

LEAVING CERTIFICATE  
ENGLISH  
STUDY GUIDE  
ORDINARY LEVEL



Wuthering Heights  
by  
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Approaching the Question  
Sample Answers

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## Guidelines for Answering Exam Questions

This section is worth 70 marks and should take you around an hour to complete. You will be asked to answer **one** question, A or B.

The questions are generally divided into two parts, (a) and (b) which are worth 30 and 40 marks respectively. This is not written in stone, however, so check before you begin your answer.

You may be asked, in part of a question, to answer on one of your texts separately.

### **Points to note:**

- When you read the question, underline the key words, 'one of the texts', 'key moment', 'describe', 'explain' etc.
- Plan your answer. It is well worth taking the time to do this.
- Think in terms of key moments; this will ensure that you refer to the text and will help you to keep the sequence of events in the right order.
- When you are planning your answer, try to think of approximately *five* key moments which illustrate the mode you have chosen.
- In your introductory paragraph, name the *text*, the *author* and the *mode* you have chosen.
- You must *compare* your texts and answer *on the mode* you have chosen.
- Do not, under any circumstances, simply summarise the plot.
- When you are comparing texts, do not write a separate paragraph for each text. Instead, you must constantly compare one with the other.
- Use a selection of the link words and phrases below when comparing texts. The examiner will be looking for them.

### **Link words and phrases:**

Likewise

Similarly

Also

In the same way

In the same manner

Just as

Both texts/characters

Each text

Conversely

On the contrary

Whereas

Differs from

However

In contrast

This is different to

While

## Comparing the texts

The examiners' reports show that the two most common faults in the comparative study section of Paper 11 are:

1. Students simply summarising the plot.
2. Students treating each text separately and not comparing them.

Listed below are some sentence structures you could use when linking texts. In these sentences, T1 and T2 refer to the texts, C1 and C2 refer to the characters and A1 and A2 refer to the authors.

- We can see in both T1 and T2 that.....
- Like C1, C2 resists the pressure to conform.....
- I feel that there are many similarities between C1 and C2.
- Unlike C1, C2.....
- The same theme is handled completely differently in T2....
- A1 uses humour while A2 treats the theme more seriously....
- Both characters have to deal with....but C1 handles it very differently to C2....
- In both T1 and T2, the characters face a crisis.....but the outcome is very different.....

It cannot be stressed enough that simply retelling the story will not get you marks. The examiner knows the plot and it is assumed you do too. Avoid falling into the trap of simply describing the social setting, for example, without saying what effect it has on the characters' lives.

In order to get high marks, you need to:

1. Answer the question asked (30%)
2. Make sure every paragraph develops that answer (30%),
3. Use varied and appropriate language (30%)
4. Keep an eye on your spelling and grammar (10%). Think about the first two points when you are planning your answer.

## Points To Consider When Comparing Themes In IID and WH

NB: All of these points are dealt with in detail in my notes. Make sure you read the relevant sections carefully so you can back up the points being made with suitable quotation or reference.

Both texts use **humour** to introduce the theme. In IID, the humour is slapstick (tripping over cable) but the point is made nonetheless. In WH, the humour is less obvious to the casual reader, perhaps. Mr. Lockwood's overblown, flowery language is in stark contrast to Heathcliff's blunt, unfriendly speech and we see that there is no real communication or understanding between the pair.

There is **cruelty** in the way the theme is initially presented in both texts. Lockwood is rejected and treated harshly by the inhabitants of WH, who make no effort to put him at his ease (see notes on introduction to theme in WH).

Similarly, Rory's treatment of Michael is harsh and almost brutal at times. (See notes.)

Development:

Similarities: Michael relies on Rory, who is the only one who seems to understand him. Heathcliff relies on Cathy too. She alone seems to like him and to understand him fully. Rory is unkind to Michael at times, and mocks him. Similarly, Cathy is unkind to Heathcliff and becomes impatient with his sullen, uncommunicative ways (see notes).

Differences: Michael's reliance on Rory is not as strong as Heathcliff's reliance on Cathy.

Similarities: Cathy begins to move away from Heathcliff when she is introduced to the Lintons and to the world of Thrushcross Grange. They do not communicate as much as they did in the past, a fact Heathcliff notes and shows to Cathy on a calendar.

Michael begins to rely on Rory less when he meets Siobhan. He communicates with her more and with Rory less.

In both cases, the rejected party notices the shift in attention away from themselves.

Differences: Heathcliff reacts with anger and retreats further into himself. Rory is less affected by Michael's interest in Siobhan. He is irritated at times and plays music

loudly to draw attention to himself but does not become as darkly brooding as Heathcliff. Rory clearly likes Siobhan too, which adds to the complications. However, he is not quite as selfish as Heathcliff and indeed, is concerned that Michael might be making a fool of himself and that he might have misunderstood Siobhan's feelings for him.

*I have dealt with the comparison of the moment of crisis or climax in both texts, and with the consequences, in my sample answer on pages 8 and 9 of these notes.*

## Sample Answers

**2009 Describe one key moment in the text where the theme is clearly evident.**

*Note: I have underlined certain words in the sample answer to draw attention to the need to include them in your answer but you should not, of course, underline them when writing your own answer.*

The text I have chosen as part of my comparative study course is the film "Inside I'm Dancing," directed by Damien O'Donnell. The theme on which I focused in this text was communication and understanding.

Although the theme can be seen throughout the film, the key moment I have chosen takes place when Rory and Michael are invited to attend a party with their carer, Siobhan. The tension in the film has been building since the young men moved into their new home with Siobhan as their carer. It becomes apparent after a short time that Michael is fascinated by Siobhan and clearly harbours romantic feelings towards her. She understands what he is saying much of the time and he is delighted with the attention she gives him when fixing his hair or helping him with his speech. For Michael, who has always had such difficulty in communicating with others, Siobhan's understanding of his slurred speech is a revelation. However, although Siobhan may understand Michael's speech, she does not understand that he is beginning to develop strong feelings for her. This is the first time in Michael's life that he has been able to chat easily to a young woman, and he misinterprets all the signals he receives from Siobhan.

When Michael and Rory go to the party with Siobhan, things reach crisis point. Michael makes his feelings for Siobhan clear by holding her too tightly as they dance and this leads to an unfortunate scene. As Michael holds the increasingly distressed Siobhan ever closer, the music and song lyrics echo the pathos of the situation and communicate his feelings perfectly.

*The look of love is in your eyes*

*A look your smile can't disguise*

*The look of love is saying so much more than just words could ever say*

*And what my heart has heard, well, it takes my breath away.*

Siobhan breaks free and the camera focuses on Michael as we see his heartbreak and dejection.

Back at the house, the tension mounts as Siobhan, ironically dressed in a nurse's uniform, helps the young men to get ready for bed. It is painfully obvious that Michael has misunderstood Siobhan's kindness and believes they have a chance of a romantic future together. Michael's lack of experience in the outside world, having lived always in the sheltered environment of Carrigmore, has not helped him when it

comes to communicating with people his own age.

There is a heartbreakingly painful scene at bedtime when Michael tries desperately to tell Siobhan that he loves her. She is clearly uncomfortable and rejects his advances, once again. Michael, in near despair, asks if she has any feelings for him. Ironically, this is one moment where Siobhan's understanding of Michael's speech fails and she is forced to rely on Rory's interpretation skills. Rory is no happier with the situation than Siobhan is. Siobhan explains that her job is simply that – a job.

The tension in the house increases the next day. The two young men are clearly angry and upset. Siobhan announces that she is leaving and she introduces her replacement. Michael is distraught and begs her not to leave. He still does not understand that her kindness to him was nothing more than that – kindness.

Rory, who has a greater experience in communicating with people outside of the world of the care home, sees the situation for what it is far sooner than Michael does. Siobhan tries to tell the pair that, regardless of their disabilities, if they want to be part of the wider community, then they must understand how to function in that community. She tells them that, "If you want to be equal, then you have to show people the same respect you demand of them. In the real world, if you insult some guy in a pub, you expect to get hammered... and if a woman says 'No' to you, you accept that maybe you're not the right man for her."

She tells Rory that he has to learn to give people the respect he expects from them. In effect, what she is saying is that they must interact with others in as normal a way as possible. Their situation does not mean that others should be more understanding or treat them differently, especially as that is not what they say they want. Rory reacts with his usual bad language and cynicism.

Michael is unable or unwilling to understand what Siobhan is saying. He has never had to deal with such a frank speech before and he is distraught. He has misunderstood Siobhan's kindness and is devastated when she leaves. Rory, who is more pragmatic, tells Michael that he is not the only one with a broken heart.

The theme of communication and understanding is very much to the fore in this key moment and we realise how misinterpretations of others' intentions has influenced the characters' lives.

(b) Compare the moment described in (a) above with a moment in another text where **the same theme** is also clearly shown. (40)

The texts I have chosen as part of my comparative study course is the film "Inside I'm Dancing," directed by Damien O'Donnell and the novel "Wuthering Heights" by Emily Brontë. The theme on which I focused in these texts was communication and understanding.

The key moment I have described in part (a) of this question shows clearly how communication and understanding play a vital role in shaping the plot and the characters themselves. Similarly, in "Wuthering Heights", the same theme comes to the fore when, like Michael and Siobhan, Heathcliff and Catherine's relationship comes under strain due to a mis-communication.

Both texts deal with love and the problems that occur when people do not communicate properly with one another and, for various reasons, misunderstand the other's intentions. A major difference between the two stories is the length of time the protagonists have known one another and how close they are before the crisis occurs. Michael falls for Siobhan in a very short space of time, whereas Heathcliff and Catherine have been soulmates for years. Also, there is no mutual love in "Inside I'm Dancing", while there clearly is in "Wuthering Heights". Catherine's love for Heathcliff is real but they communicate on a basic, natural level in many ways. They are like wild creatures, roaming the moors together. Edgar's civilised manner and easy, polite speech show Catherine that there is another way for men to behave and it shines a harsh light on Heathcliff's uncivilised nature. Catherine still loves him but, Heathcliff's increasingly sullen, uncommunicative moods drive a wedge between them in the time leading up to Edgar's proposal. This is quite different to Michael and Siobhan's relationship, which has seen them grow closer over the course of only a few weeks. Of course, the audience realises that Michael has managed to misinterpret Siobhan's kindness to Michael and believes that she might feel romantic love for him, rather than simply the fondness of a carer.

In both WH and IID, the problems with communication are clearly leading to a moment of crisis. In IID, this happens at the party, when Michael reveals his feelings for Siobhan openly and publicly. In WH, however, Heathcliff does not get a chance to do this. He and Catherine have been growing apart in the months leading up to the incident and communicating less and less. It seems that the easy understanding they had as children has vanished almost completely. The greatest misunderstanding of all occurs when Heathcliff hears part, but not all of Catherine's confession to Nelly Dean. Edgar has proposed and Catherine is discussing the matter with Nelly. Nelly is an unwilling audience but Catherine proceeds with her reasons for accepting Edgar's proposal. What she does not realise is that Heathcliff is in a dark corner of



the room, and can hear every word. Catherine tells Nelly that it would degrade her to marry Heathcliff now and he leaves without hearing the rest of her speech, in which she announces that she loves Heathcliff in a way she can never love Edgar. She claims that Heathcliff is "more myself than I am."

Like Michael when he realises Siobhan does not love him, Heathcliff is devastated when he believes that his feelings for Catherine are not reciprocated. Unlike Michael, however, Heathcliff is mistaken, and had he heard the whole conversation, things might have been very different for him and those close to him. In "Inside I'm Dancing", the misunderstanding is thrashed out fully in a short space of time, but in "Wuthering Heights", the issue is never fully resolved and both parties go to their graves unhappy and unfulfilled. The tragedy of the story is that Heathcliff and Catherine don't talk openly to each other at this stage and as a result of what he overhears, Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights and vanishes for several years. This mis-communication has devastating consequences for the entire Linton and Earnshaw families for the next twenty one years.

While both key moments from WH and IID deal with a breakdown in a relationship due to a misunderstanding, the characters in IID are far less affected long-term than those in WH. Michael learns from his experience and becomes a better, more mature young man, whereas Heathcliff is not improved by what he perceives as Catherine's rejection and seeks his revenge over the next two decades.

In both texts, regardless of the consequences, the theme of communication and understanding plays a major part in terms of plot and character development. Had the protagonists understood each other clearly from the start and communicated freely, then things would undoubtedly have taken a very different path and much misery might have been avoided.

**2007 “A key moment in a text can tell us how a social setting can influence a character in a text.”**

The text I have chosen as part of my comparative study course is the film "Inside I'm Dancing," directed by Damien O'Donnell. Although "Inside I'm Dancing" is set in contemporary Ireland, the characters live in a very different world to the majority of their peers. Because of their disabilities, the central characters are faced with a range of difficulties which they must overcome if they are to lead independent, fulfilled lives. Until they meet Siobhan, the two young men are discriminated against at worst and condescended to at best. Michael finds it easier to handle the problems they face in a calm, logical way, but Rory fights society's view of him at every turn. Rory's behaviour; his brash, offensive ways and his anger at the way he is treated by society cause him to deliberately court danger and conflict on occasion - even when such action will lead to trouble.

The director uses black humour to show us Rory's desire to be treated in the same way as everybody else. His behaviour is constantly influenced by the way he is treated by those around him. A key moment which shows us this very clearly can be seen when Rory is arrested for joy riding. The garda who comes on the scene first assumes Rory is able-bodied and is about to drag him from the car. When Michael intervenes and points to Rory's chair on the street, the garda's embarrassment and inability to cope are comical. However, we see his prejudice emerge when he asks Rory "Who's in charge of you?" Rory is enraged and we sympathise with his anger. Why should anyone be in charge of him, just because he is in a wheelchair? Perversely, Rory now demands to be arrested, saying it is his right. He feels he is being discriminated against. The garda does give in and takes Rory to the station, but he is released soon afterwards. Would he have been treated that way if he was not in a wheelchair? It is unlikely. This incident forces us to think about the nature of discrimination in our society. It also shows us that Rory is so influenced by such discrimination that he is willing to be jailed in order to prove that he is the same as other young men of his age. There are plenty of similar moments throughout the text but I feel that this incident, in which a serious issue is presented in a humorous way, best illustrates the anger and frustration Rory feels as he attempts to deal with society's preconceptions and ignorance about people with disabilities. *412 words.*

## A SOCIAL SETTING

1. (a) Write a paragraph in which you outline what you liked (or disliked) about the social setting in **one** text from your comparative course. (30)

(b) Compare the social setting in the text you have described in part (a) above with the social setting in another text you have studied. (40)

1. (a) Write a paragraph in which you outline what you liked (or disliked) about the social setting in **one text** from your comparative course. (30)

### MS

*Candidates will select the social setting and outline their like or dislike for their choice.*

*In their writing, expect that candidates will focus on 'the way things are and the ways things are done in the place concerned' (rules, expectations, relationships etc.) and tell of the extent to which understanding (some of) those customs helped them to appreciate the social setting etc.*

Note: The question does not ask whether or not you would like to live in the world of the text, but instead asks whether you liked the social setting. In other words, did you find it interesting, learning about the way the characters lived? Base your answer on the text, not on your own life. Don't waffle; you only have one paragraph in which to answer the question. Note the key word, "outline".

### Plan

Late 1700s, women, children, class, hardship, health, shaped characters, interesting, helped me understand actions. Focus on liking social setting.

The text I have chosen as part of my comparative study course is the gothic novel "Wuthering Heights" by Emily Bronte. The story is set in the wilds of the Yorkshire moors, and most of the action takes place during the late 1700s. I found it <u>fascinating</u> to learn, through my study of the novel, how people lived in those times. Understanding the social setting of the novel <u>helped me to understand the characters' behaviour</u> . The treatment of women and children as second-class citizens with no rights to education or inheritance or even safety from physical abuse is something which would be anathema to us today, but does explain why Heathcliff got away with treating Hareton and young Catherine the way he did. As a young boy, he too, had suffered at the hands of Hindley. The times in which	<i>You must always begin with this sentence.</i>  <i>Make points about social setting, showing you understand the conventions of the time etc. but base all your points on the text itself, not on your life.</i>
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the novel is set were not only difficult for women and children, but for everyone, particularly those without health or wealth. The class distinctions intrigued me, especially the snobbery and unkindness that went with such distinctions. Again, Heathcliff falls victim to such prejudice when he meets the Lintons, deepening his resentment and hatred of those who treat him badly. Death and disease play a major role in the story of "Wuthering Heights" also, and the early death of so many characters allows for regular changes of master in the two houses, thus pushing the plot along at a fast pace. I enjoyed this aspect of the novel and was interested to see how quickly the protagonists' lives could be turned upside down by the hardships of the world in which they lived. Immersing myself in the social setting of "Wuthering Heights" and learning about life at that time was a large part of what made the book such a riveting read.

*Underlined words reflect question. Do not underline words in your own answer, obviously.*

*Keep using words to show how you liked the social setting.*

*Concluding sentence ends answer neatly.*

*Be positive  
Remember, this is a test of English, not of your honest opinion of the book.*