



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

English - Ordinary Level - Paper 1

Total Marks: 200

Duration: 2 hours 50 minutes

- This paper is divided into two sections, Section I COMPREHENDING and Section II COMPOSING.
- The paper contains **three** texts on the general theme of **CELEBRATING SUCCESS**.
- 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.

This document must be handed up at the end of the examination

TEXT 1 – A SUCCESSFUL SINGER-SONGWRITER

This text is based on edited extracts from a speech delivered by singer-songwriter, Taylor Swift, to students graduating from New York University (NYU) in 2022. On the day of the ceremony, the university celebrated her success by awarding her an honorary doctorate.

1. I'd like to say a huge thank you to all at New York University (NYU) who have made this day possible. I'd like to thank NYU for making me technically, on paper at least, a doctor. Not the type of doctor you would want around in the case of an emergency, unless your specific emergency was that you desperately needed to hear a song with a catchy hook. I am elated to be here with you today as we celebrate and graduate New York University's Class of 2022.

2. Not a single one of us here today has done it alone. We are each a patchwork quilt of those who have loved us, those who have believed in our futures. Those who told us we could do it when there was absolutely no proof of that. I know that words are supposed to be my 'thing', but I will never be able to find the words to thank my mom and my dad, and my brother, Austin, for the sacrifices they made every day so that I could go from singing in coffee houses to standing up here with you all today because no words would ever be enough.

3. I never got to have the normal college experience. I went to public high school until tenth grade and finished my education doing home-school work on the floors of airport terminals. Then I went out on the road on a radio tour. This sounds incredibly glamorous but in reality it consisted of a rental car, motels, and my mom and I pretending to have loud mother-daughter fights with each other during boarding so no one would want the empty seat between us on the aircraft.



4. I started writing songs when I was twelve and since then, it's been the compass guiding my life. Everything I do is just an extension of my writing, whether it's directing videos or a short film, creating the visuals for a tour, or standing on stage performing. Everything is connected by my love of the craft, the thrill of working through ideas and narrowing them down and polishing it all up in the end. Waking up in the middle of the night and throwing out the old idea because you just thought of a newer, better one. Sometimes a string of words just ensnares me and I can't focus on anything until it's been recorded or written down.

5. As a songwriter I've never been able to stay in one creative place for too long. I've made and released 11 albums. I've switched genres from country to pop to alternative to folk. I know it can be really overwhelming figuring out who you are now and how to act in order to get where you want to go. I have some good news: it's totally up to you. I also have some terrifying news: it's totally up to you.

6. Now you leave formal education and you get to chart your own path. Every choice you make leads to the next choice which leads to the next, and I know it's hard to know sometimes which path to take. How will you know what the right choice is in these crucial moments? You won't. How do I give advice to this many people about their life choices? I won't. The scary news is: you're on your own now. The cool news is: you're on your own now.

7. I leave you with this: we are led by our gut instincts, our intuition, our desires and fears, our scars and our dreams. And you will screw it up sometimes. So will I. And when I do, you will most likely read about it on the internet. Anyway, hard things will happen to us. We will recover. We will learn from it. We will grow more resilient because of it. I hope you know how proud I am to share this day with you. We're doing this together.

N.B. Answer only ONE Question A and only ONE Question B.

Question A – 50 Marks

- (i) Identify three aspects of Taylor Swift's personality, evident in TEXT 1, that in your opinion may have helped her to become successful. Explain why you think these aspects of Taylor's personality may have contributed to her success. (15)
- (ii) Explain what Taylor Swift says to encourage the graduating students during the course of her speech. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)
- (iii) (a) You have been asked to choose a title for a documentary film about Taylor Swift. Based on what you have read above, which one of the following titles would you choose?

Swift Success
Taylor Made
Taylor Swift – A Life in Music

Support your choice with reference to the text. (10)
- (b) Identify a successful person you would really like to meet. Explain at least one reason why you would particularly like to meet this person. In your answer you may not refer to any of the people featured in this examination paper. (10)

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

Question B – 50 Marks

Based on your reading of TEXT 1, imagine you are one of the graduates who attended the ceremony at which Taylor Swift spoke. Write **a post for your blog** in which you: outline what Taylor Swift told the graduating students, give your reaction to what she said and explain why you do or do not think she was a good choice of speaker for the event.

TEXT 2 – A SUCCESSFUL ACTOR

This text is based on material drawn from two articles about successful actor Mark Smith; one by Marjorie Brennan and another by Orla Dwyer.

1. Mark Smith and I are chatting about a show based on his life which was an award-winning hit at the Dublin Fringe Festival in 2019. It was staged again in 2022 in Dublin, as well as in various venues around the country. Smith, who has Down syndrome, stars in the show which he also helped to create.

2. The play, which showcases both Smith's struggles and successes, was created in collaboration with artistic director of Run of the Mill Theatre, Aisling Byrne, and writer Shaun Dunne. "Shaun and I were in the process of presenting our latest work and I was telling Mark over coffee, and he said 'why don't you make a story about my life?'" she explained. Byrne says she always keeps her ear to the ground for artistically fulfilling opportunities for Mark.

3. Aisling stars in the production along with Mark. They met over ten years ago when Byrne was facilitating drama training and education programmes with St John of God community services in Kildare. "The first time I met Aisling, I thought she was la-di-da, sort of posh, but actually she's very nice," laughed Smith. Aisling explained, "I met Mark on my first day on the job and I knew straight away that he had that 'star quality'. Our friendship evolved as our work together started to flow, and we became more ambitious."

4. Smith, now 40, has been involved in drama since he took classes as a child and has performed in several plays directed by Byrne, including playing the lead role in Shakespeare's play, *King Lear*. Smith says of Byrne, "She keeps pushing me to do all these fantastic things. In 2016, she decided



to do *King Lear*. I was the last to get cast, and I was the oldest one in the cast. When Aisling said that she wanted me to play King Lear, I said, "What? Are you having a laugh?" but she was serious and I agreed." Byrne says that Mark had an ambition and interest in sharing his story because he has had such an incredible, exciting and rich life.

5. When he's not acting, Smith works in Tesco in Maynooth, where he recently won an award for 20 years of service. He has also been a student at NUI Maynooth. "I studied anthropology there and I passed all 14 modules. As well as that, I was a mentor to other students in the college," he says. In addition to these accomplishments Mark was also an athlete in the Special Olympics, winning a silver medal in 1999.

6. While the show covers his many achievements, it also delves into his struggles and challenges, which he says most people don't see. "People focus on those achievements, which is a good thing but it can blind people to the fact that he has had hard times behind closed doors," says Byrne. "Mark wanted to put it out there that he has faced lots of difficulties and challenges in his life and has overcome them."

7. Smith says that as well as wanting people to write more roles for him personally, he believes that opportunities need to be extended across the performing arts to people with intellectual disabilities. Byrne says she has seen first-hand the inspiration he has given to others. “Mark is a very passionate promoter of the idea that you can’t be what you can’t see. This has scaled up the ambition of every other member of Run of the Mill, who now say ‘I could do that too’.”

8. Mark says he is “very excited” about performing on stage again. “It makes me feel alive. I feel it’s like electricity going through me,” he says. Smith’s love of performance also extends to television and he refers to his appearance on *The Tommy Tiernan Show* on RTÉ as one of the highlights of his career so far. “There is one show I have to go on, which is *The Late Late Show*,” he says. Byrne adds: “We don’t have anything arranged but Mark is putting it out there into the universe. As we say, believe it, achieve it.”

N.B. Answer only ONE Question A and only ONE Question B.

Question A – 50 Marks

- (i) Identify three aspects of Mark Smith’s personality, evident in TEXT 2, that in your opinion may have helped him to become successful. Explain why you think these aspects of Mark’s personality may have contributed to his success. (15)
- (ii) Explain the ways in which Aisling Byrne contributed to Mark Smith’s success. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)
- (iii) (a) You have been asked to choose a title for a documentary film about Mark Smith’s life. Based on what you have read above, which one of the following titles would you choose?
- Believe It, Achieve It Making A Mark A Man of Many Talents
- Support your choice with reference to the text. (10)
- (b) Identify a successful person you would really like to meet. Explain at least one reason why you would particularly like to meet this person. In your answer you may not refer to any of the people featured in this examination paper. (10)

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

Question B – 50 Marks

You have been asked to write a **letter** to Mark Smith inviting him to present your school’s High Achiever Award. This award recognises achievement in sport or academics or the arts. It can also be awarded for community involvement. In your letter you should: invite Mark Smith to the event, provide him with information and details about the event, identify the winner and explain the reasons why this person is being honoured in this way.

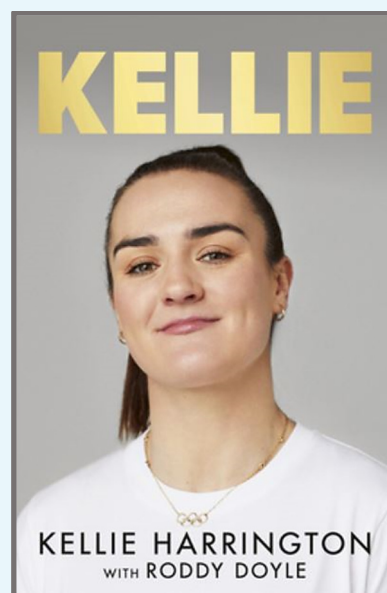
TEXT 3 – A SUCCESSFUL SPORTSPERSON

This text is based on edited extracts from *Kellie*, a book written by Olympic boxing gold medallist Kellie Harrington, with Roddy Doyle. The book tells Kellie's story in her own words.

1. There are boxing clubs on every corner of the inner city. I'd see boys going to boxing. I looked at them and I always knew they were doing something good with their lives. They were all boys, no girls. One of the coaches from the local club, Corinthians Boxing Club, lived where I was hanging around. His name was Joey O'Brien, and his flat faced the wall that me and my friends would be sitting on. I found out he was a coach and, straight away I began to talk to him about boxing and fitness. I asked him, 'Any chance of me joining the boxing club?' He said no: the secretary of the club, Paddy Osbourne, wouldn't allow girls to join.

2. I kept knocking on Joey's door. For about a year. I had his head done in. If I'd been Joey, I'd have been, 'Here she comes! Quick, quick – pretend we're not in!' But if I really want something I'm the kind of person who'll keep trying and trying. And trying. I was always like that. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad. But I'm an Olympic champion; that's how I got there. I just won't stop. And I kept knocking on Joey's door. They'd have to let girls into the club. Joey kept at the secretary, Paddy Osbourne. 'Look, Paddy – you have to let this girl join. Times are changing, we're not in the Stone Age any more.'

3. Joey was working in a gym in Finglas. He was doing fitness and boxing classes there. He said to me, 'Look, Kellie – if you want to come out and do a couple of sessions, you can.' I went out on the bus. Joey did pads with me. He'd hold up the pads and I'd hit them. It was really exciting, because I felt like I was learning something totally new. He showed me what way to hold my hands, how to stand, what a jab was.



4. I went again and again. I began to meet other people who were training and sparring in the gym. I'd watch them getting into the ring and they'd have a good spar. They'd get back out, and they'd sit on the side of the ring, talking to each other like mates. They'd just been battering each other, and now they were sitting together, chatting. I realised that I didn't have to be angry towards the other boxer if I was going to fight them in the ring. It was all about switching on and off. So I started to do it. I'd put the headgear on and the gumshield in, and I'd get into the ring and spar – always with boys.

5. One night Joey was in Corinthians and Paddy turned round to him. 'Joey – you can bring that young one down during the week if you want.' Joey knocked on my parents' door to let me know. He said, 'Tell Kellie she's allowed in.' When I came home my Ma and Da told me. I was straight out again and legging it around to Joey's. 'Joey! I'm allowed start – I'm allowed start?!'

‘Yeah, yeah – you’re in Tuesdays and Thursdays.’

Joey is a very quiet person but he knew he was delivering great news. I think he was delighted. I’m very grateful to Joey. ‘You’ll have to train separate nights, Kellie,’ Joey told me. They didn’t want me training with the lads at first, but I didn’t care. I had my foot in the door.

6. Paddy Osbourne got me a fight after about three months. My first fight was against a girl who had been boxing for about three years. I’m in the ring, my nerves are absolutely gone. I hit the girl, Caroline

O’Reilly, and I go, ‘Oh – sorry, sorry!’

She hit me real hard. I’ll never forget it. I was trying to give it back, I was trying to really box. There were three rounds in the fight, two minutes each round. In the last round, with about ten seconds to go, the referee stopped the fight because I was getting battered. I was raging. I cried all the way home. I said, ‘I’m going to fight her again. I’m going to come back and beat her.’ I thought I knew the reason why some of the men in the boxing club had put me in against a girl with so much experience. They were testing me. ‘We’ll see – does she really want it or not.’

N.B. Answer only ONE Question A and only ONE Question B.

Question A – 50 Marks

- (i) Identify three aspects of Kellie Harrington’s personality, evident in TEXT 3, that in your opinion may have helped her to become successful. Explain why you think these aspects of Kellie’s personality may have contributed to her success. (15)
- (ii) Explain the ways in which Joey O’Brien contributed to Kellie Harrington’s success. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)
- (iii) (a) You have been asked to choose a title for a documentary film about Kellie Harrington. Based on what you have read above, which one of the following titles would you choose?
- Fighter Girl Never Give Up Champ
- Support your choice with reference to the text. (10)
- (b) Identify a successful person you would really like to meet. Explain at least one reason why you would particularly like to meet this person. In your answer you may not refer to any of the people featured in this examination paper. (10)

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

Question B – 50 Marks

Imagine you have written a book about the life of a successful person you admire. Identify the successful person your book is about and write **an introduction** for it in which you: explain why you chose to write about this person, outline what writing the book taught you about success and share the reasons why you think readers will enjoy the book.

SECTION II

COMPOSING

(100 marks)

Write a composition on **any one** of the following composition assignments 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. Taylor Swift, one of the world's most famous people, features in TEXT 1.

Write an article, for publication in a popular magazine, in which you explore both the positive and negative aspects of being famous.

2. TEXTS 1, 2 and 3, all deal with the theme of Celebrating Success.

As the chairperson of your school's graduation committee, you have been asked to give a speech at the graduation event. The theme of your speech is, "Celebrating Success". Write the speech you would deliver.

3. In TEXT 3, Kellie Harrington mentions that there are boxing clubs on every corner of inner-city Dublin.

Write an article for the sports pages of a local newspaper in which you discuss the contribution made to the community by sporting groups of all kinds, celebrate local sporting achievements and encourage more young people to participate in local sporting activities.

4. TEXT 2 is entitled 'A Successful Actor'.

Write a short story about a school show or a production by a local drama group that faced a variety of difficulties in the run-up to the opening night of their play. Your story may be serious or humorous or both.

5. The individuals featured in TEXTS 1, 2 and 3 are all passionate about what they do in life.

Write a personal essay about an activity you feel passionate about, explain how participating in this activity makes you feel and the impact your participation has had on your life.

6. TEXTS 1, 2 and 3 all feature people from different professional backgrounds.

Write a short story in which a successful scientist, a successful engineer and a celebrity chef get stranded together on a desert island and have to pool their skills in order to survive until they are rescued.

7. In TEXTS 1, 2 and 3 we meet people who have enjoyed different kinds of success.

Write a personal essay about what success means to you, discuss some of your personal successes and explain who or what helped you to achieve your success.

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Acknowledgements

Images and texts that appear on this examination paper were sourced as follows:

TEXT 1: <https://www.billboard.com/music/music-news/taylor-swift-nyu-commencement-speech-full-transcript-1235072824/>

Image: Detail from: Taylor Swift delivers the commencement address to New York University graduates on May 18, 2022.

ANGELA WEISS Sourced: <https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/taylor-swift-graduation-speech>

TEXT 2: Marjorie Brennan article <https://www.irishexaminer.com/lifestyle/artsandculture/arid-40834232.html>

Orla Dywer article: <https://www.thejournal.ie/mark-smith-aisling-byrne-making-a-mark-4799229-Sep2019/>

Image: <https://kildare-nationalist.ie/2022/03/20/kildare-actor-leaves-his-mark-on-play-about-his-own-life/>

TEXT 3: *Kellie*, Harrington K. with Doyle R., Sandycove (an imprint of Penguin Books), United Kingdom, 2022

Image: <https://www.easons.com/Memoir-Kellie-Harrington-Roddy-Doyle-9781844886074>

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Leaving Certificate – Ordinary Level

English, Paper 1

2 hours 50 minutes