree when they say it, don't argue yourself out of it. Take the next step. And don't let anyone tell you that you can't do something. Everything I do is stuff I was told I couldn't do.

A lot of people enjoy fear as pleasure. It's delicious that you can get so close to the dragon that you can feel its warm breath, but you're not going to get burned. That's an empowering experience.

All this makes you feel more alive because you are taking power and control over a world that is random and difficult. And the more you do with boldness and confidence, the more you get out of life. That's what we should do while we're here. Don't just exist – do something!

### Question A

- (i) Based on your reading of the above extract, explain three insights you gain about Patricia Cornwell's attitude to fear. (15 marks)

#### Prompt!

It's natural to feel scared.

- Fear can be seen as a challenge.
- It's important to confront fear.
- Fear can even be exhilarating.
- Overcoming fear is empowering, and gives us a great sense of achievement.

### Sample answer

Patricia Cornwell has changed her attitude towards fear over the years. She is honest in admitting that she has often been fearful in the past, but says that she 'will not be ruled by fear'. While her extreme sports hobbies, such as scuba diving, excite and scare her, she has always succeeded in conquering fear.

The famous author is a very positive person who encourages everyone to face up to what terrifies them: 'If I hadn't learned to deal with fear, I would have been crippled by it'. From personal experience, she believes that she has become a 'totally different person' by taking up extreme hobbies, including helicopter flying and motorcycling.



Allow about 10–12 minutes and aim for three focused, supported points in short paragraphs.



Cornwell obviously gets great pleasure from taking part in such 'nerve-racking' sports. Her enthusiasm for life is evident throughout the extract. It's interesting that she conquers her fears by taking on challenging sports that make her feel confident and 'more alive'. Her concluding tone is particularly enthusiastic ('Don't just exist – do something!') and makes it clear that she is totally convinced about the many benefits of overcoming fear.

### EXAMINER'S COMMENT

- Succinct, well-organised response is directly focused throughout.
- Three distinct, relevant points are aptly supported by reference and quotation.
- Discussion ranges over the entire extract.
- Controlled economical language use. Clear expression, e.g. 'succeeded in conquering fear', 'concluding tone is particularly enthusiastic'.

MARKS AWARDED: **15**  
**15**



Realistic time management is an essential part of successful answering. For the Comprehending A 15-mark questions, allow about 10–12 minutes and aim for three relevant points, supported by suitable evidence. Do not fall into the trap of over-writing, as this is likely to leave you short of time for the other questions.



### Running away

**Waris is a young girl, living with her family in the desert in Somalia, Africa. She decides to run away from home to avoid an arranged marriage.**

A slight sound awoke me, and when I opened my eyes, I was staring into the face of a lion. Riveted awake, my eyes stretched wide – very wide – as if to expand enough to contain the animal in front of me. I tried to stand up, but I hadn't eaten for several days, so my weak legs wobbled and folded beneath me.

Collapsing, I slumped back against the tree where I had been resting, sheltered from the African desert sun that becomes so merciless at noon. I quietly leaned my head back, closed my eyes, and felt the rough bark of the tree pressing into my skull. The lion was so near I could smell his musty scent in the hot air. I spoke to God: 'It's the end for me, my God. Please take me now.'

My long journey across the desert had come to an end. I had no protection, no weapon. Nor the strength to run. I knew I couldn't beat the lion up the tree, because with their 10 strong claws, lions are excellent climbers. By the time I got half way up – boom – one swipe and I'd be gone. Without any fear, I opened my eyes again and said to the lion, 'Come and get me. I'm ready for you.'

He was a beautiful male with a mane of golden hair and a long tail switching back and forth to flick the flies away. He was five or six years old, young and healthy. I knew he could crush me instantly; he was the king. All my life I'd watched those paws take down wildebeest and zebras weighing hundreds of pounds more than me.

The lion stared at me and slowly blinked his honey-coloured eyes. My brown eyes stared back, locked on his. 'Go on. Take me now.' He looked at me again, then looked away. He licked his lips and sat down on his haunches. Then the lion rose and paced back and forth in front of me elegantly. Finally, he turned and walked away.



Waris Dirie

### Question A

- (i) Outline, in your own words, Waris's thoughts and feelings in the above extract. (15 marks)



Allow about 10–12 minutes and aim for three focused, supported points in short paragraphs.



Autobiographical texts include memoirs and diaries.

- They are personal records of past experiences.
- These texts often describe people and places in detail.
- They are written in the first person.
- They usually have a reflective or nostalgic (sentimental) tone.

### Sample answer

Waris is acutely aware of the great danger she faces. She is so weak, however, that all she can think of is how close she is to the lion, 'I could smell his musty scent in the hot air'. This physical sense of the wild animal's presence is intense. Waris is also convinced that she will be killed and prays to God, 'Please take me now'.

Although exhausted, the young girl takes a moment to consider the possibility of escape, but is realistic enough to accept that she has neither the energy

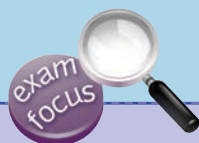
nor speed to run away to safety, 'I knew I couldn't beat the lion up the tree'. Her past experience of lions confirms her worst fears, 'I knew he could crush me instantly'.

Waris strikes me as being remarkably courageous. Even though she believes that she will soon die, Waris can still admire the lion, 'a beautiful male with a mane of golden hair'. She is highly observant and is able to describe close-up details of this stunning creature. As she stares at the lion's 'honey-coloured eyes', it is evident that she feels very much at one with nature.

### EXAMINER'S COMMENT

- Clearly focused concise points ('aware', 'realistic', 'courageous') tackle the question directly.
- Uses relevant supportive quotations, well-integrated into commentary.
- Impressive expression – fluent, varied and controlled.
- A confident, successful response.

MARKS AWARDED: **15**  
15



Some Comprehending A questions might ask you to deal with both content and style (sometimes including visual images). Re-read your answer to check that you have covered all the key elements in the question.



### Parents, rise up!

**Read carefully the online article written by Liat Hughes Joshi and answer the question that follows.**

Nothing sums up modern parenting more than slogan T-shirts. You know, the ones that say 'Daddy's Princess' or 'No. 1 Child'. Parents fifty years ago may have loved and adored their children, but they would never have proclaimed it to the world. And certainly never to their child. There was a strict difference between the generations, with children – for the most part – knowing their place. Today's children are placed on pedestals and they know it. No wonder we're seeing more anti-social, selfish and bad behaviour than ever before.

I recall trying to leave a café recently. In front of the doorway, two young children were playing on the floor, their parents smiling indulgently at them. Not wanting to push past, I waited for the children to move aside or for the parents to tell

them what to do. Nothing happened. I waited and waited until, frustrated, I had to ask them to move away. No big deal? Perhaps not. But recently in another café the table next to mine was mobbed by teenagers, throwing food and screeching at the top of their voices. It was dreadful and their seemingly irresponsible parents stood by and did nothing. I could go on.

How many of us have been frustrated by children who push, shout over their parents, won't accept bedtimes, never say please or thank you and scowl when given a present which doesn't meet their demands? Too many modern children – while at times loveable – are becoming bad-mannered, self-centred and utterly lacking the social skills they'll need in adulthood.

There's no doubt that treating children as individuals and enjoying their company is helping us to develop young people with stronger self-esteem. But we have to find a balance before we create an entire generation of selfish brats who are unable to function in the real world.

Take helping around the house. Why don't many modern children clear the table and wash up? Why don't they earn pocket money by washing the car? Yes, children have a lot of homework these days, but learning the discipline of doing household chores matters too.



We also have to stop entertaining children so much. Stop the constant ferrying around, the endless hobbies and extra classes. Not only are we becoming worn out, but we're not allowing children to learn the essential life skill of managing boredom. Getting tougher isn't about teaching needless etiquette. I don't want to sit opposite a child eating with their mouths hanging open, but I'm quite relaxed about whether they're holding their knife and fork the right way. Equally, I don't want to sit frustrated as teenagers (and young children) stare at their tablets or smart phones when I'm trying to have a conversation. I like the fact that we respect our children more these days. But that respect has to cut both ways.

Stand firm. Not meeting expectations can mean no pocket money or less screen time. Remind unhelpful children that neglecting to do tasks could result in a 'No' the next time they need a lift. It's fine for teenagers to text and message each other, but make sure their online socialising is balanced with plenty of face-to-face interaction. Look at what makes him or her tick: is it watching TV, gaming with friends? Identify what they want and offer it as a reward.

As parents, we have three main responsibilities: to keep our children safe, to make them happy, and to prepare them to be well-functioning, content adults. But, if we carry on as we are, we're in real danger of creating a generation of self-centred brats. To avoid that, we need to take back the tiaras and put an end to the tantrums!

### Question A

- (i) How does the writer try to persuade readers that children and teenagers are 'spoilt'? (15 marks)

#### Prompt!

- What persuasive techniques are used? (See checklist on page 17.)
- Does the opening make an immediate impact?
- Is the writer's tone effective?
- Are the arguments valid and convincing?
- Any persuasive examples or illustrations?
- Does the writer affect the reader's responses?

### Sample answer 1

I don't agree that the writer Liat Hughes Joshi is persuasive. In fact, she seems to just totally hate young people and is one-sided for no good reason. Except actually prejudice.

What is so wrong with praising young kids today and buying them T-shirts? We live in the modern world and old people in their forties are no longer in tune and not with reality half the time. I never see teenagers throwing food at people. This is totally prejudice. This writer of the extract has issues with young people. Some of us live in the country and actually depend on lifts from parents.

She tries to be a persuasive writer but only ends up looking ridiculous because she is so totally negative. Everything she says is against teenagers as if they never work. Many of my friends have jobs at weekends and I have had a summer job last year to pay for a holiday. This writer uses insulting language about brats and this is totally out of order.

I think a lot of the time she is trying to get attention by such insults in which there is no truth. I don't agree that children and teenagers are spoilt and that this is actually persuasive language at all.



Allow about 10–12 minutes and aim for three focused, supported points in short paragraphs.

MARKS AWARDED:  $\frac{8}{15}$

**Improving the answer:**

- Sample answer 1 would gain marks if there were greater focus on the question (by discussing the writer's arguments).
- Develop points, e.g. about the writer's generalising and subjective views.
- Avoid drifting into personal opinion.
- Refer to the text by commenting on key points and quotations.
- Language needs to be more carefully managed. Overuse of 'and', 'actually' and 'total'.

**Sample answer 2**

The writer expresses very strong personal views from the start – but seems to be generalising about how parents spoil their children. However, the emphatic opening sentence grabs the reader's attention. This is followed up by an effective visual image of T-shirt slogans, such as 'Daddy's Princess' – something that will be familiar to many people.

Liat Hughes Joshi builds her argument by appealing to traditional parenting values when children knew 'their place' and contrasting them with today's young people who, she asserts, are 'placed on pedestals'. She supports her strong views with several anecdotes of her own experiences in cafés where parents apparently ignored their children as they misbehaved. Hughes then appeals to the reader's good sense by arguing that there needs to be a sensible balance, so that children develop responsibly, equipped with the 'social skills they'll need in adulthood'.

By using the inclusive personal pronoun, the writer invites us to agree with her views: 'We also have to stop entertaining children'. She gives many examples of self-indulgent teenage behaviour and suggests that parents use rewards to improve how young people can improve their manners in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The article is rounded off effectively by offering parents a choice between well-functioning, content adults and 'self-centred brats'.

**EXAMINER'S COMMENT**

- Clearly focused, top-grade response that never strays from the question of the writer's persuasive techniques.
- Organised points in paragraphs supported effectively with apt reference and quotation.
- Ranges over the full extract in discussing persuasive arguments.
- Impressive expression (e.g. 'emphatic opening', 'traditional parenting values', 'atmosphere of mutual respect').

**MARKS AWARDED:**  $\frac{15}{15}$