2026.M106

2026L568A1EL

Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Leaving Certificate Examination 2026

Politics and Society

Higher Level

Tuesday 23 June Morning 9:30 - 12:00

400 marks

Examination Number

Date of Birth / /

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

Centre Stamp

Instructions

There are three sections in this examination paper.

Section A	Short Answer Questions Answer **ten** out of 15 questions	50 marks
Section B	Data-based Questions Answer **all** questions	150 marks
Section C	Discursive Essays Answer **two** questions	200 marks

Answer all sections

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.

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

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.

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

Section A	Short Answer Questions	50 marks

Answer any ten of the following items: (a), (b), (c)…(o).

Question 1

(a) Tokenism occurs when children are given the appearance of being involved, but their views have no real impact on decisions.

Comment on the value of tokenism in children's participation in initiatives that affect them.

(b) Transport for Ireland has introduced a JAM card, which stands for "Just a Minute". It allows passengers with a learning difficulty, autism, or a communication barrier to discreetly indicate that they may need a little extra time or understanding in public or social situations. Comment on this initiative in relation to equity and/or equality.

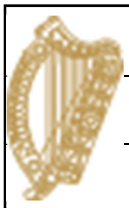
https://www.transportforireland.ie/news/nta-launches-2025-jam-campaign-celebrating-six-years-of-accessibility-and-inclusion-across-the-tfi-network/

(c) Explain the role of the European Commission.

(d) Plestia Alaqad is a Palestinian journalist who gained international attention for her eye witness reporting during the war in Gaza. She has become a powerful symbol of journalistic courage. Why is it important that we have first-hand accounts from war zones?

https://malaysia.news.yahoo.com/palestinian-journalist-plestia-alaqad-flees-190903974.html

(e) Describe **two** methods by which a potential candidate can secure a place on the ballot paper for presidential elections in Ireland.



https://president.ie/en

(f) "This is inhuman, degrading, and unworthy of Ireland in 2025."
Mark Kelly, Chief Inspector of Prisons in Ireland.

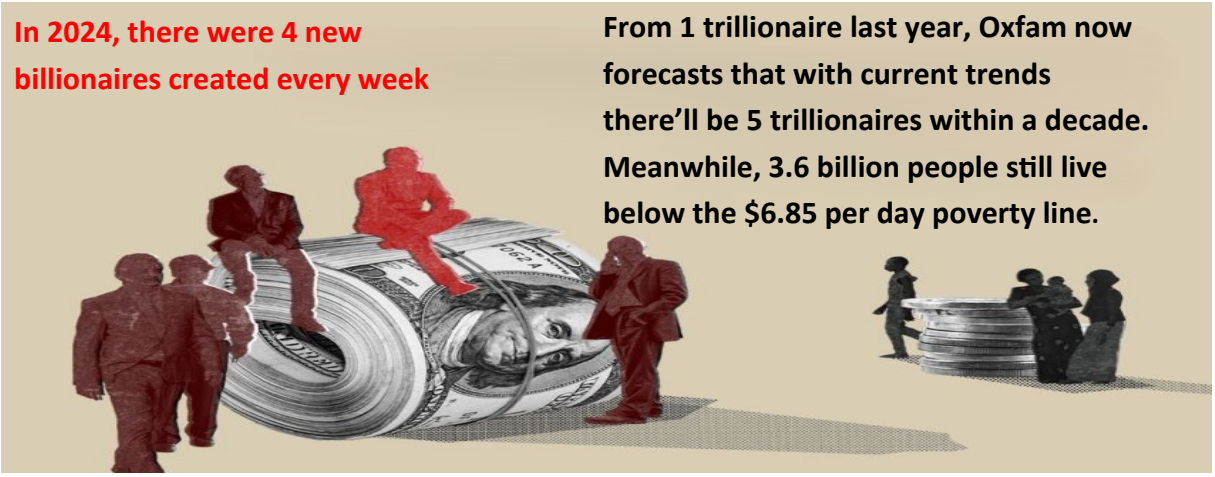
Irish prisons are currently operating at 120% of capacity and around 500 prisoners are sleeping on floors. Mr Kelly has also said that overcrowding and poor healthcare had contributed to a 50% increase in prison deaths in 2024. (Irish Times, November 2025)

Comment on these statistics in relation to the human rights of prisoners in Ireland.

(g) Describe **two** aspects of the role of The Electoral Commission / An Coimisiún Toghcháin.

(h) State the **five** filters in Noam Chomsky's theory of 'Manufactured Consent'.

(i) What message does this graphic convey about inequality and income distribution in society?



https://www.oxfam.org/en/takers-not-makers-unjust-poverty-and-unearned-wealth-colonialism (Adapted)

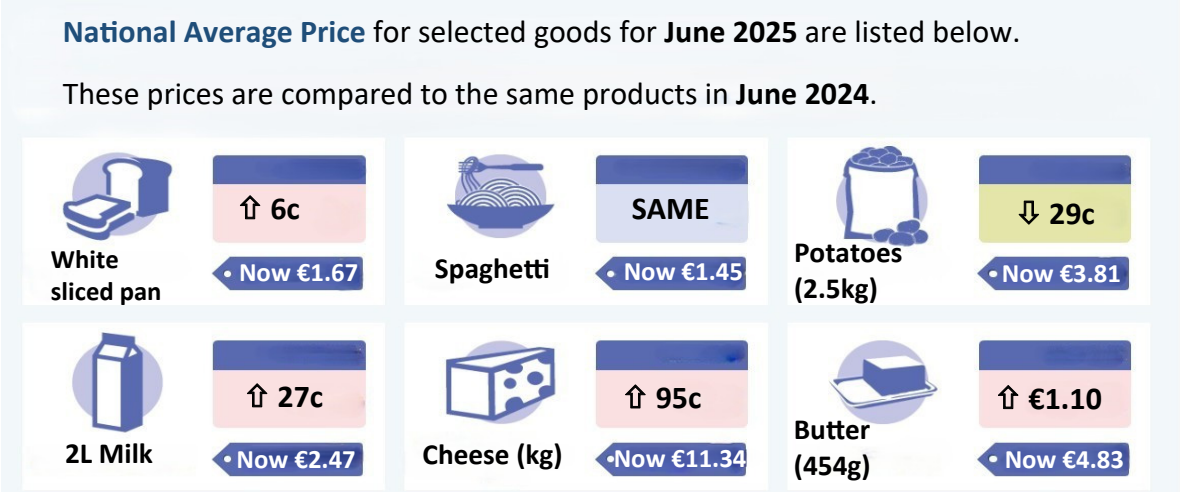
(j) Give **two** examples of how the PR-STV electoral system in Ireland supports the rights of minorities.

(k) Explain what it means for human rights to be 'inalienable'.
Give an example of an inalienable right.

(l) Comment on the relevance in contemporary Ireland of the quotation from James Connolly:
"Let no Irishman throw a stone at the foreigner; he may hit his own clan."

https://news.corksafetyalerts.com/cork-mural-sparks-nationwide-conversation-on-immigration-and-irish-identity/

(m) According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) June 2025, consumer prices rose by 1.8% over 12 months to June 2025.
What challenges does this data pose for society in Ireland today?



https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpi/consumerpriceindexjune2025/

(n) How effective are COP agreements in achieving sustainable development?

https://p2.trrsf.com/image/fget/cf/326/80/images.terra.com/2025/02/04/logo-cop30-light-u7rsj3sr25b6.png

(o) Briefly outline the role of the World Bank.

Section B	Data-based Questions	150 marks

Answer **all** questions in this section. Answer in the space provided.

Document A: From *'Correct the Map': Africa takes on centuries-old 'biggest lie' in world geography*, Anadolu Ajansı 17.09.25.

For generations, schools, media outlets and decision-makers have relied on a familiar world map - it has become a global standard. But behind its widespread use lies a major flaw: the Mercator projection presents a distorted view of the world. Now, a growing initiative led by African organizations *Africa No Filter* and *Speak Up Africa*, with support from the African Union (AU), is pushing for change. The *Correct the Map* campaign urges a shift away from the outdated projection, which artificially inflates the size of some regions while minimizing others, particularly Africa. The campaign calls for global adoption of the Equal Earth projection, which preserves proportional continent sizes and presents a fairer, more visually balanced view of the planet.

What are map projections and why do we need them?

A map projection is a method of representing the 3D surface of the Earth on a 2D plane (such as a map or screen). Since the earth is a sphere, flattening it onto a map surface inevitably introduces some sort of distortion.

"A map decides what to highlight, what to leave out, where to place the center, and how big or small places appear," Moky Makura, the executive director of *Africa No Filter*, told Anadolu. "Those choices create a narrative about importance, connection, and power. Mercator map shrinks Africa's size, which downplays its importance." Makura said the projection also reinforces colonial-era narratives, portraying Africa as small, peripheral and less significant in the global order. "It's not just a geography issue or just a map," she said. "It's a narrative issue about pride and identity." Seeing Africa minimized on maps, she warned, can subconsciously make the continent seem less important, less powerful and less worthy of attention – shaping everything from where aid is directed to how policies and investments are decided. "Maps are instruments of power. Africa is reclaiming its power."

Greenland and Africa as they appear on the Mercator Projection

One of the best known and commonly used world maps, the Mercator Projection, depicts Greenland and Africa as being roughly the same size.

In reality, Africa is 14 times larger.

Greenland and Africa based on the 'Equal Earth Projection'

https://correctthemap.org (Adapted)

Document B: From Africa No Filter *Stereotypes about Africa in Britain and the United States* Research Report 2025. In collaboration with the University of Bath.

Media and developmental aid organisations often portray Africa in stereotypical ways related to lack of progress, poverty, political instability, exotic tribalism, harsh living conditions, and other negative images. Presumably, this is intended to provoke sympathy and encourage donations and willingness to help Africa progress. While they may be well-intentioned, critics – such as *Africa No Filter* – warn that these portrayals may foster overly negative perceptions of Africa, ultimately undermining its global image and economic prospects.

Western consumers might hesitate to support African businesses or cultural products if the only images that come to mind about Africa are deserts and poverty. Significant research has highlighted how the media portrays Africa as helpless and impoverished but there is surprisingly little research on how these portrayals are reflected in the perceptions of the average person in the Global North, such as the USA or UK.

There were two parts to this study.

Part 1: Stereotypes of Africa and their consequences.

A survey of 1,126 representative US and UK participants revealed that:

1. Africa's image is dominated by nature and wildlife, perpetuating outdated colonial tropes that overshadow its societal progress and cultural richness.
2. Thoughts about Africa are generally more negative compared to thoughts about Europe.
3. Negative stereotypes about Africa can be grouped into three key themes:
    a. Hostile, uninhabitable natural environments (e.g. droughts, barren landscapes)
    b. Societal challenges such as political instability, disease, poverty, and corruption
    c. A perceived lack of rich culture and advanced civilization, in contrast to Europe's association with rich cultural heritage and modernity
4. These stereotypes directly explain lower interest in African products and cultural offerings in the US and UK.

Part 2: Changing the narrative of Africa versus negating negative stereotypes.

Another sample of 960 US participants showed that providing positive new information about Africa, rather than merely negating stereotypes, can effectively shift perceptions and foster greater interest in Africa's products and cultures.

Study Participants: We aimed to collect 960 US-American participants. After excluding participants with African and European backgrounds, and participants who failed attention checks, we report a sample of 863 final participants (age 18-86, average age 41.1; 36.6% male, 61.3% female, 2.1% non-binary; 89.9% White, 0.3% Black, remaining 9.8% other backgrounds).

In summary, this report shows that negative stereotypes about Africa remain widespread in the US and UK and shape how people engage with the continent. However, our research shows that sharing positive stories about Africa can shift perceptions and foster greater interest in its products, cultures, and potentials.

https://africanofilter.org/documents/Stereotypes--about-africa-in-UK-and-USA.pdf (Adapted)

Question 2 **(150 marks)**

(a) What is the main objective of the 'Correct the Map' campaign in **Document A**?

(b) Comment on the authorship of **Document B**.

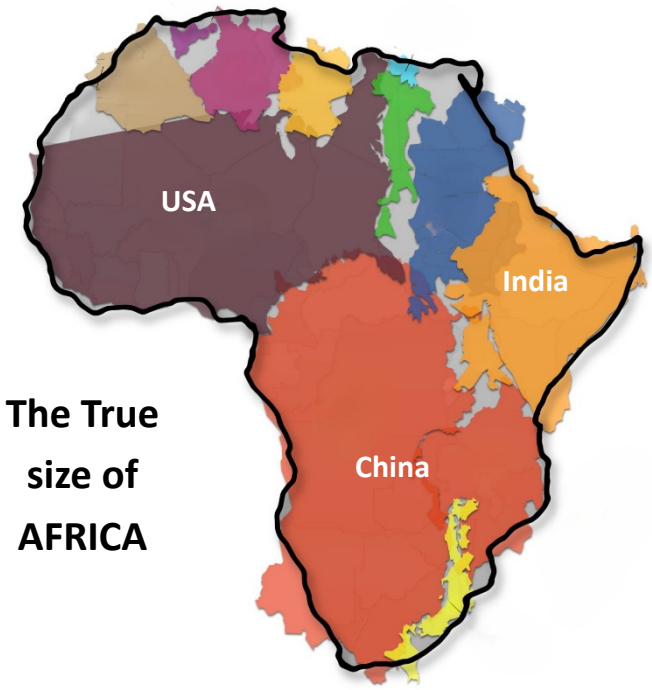
(c) From **Document A**, explain what is meant by 'maps are instruments of power'.

(d) Outline the stereotypes of Africa as mentioned in **Document B**.

(e) Critique the methodology used to gather data as described in **Document B**.

(f) Based on the evidence in **both** documents, what are the economic implications of portraying Africa more fairly?

(g) Drawing on the data presented in both documents and the quotation below, what conclusions can you draw about the perception of Africa as being peripheral and marginal on the global stage?



http://kai.sub.blue/en/africa.html

"The current size of the map of Africa is wrong," Moky Makura, executive director of *Africa No Filter*, said. "It's the world's longest misinformation and disinformation campaign, and it just simply has to stop."

This map shows 30 countries overlaid on a map of Africa to show the size of the continent of Africa in comparison to them.

Optional space to help you prepare your answer.

Answer

Section C	Discursive Essays	200 marks

Answer two questions from 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Question 3(a) **(100 marks)**

Irish Examiner

"Child poverty and housing shortage are destroying the Social Contract."

Irish Examiner, 13 March 2025

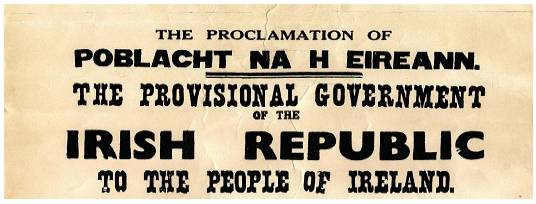
Discuss whether the state is failing in its responsibilities as part of the Social Contract, for example in protecting citizens' fundamental rights, providing essential public services and infrastructure, and ensuring a minimum standard of living.

[Your answer should include contemporary examples and evidence from a national context to support your argument. You should also refer to the ideas of at least two theorists, one of whom must be named on your course.]

OR

Question 3(b) **(100 marks)**

Drawing on the extract below from The Proclamation of the Irish Republic, 1916, what conclusions can you draw about the state's obligation as a duty bearer to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights in Ireland?


THE PROCLAMATION OF
POBLACHT NA H EIREANN.
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

"The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally."

[Your answer should include contemporary examples and evidence from a national context to support your argument. You should also refer to the ideas of at least two theorists, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Question 4 **(100 marks)**

Discuss the relationship between Edward Said's theory of Orientalism and Western Imperialism.

[Your answer should include contemporary examples and evidence to support your argument. You should also refer to the ideas of at least one other theorist.]

Question 5 **(100 marks)**

"We need to highlight the role women play in perpetuating and sustaining patriarchal culture so that we will recognize patriarchy as a system women and men support equally, even if men receive more rewards from that system."
bell hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*, 2004.

https://shop.womenshistory.org

Discuss the impacts of patriarchy on women and men, and whether or not dismantling patriarchy requires a collective response.

[Your answer should include contemporary examples and evidence from a national and/or global context to support your argument. You should also refer to the ideas of at least two theorists, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Question 6 **(100 marks)**

"Poverty is not just a lack of money; it is not having the capability to realise one's full potential as a human being." Amartya Sen

Discuss Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach in relation to human and sustainable development in the contemporary world.

[Your answer should include contemporary examples and evidence from a national and/or global context to support your argument.]

Question 7 **(100 marks)**

https://european-union.europa.eu/

"Ireland will bring to this role our characteristic blend of ambition and pragmatism, our deep commitment to European values, and our determination to make Europe work for all its citizens."
Tánaiste Simon Harris TD, July 2025

As Ireland takes on the Presidency of the Council of the EU in July 2026, critically assess whether Ireland's domestic politics and/or foreign policy maintains "our commitment to European values."

[Your answer should include contemporary examples and evidence from a national and/or global context to support your argument. You should also refer to the ideas of at least two theorists, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Section C – Answer to Question ___

Optional space to help you prepare your answer.

Answer

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Optional space to help you prepare your answer.

Answer

Optional additional page.

Indicate clearly the number and part of the question(s) you are answering.

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Leaving Certificate – Higher Level

Politics and Society

Tuesday 23 June

Morning 9:30 - 12:00