



General Certificate of Secondary Education
Winter 2011

English

Paper 1
Higher Tier

[G2903]



TUESDAY 8 NOVEMBER, MORNING

TIME

2 hours.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your Centre Number and Candidate Number on the Answer Booklet provided.
Answer **all four** questions.
Answer the **three** questions in Section A and the **one** question in Section B.
Spend **one hour** on Section A and **one hour** on Section B.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 60.
Figures in brackets printed down the right-hand side of pages indicate the marks awarded to each question.



Section A

This section tests **reading** skills.

- Spend about **15 minutes reading** the passage carefully.
- Answer **all three** questions carefully.

Robert, his mother and his little brother Dennis have moved out of Dublin to Co. Clare. They have just arrived at the house they have rented with their new landlord, PJ Dooley.

There was an old Skoda parked in the drive in front of the house.

“I’ll be moving that,” PJ said. “The last tenant left it behind him when he ... went. I don’t suppose it’s worth much.”

The house was a kind of cottage with an upstairs tacked on. It looked OK from the outside, if you liked that sort of thing. A big thick green hedge. Flowers in big buckets. But the front door was swollen into its frame from the damp and PJ had to put his hip against it to open it. Inside it was more like a shed than a house. It was no warmer than it was outside and the air was so damp you could nearly drink it. There was a little porch with mould growing on the walls and a bathroom opening off one side of it. Two more doors opened off the porch, one into a sitting room and the other into a kitchen. There was a big old range in there, and stairs running straight up out of the room, and the back door at the bottom of them. Behind the chimney pipe, the wall was covered in black streaks. 5 10

PJ said, “It’s soot. These old houses. Nothing you can do about it.”

Upstairs was much newer. There was a landing and three bedrooms, all with wooden walls, painted the colour of pus in a scab. The beds were old and there were chests with sticking drawers and a dressing table with a mirror that stared at the ceiling. 15

In the biggest bedroom my ma said, “You could have this one, Robert. We can get you a desk in here.”

“A desk?” I said. “What would I want with a desk?”

“For your school work,” PJ said all innocent. “For your homework and all.” 20

“Homework?” I said. “You said we were only staying for the summer!”

Behind his back, my ma shook her fist at me.

“And anyway,” I said. “I told you. I’m not staying.”

My ma gave me a vicious look. Then Dennis started bawling. He was still bawling when we followed PJ downstairs, and my ma had to carry him and shout over his head. 25

“It’s fine, honest. It’s gorgeous. We love it.”

PJ opened the cupboard under the stairs. It was crammed full of boxes and bin bags. He said, “I hope you don’t mind. There’s some stuff here belonging to the last fella. Only I don’t know what to do with it. I don’t like to throw it out – he might come back for it some day, you never know.” 30

My ma looked alarmed.

“Oh, there’s no need to worry,” PJ said. “He’s an awful nice fella. A real gent, Lars. Swedish. But he left a bit sudden, like ...”

“Why?” my ma asked.

PJ shrugged. “No one knows. He just disappeared one day.” My ma looked even more alarmed, but PJ said: “Nothing to worry about. The police were here and they had a look 35

round, but there was nothing suspicious. He took his passport and driving licence and all, so he must have had a plan. It was just a bit sudden, that's all."

"Did he owe you rent?" I asked.

"He did," PJ said, "but not that much. No, that wouldn't have anything to do with it, I'd say." He pointed out the window. There were two big meadows on the side of the hill, and above them a couple of houses and loads of sheds – a real farmyard from the looks of it. 40

"That's my house there, the two storey one. If you need anything, just call up."

He gave me the keys. Then we all trooped out of the house to his car. PJ looked at my ma and said, "You might get a visit from my mother as well. She likes to know what's going on. She comes out with some strange things sometimes, but don't mind her. She's getting on." 45

As he drove away we trooped back into the house. It was June and the weather was warm but the house felt cold because of the damp. My ma set about lighting a fire and I put on the kettle. Then I went out the back door.

"Where are you going?" she called after me. 50

"Back to Dublin," I yelled.

"You are NOT!" she screeched. "Come back here."

"You can't watch me every minute of the day," I said calmly and closed the door.

Beside the house was a small grassy kind of yard with a hayshed and a block of little stone sheds. Behind them, in every other direction there was nothing but boring farmland. The cattle in the meadow lifted their heads to look at something and I saw someone coming. She was a long way off but I could see grey hair, a brown dress and wellies. I had a good idea who she was. I went back into the house to warn my ma. 55

She was in a rage. She had unpacked the bag of groceries we had brought with us and all the eggs were broken. Now she had sausages on the pan but she couldn't get the gas to light. 60

"I can't find a meter or anything," she said. "You look, will you?"

I looked all round the walls and behind the cooker.

"It's not going to be down there now, is it?" she said.

It wasn't but there was an orange pipe that disappeared into the wall. I followed it outside and found a gas bottle. I flicked the switch on top of it. The fat old woman was crossing the near meadow now, and I could see she had a dog with her. 65

"It's working!" my ma said cheerfully. "What did you do?"

"Turned it on, of course." I said. "And we're getting a visitor."

"Who?"

"Mrs Dandy, I suppose." 70

"Eh? Mrs Dandy?"

"PJ's ma."

"Dooley," she said. "Not Dandy, it's Dooley."

"Yankee Dooley Doodle Doody Dandy," I said. "Who cares?"

My ma laughed and I turned away so that she couldn't see the smile on my face. I wasn't ready to forgive her for dragging me down to this hole. 75

Miraculously, Mrs Dooley had brought us a box of eggs.

"You must be psychic!" my ma said, showing her the broken ones in the bin.

"Ah well, these are from our own hens, fresh laid. Save your scraps and send the young lad up with them. Old bread, potatoes, cabbage ... hens'll eat anything." 80

She took a carton of milk out of her bag and gave it to my ma.

"And did your cows lay that as well?" I said. Mrs Dooley looked at me for a long moment and then ignored me. Dennis decided it was time to join in. He came and stood in front of Mrs Dooley.

"What age are you?" she asked. "You must be five or six at least!" 85

“He’s only just four,” my ma said. “But he takes age six in clothes.”

“Only the two lads, is it? Do you know how many children I reared? And my house is no bigger than this one!”

Dennis just stared. He had no idea what she was talking about, what with the accent and the false teeth. 90

“Eleven,” she said. “Eleven children.”

My ma said, “Did you really have eleven kids?”

“I did,” said Mrs Dooley. “But there was only ever one child in this house, more’s the pity, and she was not allowed out.”

“Why not?” I asked. 95

Mrs Dooley looked at Dennis. He was staring at her with big, wide eyes.

“It’s a very strange story,” she said, “and a very sad one. But it can wait. Your dinner’s ready and I only came down to leave you the eggs and to make sure you put a drop of milk out for the fairies.”

“The what?” my ma said. 100

“I know you’ll scoff,” Mrs Dooley said, “but the truth is there never was a time since this house was built that there wasn’t milk left out for the fairies. It’s on a fairy path, they say.” I couldn’t look at her. I turned away. A grin was splitting my face.

“You might laugh,” she said to my back, “but it’s bad luck to disregard them.”

I heard her open one of the cupboards beside me and out of the corner of my eye I saw her put a little green bowl on the table. 105

“About this much,” she said, pouring milk from the carton. “Leave it on the window sill when it gets dark.”

“All right,” my ma said and I could tell she was trying not to laugh as well.

“Lars used to put it out every night,” Mrs Dooley said. “And if he was going away he would tell me and I’d do it. That’s why it’s so strange. Him disappearing without telling a soul.” 110

My ma was stirring the sausages beside me. I didn’t dare look at her or we would both have disgraced ourselves laughing.

“Do you think the fairies took him?” my ma muttered out of the side of her mouth. I bit my lip hard to keep the laugh from breaking out of me. 115

“I’ll leave you to it, so. Call over if there’s anything you need.” Mrs Dooley sniffed.

“I will, thanks,” my ma said.

“And don’t forget, every evening the milk in the bowl,” Mrs Dooley hobbled slowly to the door. It was more than I could take. I burst out past her and raced to the hayshed. I laughed until my ribs hurt. 120

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- 1 Spend about **10 minutes** on this question. Use **evidence from lines 1–16** to support your answer.

How does the writer’s description create an unpleasant impression of the house? [8]

- 2 Spend about **15 minutes** on this question. Use **evidence from lines 44 to the end of the passage** to support your answer.

What do you learn about Mrs Dooley? [10]

- 3 Spend about **20 minutes** on this question. Use **evidence from the whole passage** to support your answer.

How has the writer tried to capture and hold the reader’s interest?

You should consider how the writer:

- develops a sense of mystery surrounding the house
- presents the strained relationship between Robert and his mother
- uses particular words and phrases to engage the reader.

[12]

TURN OVER FOR SECTION B

Section B

This section tests **writing** skills: to **review, analyse and comment**.

- Write in a way that suits this type of task.
 - The answer should be developed fully. You are expected to **write at least two sides**.
 - Leave **enough time to re-read your work** so that you can make any changes you feel are necessary.
-

4 Consider the following statement and the issues it raises:

“If we are serious about saving our planet then it’s time we started to holiday responsibly – no more going abroad.”

The opinions below present quite different attitudes about going abroad on holiday. The examiner wants you to review the points that you consider to be important, along with ideas of your own. Analyse these in an extended piece of writing.

“Only by going abroad can you experience other cultures or enjoy good weather for that matter!”

“All that travel by plane, boat or train is just adding to global warming – that’s not responsible.”

“Going abroad is responsible – just think of all the economies around the world that would collapse if international tourism ceased.”

“There is so much to see and do in our own country – why go away with all that to choose from?”

Remember to include your own ideas, comments and conclusions.

[30]

THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTION PAPER

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