GrindSpot
ONLINE GRINDS PLATFORM

LEAVING CERT 2027

LEAVING CERT ENGLISH

Exam Ready

Higher Level · Paper 1 · Workbook A

Dyslexia friendly
large, clear text · room to write

Built from 9 years of real Leaving Cert papers: what comes up, how it's marked, and the practice to nail it.

- **9** years of exam trends, question by question
- **36** exam-style drills with model answers
- **1** full practice paper, 200 marks
- ✓ marking guide for the practice paper



Know what's coming.
Walk in ready.

Original GrindSpot material written in the style of the Leaving Certificate examination. Not an official SEC paper.

What comes up

2017 to 2026

We read every Higher Level Paper 1 from the last 9 exams (none in 2020). Each number is how many questions in that year's paper set that task. We counted tasks, not subjects: a Question A counts once for each task its parts set, a Question B or composition once for its form.

	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Years
Question A: personal response	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	9/9
Question A: style and language	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	9/9
Question A: understanding the text	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	9/9
Composition: personal essay	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	9/9
Composition: short story	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	9/9
Composition: discursive or persuasive essay	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9/9
Composition: speech or talk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9/9
Question B: article	2	2	1	1	1	1	–	–	1	7/9
Composition: article or opinion piece	1	–	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	7/9
Question B: letter or email	–	1	–	1	1	1	–	–	1	5/9
Question B: speech or talk	1	–	–	1	1	–	–	2	–	4/9
Composition: descriptive or reflective writing	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	3/9
Question A: visual image	1	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	3/9
Question B: diary, blog or personal account	–	–	1	–	–	1	1	–	–	3/9
Question B: other task	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	1	–	3/9
Question B: report, review or proposal	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	2/9
Composition: other	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1/9

Darker = more questions. Source: State Examinations Commission papers, 2017 to 2026, read and grouped by GrindSpot. Every question we counted is listed at **grindspot.ie/exam-trends**. A guide to what has come up, not a prediction of what will.

Question A keeps its shape: what the text says, your personal response, and the writer's style.

Two personal essays and two short stories in every paper since 2018, plus a speech.

Question B changes form: article 9 times in 27, letter or email 5, speech or talk 5.

Image questions are rare: 4 parts in 3 questions in 9 years, the latest in 2023.

TOPIC 9

Images, reports and reviews

Worked answers →

In the real exam

Image parts in 3 of 27 Question As, 2017 to 2026: a diary, report, review or proposal in 5 Question Bs.



Fionn's tip: An image question rewards what you **see** (people, faces, light, layout) and what it **suggests**. In the Question B forms below, the layout is part of the task: learn each shape.

1. Look at this image and its caption, *"Arrivals, Dublin Airport, 22 December."*



In about 100 words, describe what you see and explain what the image suggests about homecoming.

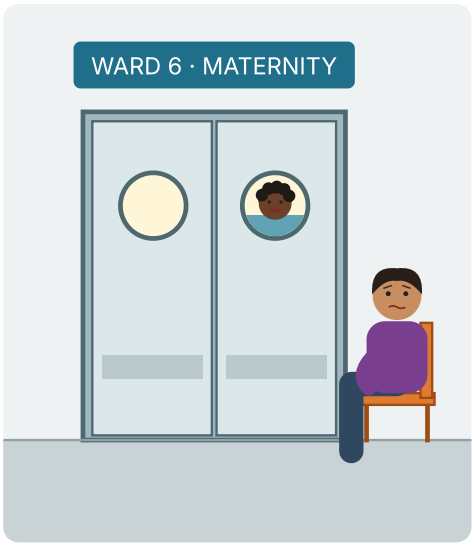
2.

> **Diary entry:** a date; the first person; a private, honest voice; what happened, then your feelings and thoughts. No greeting, no formal sign-off.

Write a diary entry (about 100 words) by a student who has just moved to Ireland, on the evening of the first day in a new school.



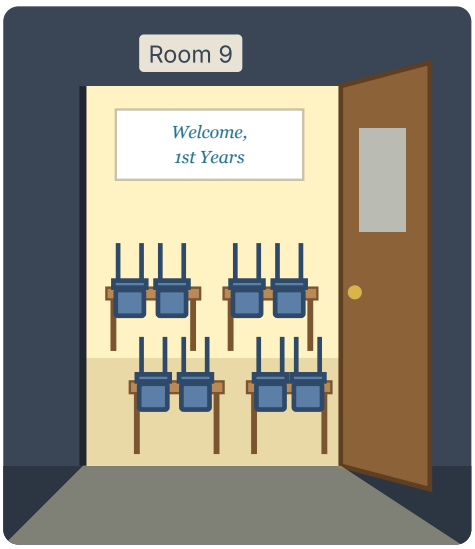
A · "Number 14. My great-grandfather painted it red the week his son came home from Boston, so he could see it from the end of the road."



B · "Nearly every family in this town has waited on that chair. Some of the best news in the world comes through these doors."



C · "Gate 312. Half the people in the queue are crying and half are trying very hard not to. The pilot is from Longford."



D · "Room 9, the last week of August. The chairs are stacked and waiting. Nobody has arrived yet, so everything is still possible."

There is no single right answer in English. For each task this guide gives **what a strong answer would include** (the kind of points examiners look for, not a full list), then **the marks** and a guide to how marks are awarded, in the style of the SEC marking schemes (our guide, not an official scheme). Every task is marked on four criteria: **P** Clarity of Purpose (30%), **C** Coherence of Delivery (30%), **L** Efficiency of Language Use (30%) and **M** Accuracy of Mechanics, spelling and grammar (10%). C and L can never get more marks than P, so answering the actual question always comes first.

TEXT 1 · Question A (50 marks)

(i) Three developed points, each backed by reference. For example:

- **Nan is shrewd but discreet:** she "never wrote anything down" yet knew "to the cent" what every family owed, and "never once mentioned it to their faces": kindness and tact.
- **She is dignified and stoical:** she greets the rival supermarket with "Good luck to them", hiding her hurt; on the last day she stands "with her hand flat against the glass", a private moment of grief.
- **The shop is the heart of the town:** post office, Credit Union meeting room and news exchange ("you did not need the internet"); the worn step is "the shape of the town itself".
- **It shaped the writer:** she learned arithmetic "and more about people" there, e.g. that "the loudest customers were often the loneliest".

15 marks, marked as a whole using the criteria · *Top band (13–15):* three distinct, well-developed points on both Nan and the shop, each supported by apt quotation · *Middle (8–12):* three points, thinly developed, or the shop/Nan handled unevenly · *Low (1–7):* retelling of the text, or fewer than three points