

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY

LC English



WHAT IS THE COMPARATIVE?

A^BC

- The Comparative is a prescribed study of three texts of varying media that you will compare, contrast and contextualise.
- This means three texts that you have studied during your Leaving Cert. course are looking at for their similarities and differences regarding their themes, devices used, characterisation and settings.
- You also will discuss the setting they are set in, meaning if you have a Shakespearean text within your three studied texts you can compare the differences in its society with the societies of your other texts, i.e, Sacramento, USA 2002/2003
- 70 marks, spend 1 hour on the question out of your 3 hours 20 minutes.

WHAT TEXTS ARE ON THE COMPARATIVE?

NOVEL/MEMOIR

- Americanah
- Behind the Scenes at the Museum
- The Handmaid's Tale
- Persuasion
- Days Without End
- Wuthering Heights
- All the Light We Cannot See
- Room
- Silas Marner
- Never Let Me Go
- If This Is A Man
- Miss Emily
- Star of the Sea
- The Damned Utd
- The Cove
- Frankenstein
- The Luras
- Out of Shadows
- Educated
- The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891 Version)

DRAMA

- Eclipsed
- By the Bog of Cats
- Philadelphia, Here I Come
- A Doll's House
- Tribes
- Kindertransport
- Macbeth
- Othello
- Oedipus the King

FILM

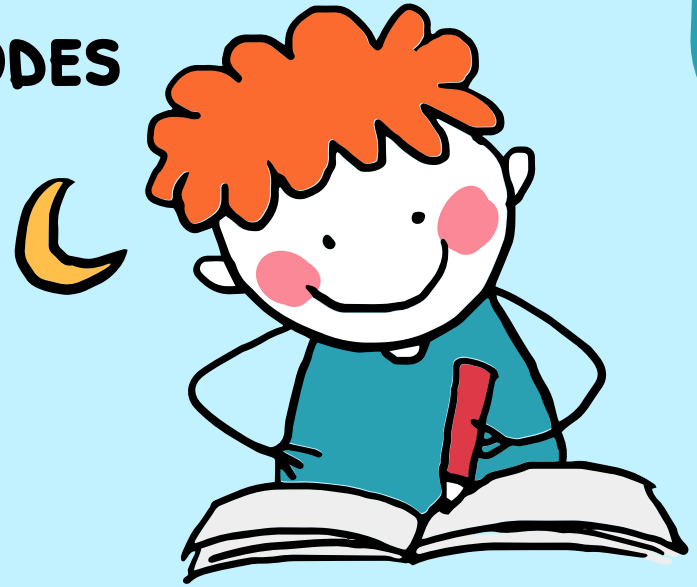
- Rosie
- Unforgiven
- Mustang
- Ladybird
- Winter's Bone
- Trading Places
- Hunger
- Some Like It Hot

Your teacher has picked one out of each of these sections; so you will have one novel, one drama and one film studied and comparable.

COMPARATIVE MODES

Modes of comparison change year on year similar to the prescribed texts.

- I. Cultural Context
- II. General Vision and Viewpoint
- III. Literary Genre



There are three modes for comparison within the comparative question.

On your exam paper, two options will come up. The question is which two....



MODE 1: CULTURAL CONTEXT

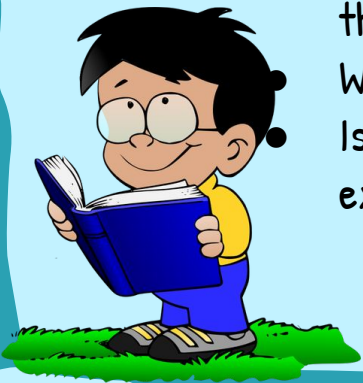
- Looking at the kind of world and society that the story is set and takes place in.
- What is the setting? Does the time matter? If the story took place in today's time would it be appropriate what would change?
 - Does the location matter? What does the culture of that location do to the story?
 - What do you learn about the societal attitude of the place/time of the text?
 - What are the characters' values and attitudes? Are they influenced by those around them, by society?
 - Class/race/gender/age distinctions or discrimination?
 - Religion, money, family, civil status?
 - The comparability of your texts based on these questions, their culture and their context.

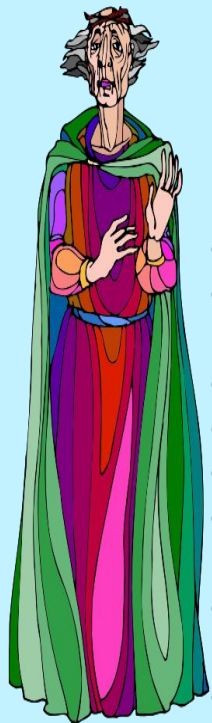


MODE 2: GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT



- Examine the broad outlook on life as portrayed by the texts of your comparative. You are focusing on the overall impact the text has. Key word: GENERAL
 - Negative/Positive story? Optimistic/Pessimistic?
 - What about life is highlighted in the text?
 - What relationships? Dysfunctional, materialistic, symbiotic, fantastical, etc. Are they healthy? How do they encourage the development of characters, plot and theme?
- Writer's tone and attitude, does it influence the readers' view and response?
- Is there a key scene where we can clearly see the general viewpoint and vision expressed?





MODE 3: LITERARY GENRE



- **HOW** the story is told. The texts all tell their stories in different media, film drama and novel.
- All different ways these stories are told; all different ways. A play cannot be performed or told the same way as a novel.
- Characterisation; character personalities, do we empathise with them?
- Narration; is there a narrator? Reliable? Does it influence reader opinion?
- Flashback; any flashbacks/forward influence how we view characters and story?
- Music/Lighting; applies mainly to film and play but some novels reference songs or lighting. How do lighting and music create or enhance a mood, tone, attitude or atmosphere?
- Imagery and Symbolism; significance of particular items, what do these things represent, influence of these on characters, story and theme?
- Dialogue; vernacular, rhetoric, monologue, soliloquy, accent. Does this show us anything about social status, education, where characters originate from, how they feel with other characters, emotions etc.
- Costume/Makeup/Hair/Props; revealing the setting, context etc. Clothes can have symbolic importance, reflecting how a character feels about a situation, hair/makeup can reveal emotions.
- Plot/climax/twist/resolution; how text ends is of utmost importance, influences our feelings, outlook on themes, characters and the lasting impression it leaves on us.



SECTION II THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 marks)

Candidates must answer **one** question from **either A** – General Vision and Viewpoint or **B** – Literary Genre.

In your answer you may not use the text you have answered on in **SECTION I** – The Single Text. All texts used in this section must be prescribed for comparative study for this year's examination. Candidates may refer to only one film in the course of their answers.

Please note:

- Questions in this section use the word **text** to refer to all the different kinds of texts available for study on this course.
- When used, the word **reader** includes viewers of films and theatre audiences.
- When used, the term **technique** is understood to include techniques employed by all writers and directors of films.
- When used, the word **author** is understood to include all writers and directors of films.
- When used, the word **character** is understood to refer to both real people and fictional characters in texts.

A GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT

1. "Our personal beliefs – our views and values – can influence our sense of the general vision and viewpoint of a text."

- (a) With reference to **one** text on your comparative course, explain how your sense of the general vision and viewpoint was influenced by at least one of your personal beliefs. Develop your response with reference to the text. (30)
- (b) Compare how your sense of the general vision and viewpoint in each of **two other** comparative texts was influenced by at least one of your personal beliefs. Develop your response with reference to your chosen texts.

In response to 1. (b) you may refer to the same or different personal belief(s) that you referred to in 1. (a) above. You may refer to the same personal belief or different personal beliefs in relation to each of your two other comparative texts. (40)

OR

2. "Our view of the personal integrity of a central character can help to shape our impression of the general vision and viewpoint of a text."

Compare the extent to which your view of the personal integrity of one central character, in each of **three** texts on your comparative course, helped to shape your impression of the general vision and viewpoint of your chosen texts. Develop your answer with reference to the texts. (70)

B LITERARY GENRE

1. (a) Discuss how effectively two techniques are used to provide insight(s) into the mindset of a central character in **one** text on your comparative course. Develop your answer with reference to the text. (30)

- (b) Compare how effectively at least one technique is used to provide insight(s) into the mindset of a central character in each of **two other** texts on your comparative course. Develop your answer with reference to your chosen texts.

In response to 1. (b) you may refer to the same technique or different techniques in relation to each of your chosen texts. You may refer to the same or different techniques to those you referred to in 1. (a) above. (40)

OR

2. Compare how mood or atmosphere is created in each of **three** texts on your comparative course. Refer to at least one technique used to create mood or atmosphere in each of your chosen texts. Develop your answer with reference to your chosen texts.

You may refer to the same technique or different techniques in each of your chosen texts. (70)

You can't go into your comparative half knowing your texts, you must know them fully as ALL THREE are questioned in the exam.

BUT, WHAT DO I NEED?

When studying your
comparative, there are a
number of things you need
to retain and explain...



WHAT YOU NEED (BRIEFLY)

01

LINKING AND COMPARISON

There is not enough space in here to explain, but your ability to identify contrasts and similarities

02

CONTEXT AND KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge of setting, characters, themes etc.

03

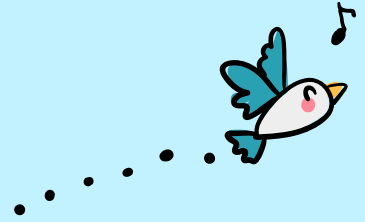
QUOTES, DEVICES AND CAMERA ANGLES

Literary devices, quotes, camera angles, dramatic devices and so on..

04

GOOD VOCAB AND FLUENCY

Your essay has a good flow to it,



01

LINKING AND COMPARISON

Among one of the most important aspects of your Comparative is your ability to link your paragraphs and ideas and compare your texts in a number of different ways.



COMPARING



- Find common areas in your texts that are comparable, by comparable it means similar or of equal worth to their texts.
- Concentrate on “Key moments” of the text regarding theme, attitude, characters etc.
- Paragraphs should focus on a connection to the question (mode) and the texts, ideally you should compare two texts on a basis of perhaps theme or attitude toward women.
- Summarising a plot, or scene is NOT comparing, comparing includes your ability to show what impact the scene or chapter has on the plot and the reader’s perspective.
- Consistent comparison is where marks are awarded, lack of comparison or solo justification is where marks are taken away.
- Linking words when comparing are also a form of mark winning.

EXAMPLE OF COMPARISON ; CULTURAL CONTEXT

With reference to two other texts on your comparative course, identify at least one type of behaviour considered to be unacceptable in the world of each of these texts. Compare why such behaviour is considered unacceptable in these cultural contexts and response or responses of society to such unacceptable behaviour. Support your answer with reference to the texts.

"Whilst certain things are expected of men in these texts, particular behaviours are also expected of women. Men have unlimited freedom while the decisions choices to be made in the lives of women are made by the patriarchal figure in their lives. The sexualisation and objectification of women at the hands of men is made distinctly clear in the texts. Despite this, women are not free to decide for themselves if they wish to be promiscuous. Ophelia is Hamlet's main love interest. At the time which the play was written, the innocence, virginity and purity of a woman would ideally be intact upon marriage....."



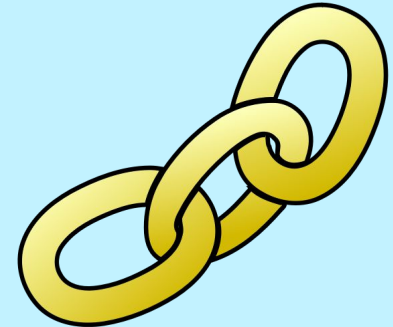
LINKING

Beginning of each new paragraph must have a link.

Linking means there is fluency and a flow to your essay, showing your ability to construct, create and compare.

The examiner will be inspecting your essay, combing through it looking for linking 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
- We can see in both T1 and T2 that..
- There are many similarities regarding crisis in both texts..



02



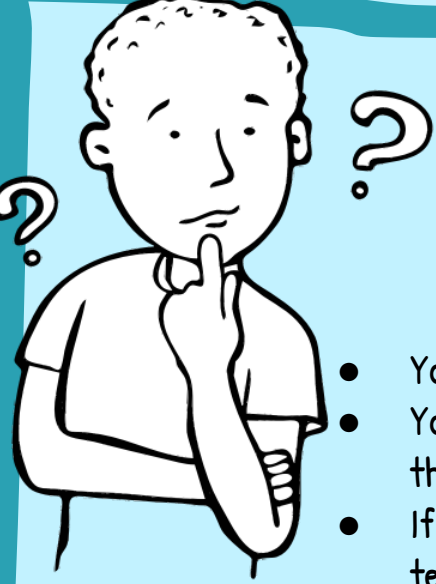
CONTEXT & KNOWLEDGE

Your knowledge and understanding of setting, characters, themes and symbols.

CONTEXT

- When studying your texts (film, drama and novel), you should learn about the context.
- Context is the circumstances that the passage is set; society, place, time etc.
- For example, if you are using an Shakespearean text, you should learn about the time it is written and the time the author has based the text in. Shakespearean texts tend to be written a less liberal, more conservative time, the 1500s (elizabethan period), meaning a patriarchal society with little to no freedoms for women.
- The film you are studying may have a different context, such as Ladybird being set in Sacramento 2002/2003. A severely more liberal time with women having a lot more rights than those predecessors discussed in Shakespeare's Othello or Macbeth.
- Having Contextual knowledge about the time and place of the text can gain you more marks as you can compare your three texts .

CONTEXT
MATTERS



KNOWLEDGE

- Your knowledge of your texts is of **UTMOST** importance.
- Your ability to cross compare the themes, attitudes and images of the three texts is telling of your knowledge of the comparative study.
- If you can fluently speak about the themes, context and characters of the text using literary devices and quotes will portray your knowledge of the texts.
- You don't need to know each text to the same level of your single text but you must know what is comparable and contrastable.





03

QUOTES, DEVICE AND CAMERA ANGLES; LITERARY DEVICES

Literary devices, quotes, camera angles, dramatic devices and so on..



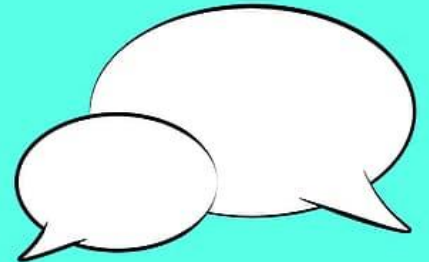
QUOTES, DEVICE AND CAMERA ANGLES; LITERARY DEVICES



You don't need to know quotes and literary devices as heavily as you would for your single texts. But with that being said, you should know some to help you support your claims and ideas.

Quotes from all three texts are compatible and supportive.

Literary devices are the main way that you can identify the way the authors/directors wished to portray the story, i.e direct speech, camera angles, costume, lighting, non-diegetic sound, etc.



CAMERA ANGLES

Film Language

1. **The Shot**—the image that is seen on screen until it is replaced by another image through some type of editing technique.

2. **Framing**—how the object will be positioned within the shot, or how much of the frame of the movie screen the object will occupy.

Long Shot—the object on the screen appears small or appears to be seen from some distance away. It gives the viewer a sense of time and place.

Close-Up—the object or subject takes up nearly 80 percent of the screen space. It forces the viewer to look at only what the director intended.

Medium Shot—a “neutral shot” that is probably the most common type of shot and is a compromise between the long shot and the close-up. Most often, the character is framed from the waist up.

3. **Focus**—the degree of clarity or texture through which the camera lens shows an image.

Soft Focus—a slight blurring of the image in order to, for example, create uncertainty or obscure identity or soften facial features.

Rack Focus—the sudden shift used to bring either the background or the foreground suddenly into focus.

Deep Focus—allows for all objects in the foreground as well as in the background to remain in focus.

4. **Angles**—the placement of the camera in relation to the subject.

Low Angle—the camera shoots from below the subject.

High Angle—the camera shoots from above the subject.

Eye Level—another “neutral shot” that places the viewer at eye level with the subject.

5. **Camera Movement**

Pan—pivoting of the camera along the horizontal axis, often from left to right, to take in (for example) surroundings or a situation.

Tilt—movement of the camera along the vertical axis up or down.

Zoom—a change in the focal length of the lens, making the object appear to move closer or farther away.

Tracking or Dolly Shots—movement of the camera itself to move us through the action or imaginative space of the film.

6. **Lighting**—the principal source of light on a movie set, called “key lighting.”

Low-Key—used to create darkness, shadows, and patches of bright key light.

High-Key—distinguished by its brightness, openness, and lack of shadows or

contrasts between light and dark.

Neutral—lighting that is even and balanced throughout the shot.

7. **Sound**—dialogue, music, or sound effects used to create an effect on the viewer.

Diegetic—any sound that could logically be heard by a character within the movie environment.

Nondiegetic—sound that cannot be heard logically by characters within the film.

Internal Diegetic—internal sounds that one character hears (for example, in memory) but others in the scene do not.

8. **Editing**—the methods by which a director chooses to move from one shot to another.

The Fade—the slow fading away of an image on screen until the screen itself becomes entirely black.

The Dissolve—the slow fading out of an image on screen, but instead of fading all the way to black, the image is replaced by another that is slowly fading in.

The Crosscut—parallel editing which allows the director to show that events occurring in different spaces are happening simultaneously.

The Flashback and the Flash-Forward—connected shots designed to give the viewer important information about what has happened in the past.

The Eye-Line Match—a series of three or more shots used to show point of view or the thoughts of a character.

9. **Mise en Scène**—briefly, a term used to describe what appears on film in a scene, such as set, costumes, props, lighting, and blocking.

*Source: John Golden, *Reading in the Dark*, Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2001

04



GOOD VOCAB. AND FLUENCY

Your essay has a good flow to it and a good standard of English.

GOOD VOCAB..

- Ensure that you are not repeating the same word over and over again when constructing your sentence.
- Vary the way you say portray, show, develop, make etc.
- A good standard of English can make the examiner give you more marks and can help you get your point across to a better degree.
- The way to go about doing this is essentially through practice. But make sure you understand the context and meaning of your big fancy words.



FLUENCY

- Fluency between paragraphs and points can be difficult to do with lots of different questions.
- But fluency between your use of quotes and devices is important. As well as the fluency between your texts.
- It shows you have a good standard of essay writing and can, once again, lead to better marks being awarded.





MARKING OF THE COMPARATIVE



HOW IS THE COMPARATIVE MARKED?

It is a 70 mark question, that's a big amount for something you will spend 60 minutes on.

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.

EXTRA MATERIAL

[Dublin School of Grinds; the comparative study](#)

[Aoife's Notes; 2014 Comparative](#)

[LeavingCertEnglishNotes.net](#)