



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Junior Cycle Final Examination 2026

English

Higher Level

Wednesday 3 June Morning 9:30 – 11:30

180 marks

Examination Number

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Date of Birth

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For example, 3rd February
2005 is entered as 03 02 05

Centre Stamp

The theme of this examination paper is
Critical Reflection

Instructions

There are **four** sections in this examination paper.

Section A	Writing to Evaluate	35 marks	2 questions
Section B	Appreciating Character, Setting and Story	40 marks	2 questions
Section C	Responding to Shakespearean Drama	50 marks	2 questions
Section D	Writing to Analyse and Imagine	55 marks	3 questions

Answer all 9 questions.

The questions do not all carry equal marks. The number of marks for each question is stated at the top of the question.

You should spend about 20 minutes on Section A, 30 minutes on Section B, 30 minutes on Section C and 35 minutes on Section D.

When answering on studied material, you must use texts in line with what is prescribed for this year's examination.

Write your answers in the spaces provided in this booklet. You may lose marks if you do not do so. You are not required to use all of the space provided. You should read each question in full before beginning your response.

Extra pages are provided if needed. Label any extra work clearly with the question number and part.

You may only use blue or black pen when writing your answers. Do not use pencil.

This examination booklet will be scanned and your work will be presented to an examiner on screen. Anything that you write outside of the answer areas may not be seen by the examiner.

Suggested time for Section A: 20 minutes

Read the following review of the film *Dune Part 2*. In it, the same reviewer gives a range of views on the film. Answer the multiple-choice questions based on the review.

***Dune Part 2* - Film Review: Gorgeous, Awe-Inspiring and Hollow****The Good**

The film is absolutely gorgeous. It's one that you really must see on the biggest, best screen you can find, preferably in a theatre with really great sound. The seats were shaking at some points. There is so much spectacle here, it's a little overwhelming at times. And it's all so well-crafted. Other than the lack of sweat—still odd for such a hot planet—the planet of Arrakis feels real and we see much more of it this time around.

Many of the fight scenes were also deftly handled. The scenes with ambushes on the enemy Harkonnen spice vessels were a lot of fun. The climactic fight between Paul, played by Timothée Chalamet, and Feyd-Rautha, played by Austin Butler, is quick but brutal.

The Mixed

Chani, played by Zendaya, is very upset by Paul's transformation and development in the film and storms out when he is given Princess Irulan's hand in marriage—something that Chani, in the book version, wouldn't be bothered by in the slightest. I suppose I don't care that much but it was weird, and handled a bit awkwardly just in terms of really being able to understand what was bothering Chani so much when she also told Paul she would always be there for him. Just one of the many little details that left me scratching my head. The movie sticks to so many of the book's major plot points, but then steers away from others.

The Bad

2 hours and 46 minutes is too long, especially since this is the second in what will (I believe) be a trilogy. I'm sorry. I know I say this all the time, but very few films justify these long run-times. There were many great scenes in *Dune Part 2*, but a lot could have been cut. It's not a very long book and here we have two whole movies to tell it in. Brevity is the soul of wit.

The Verdict

Overall, while it's not perfect this really was about as good an adaptation from a book as you could ever hope for when it comes to *Dune*. Other adaptations have failed in the past. Director Denis Villeneuve continues to be one of the more engaging directors in modern cinema and he and his entire team did an admirable job bringing this space opera (spice opera?) to the big screen.

Question 1

(10 marks)

Answer the following questions by putting a tick (✓) in the relevant box. Tick **one** box only for each question.

- (a) Why does the reviewer suggest that the presentation of characters on the planet of Arrakis is strange?

it does not feel like the characters belong there ☐

the characters show no physical signs of the heat ☐

characters seem lost in the desert location ☐

- (b) Which word describes the reviewer's opinion on Chani's actions best?

spiteful ☐

loving ☐

confusing ☐

- (c) Why does the reviewer have 'mixed' opinions on the film?

the director used poor visual effects ☐

the dialogue was not engaging ☐

the plot was too different compared to the book version ☐

- (d) What is the reviewer's harshest criticism of the film?

the Harkonnen spice vessels had poor visual effects ☐

the film needed better editing to condense the story ☐

the character of Paul was not on screen for enough time ☐

- (e) Which word describes the reviewer's overall tone in the verdict of the film best?

complimentary ☐

disappointed ☐

underwhelmed ☐

Question 2**(25 marks)**

Write a review of a film that you have studied, following the format used in the review for the film in Question 1. Support your views with reference to the film using the prompts below:

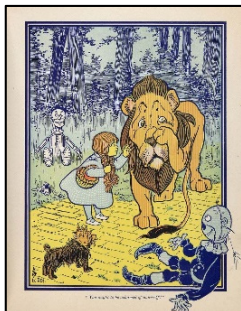
- The Good
- The Mixed
- The Bad
- The Verdict.

Optional Rough Work

Title of film:

Additional writing space. Label all work clearly with the question number and part.

Suggested time for Section B: 30 minutes



Read the following extract from the end of L. Frank Baum's classic children's novel *The Wizard of Oz*. In it, the central character Dorothy is transported to a magical world called Oz, where she meets a number of endearing characters who each have an important influence on her. In this extract, following many adventures, she is ready to return home to Kansas. Answer the question that follows.

The Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman and the Lion now thanked the Good Witch earnestly for her kindness; and Dorothy exclaimed: "You are certainly as good as you are beautiful! But you have not yet told me how to get back to Kansas."

"Your Silver Shoes will carry you over the desert," replied Glinda.

"If you had known their power you could have gone back to your Aunt Em the very first day you came to this country."

"But then I should not have had my wonderful brains!" cried the Scarecrow. "I might have passed my whole life in the farmer's cornfield."

"And I should not have had my lovely heart," said the Tin Woodman. "I might have stood and rusted in the forest till the end of the world."

"And I should have lived a coward forever," declared the Lion, "and no beast in all the forest would have had a good word to say to me."

"This is all true," said Dorothy, "and I am glad I was of use to these good friends. But now that each of them has had what he most desired, and each is happy in having a kingdom to rule besides, I think I should like to go back to Kansas."

"The Silver Shoes," said the Good Witch, "have wonderful powers. And one of the most curious things about them is that they can carry you to any place in the world in three steps, and each step will be made in the wink of an eye. All you have to do is to knock the heels together three times and command the shoes to carry you wherever you wish to go."

"If that is so," said the child joyfully, "I will ask them to carry me back to Kansas at once."

She threw her arms around the Lion's neck and kissed him, patting his big head tenderly. Then she kissed the Tin Woodman, who was weeping in a way most dangerous to his joints. But she hugged the soft, stuffed body of the Scarecrow in her arms instead of kissing his painted face, and found she was crying herself at this sorrowful parting from her loving comrades.

Glinda the Good stepped down from her ruby throne to give the little girl a good-bye kiss, and Dorothy thanked her for all the kindness she had shown to her friends and herself.

Dorothy now took Toto up solemnly in her arms, and having said one last good-bye she clapped the heels of her shoes together three times, saying:

"Take me home to Aunt Em!"

Question 3

(15 marks)

Analyse three aspects of the above extract from, *The Wizard of Oz*, that you think make the text an appealing one for younger readers. Explain your suggestions with reference to the extract.

Optional Rough Work

Question 4

(25 marks)

Describe a key moment from a novel you have studied, that was vital to a character’s personal growth. Explain how this moment helped your chosen character to develop. Support your response with reference to your chosen novel.

Optional Rough Work

Title of novel:
Author:

Additional writing space. Label all work clearly with the question number and part.

Suggested time for Section C: 30 minutes

**Question 5****(25 marks)**

The following lines are from a selection of plays written by William Shakespeare. Explain what advice or reflection on life you think Shakespeare is sharing in these lines.

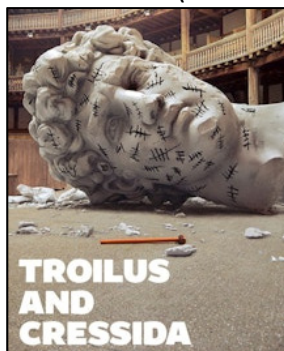
- (a) 'We know what we are but know not what we may be.'

(Ophelia, Act 4 Scene 5, *Hamlet*.)



(b) 'Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.'

(Cressida, Act 1 Scene 2, *Troilus and Cressida*.)



(c) 'What's in a name?

That which we call a rose

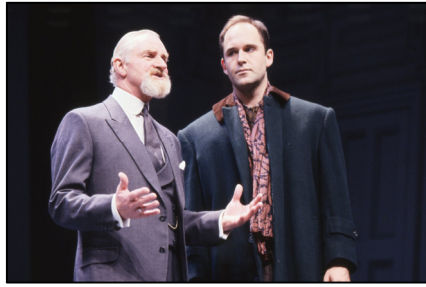
By any other name would smell as sweet.'

(Juliet, Act 2 Scene 2, *Romeo and Juliet*.)



- (d) 'This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as night the day,
Thou canst not be false to any man.'

(Polonius, Act 1 Scene 3, *Hamlet*.)



- (e) 'The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together.'

(French Lord, Act 4 Scene 3, *All's Well That Ends Well*.)



Question 6

(25 marks)

‘Shakespearean drama remains important for people today, as the characters deal with issues that continue to be relevant.’

Describe a key moment when a character, in a Shakespearean play you have studied, dealt with an issue that you think is still relevant today. Outline the issue and explain whether the character dealt with it effectively. Support your response with reference to your chosen play.

Optional Rough Work

Additional writing space. Label all work clearly with the question number and part.

Suggested time for Section D: 35 minutes

Read the following poem by Emily Cullen and answer the question that follows.

Envoi* in Chalk

I'm calling my son from the end of the estate
when my eye snags on green pastel words.
He has chalked on the pavement:
The world is great

This is just the line I need to read;
my mother in hospital, my shoulder inflamed,
our financial future uncertain,
Earth eyeballing Armageddon.*

Yet how right, his perception.
He bolts up on his yellow scooter,
eight-year-old fringe quiffed with gel,
on the cusp of the age of cool.

* *concluding remarks*

* *an event of great destruction*



Question 7

(15 marks)

'The world is great'

Explain why these words had such an impact on the speaker in this poem. Support your response with reference to the poem.

Question 8

(20 marks)

Imagine you have been asked to deliver a speech to fellow students about a poem that made you think more about how you view the world. Write the text of this speech below. Support your response with reference to the poem that you have chosen. You may not use the poem printed on this examination paper.

Optional Rough Work

Question 9

(20 marks)

Imagine your youth group has been invited by the local county council to select one of the posters below as part of a campaign to promote the participation of women, particularly girls, in sport.

Write an email to your county council in which you:

- identify your chosen poster
- outline why you think your chosen poster is the better option. In your response you should refer to both the content and the visual aspects of the poster
- suggest a slogan for your campaign to accompany your chosen poster
- explain why you think that this slogan would be effective.

Poster A



Poster B



Optional Rough Work

[illegible]

Additional writing space. Label all work clearly with the question number and part.

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Acknowledgements

Images

Image on page 3: <https://thedirect.com/article/dune-2-online-streaming-release-date-report>

Image on page 8: <https://alamy.com/stock-photo-wonderful-wizard-of-oz-main-characters-created-by-frank-lyman-baum-32377470.html>

Images on page 14: <https://www.rsc.org.uk/henry-v/past-productions/in-focus-gregory-doran-2015#&gid=1&pid=35>;
<https://people.com/who-is-ophelia-shakespeare-taylor-swift-the-fate-of-ophelia-meaning-11822701>

Images on page 15 : <https://www.london-theater-tickets.com/west-end-plays-in-london/troilus-and-cressida-tickets/>
<https://www.goldderby.com/gallery/baz-luhrmann-best-movies-ranked/baz-luhrmann-movies-ranked-the-romeo-and-juliet/>

Images on page 16 : <https://rscmslive.azurewebsites.net/shakespeare-learning-zone/hamlet/character/relationships>;
<https://www.jpc.de/jpcng/movie/detail/-/art/d-j-wade-all-s-well-that-ends-well/hnum/11559766>

Image on page 20: <https://canva.com/create>

Images on page 23: <https://x.com/HerSportDotIE/status/1814583969066672138>

Texts

p.3&4, Adapted review by Erik Kain, Forbes, March 2024 - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/erikkain/2024/03/01/dune-part-2-review-the-good-the-bad-and-the-spicey/>

p.8, Baum, L, Frank, *The Wizard of Oz*, <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/55/pg55-images.html#chap23>

p.14, Shakespeare, William, *Hamlet*

P.15, Shakespeare, William, *Troilus and Cressida*

p.15, Shakespeare, William, *Romeo and Juliet*

p.16, Shakespeare, William, *Hamlet*

p.16, Shakespeare, William, *All's Well that Ends Well*

p.20, Cullen, Emily. 'Envoi in Chalk'. *Conditional Perfect*. Inverin, County Galway: Doire Press, 2019.

p.23, HerSport.ie, <https://x.com/HerSportDotIE/status/1814583969066672138>

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English

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