

**Forget PQE**

**Think PQEEE**



Leaving Certificate English

Paper 1

## Comprehension Question A

**Timing : 1 Hour. Length : 5 Pages Marks: 50 Marks**

**12.5% LC ENG**

### Guideline

- Question A is worth **50 marks**. This is the same as the marks given for the prescribed poetry section, so it is well worth taking the time to prepare for this task.
- You must answer **Question A from one comprehension text and Question B from another**. It is a good idea to check all the **Question Bs first** and choose one that suits you, and then decide which comprehension text you will use for Question A.
- There may be a **visual element** to the written text, so be prepared to discuss this.
- Remember that each year Paper One is centered around a different **theme**. In 2012, the theme was 'Memory'. Each of the texts will reflect this theme.
- If there is an **introduction to the text, it is vital that you read it carefully**. It might give you valuable information and help you to answer the questions which follow the text.
- To date, there have been three questions set after each of the texts: **two fifteen mark questions and one twenty mark question**.
- As a general rule, you should think that for **every five marks, you should make one well-developed point**. This means that you should make a point, support it with suitable quotation or reference, and develop or expand on the point.
- Write **one point per paragraph**. Move on to a new paragraph for each new point. Planning is essential here. Jot down a brief plan for every single answer. This will ensure that you stay focused and that you don't just repeat the same point several times.
- You will need to use "**index margining**" e.g. colouring in. You should use a different colour marker for each of the 3 questions. **This saves time**.



## Types of Question:

### FOCS



1. Factual
2. Opinion
3. Character
4. Style

## 1. Factual

You may be tested on your understanding of the piece you have just read. This type of question is usually (but not always) **one of the first ones asked**. Watch out for the following:

- What did we learn about... What is the writer's attitude towards...  
What does the writer see as the main advantages/disadvantages/problems/highlights etc.?  
What does the writer tell us about...? What happened when...?

## 2. Character

**Do not give a personal response or introduce your own views at this stage**. Stick to the question and plan your answer carefully. You should give a clear account and show that you understood the piece. Make a note in the margin beside the section or sections of the text which you think answer the question. Use quotes to support your answer but beware of simply re-telling the piece in your own words.

**Confident Intelligent Kind**

## 3. Opinion / Personal Response

You may be asked for your personal response to the passage. Such questions may be phrased in the following ways:

1. Do you agree with the writer that...?
2. Did you find this piece interesting?
3. Do you think...?

Remember that it is **better to be positive than to be negative**. You have a choice of three texts so try to choose one which you genuinely do like if possible. Be careful that you do not go off the point in this question. It may seem quite general but your answer should be based on the text. You will get a chance to express yourself more freely in the composition, but in this section of Paper 1, **you must stick to the passage**.

## 4. Style

In the Leaving Cert, you are **usually asked to analyse a writer's style**. This is one of the most difficult questions but with a little preparation and practice, you can become quite adept at it. Such questions may be phrased in the following ways:

1. How does the writer convey...?
2. How does the writer give us a clear impression of...?
3. How does the writer show the atmosphere of tension and fear...?
4. Does the writer succeed in convincing you that...?

When you are answering these questions, think about the **five language genres**.

If you are asked whether you find a **writer's style effective or not, try to use verbs to explain** your answer. Never, ever point out a feature of the language used in the text **without saying what that feature does in the context of the text**. (The same rule applies to your literary essays, of course.) For example, you might say that the use of **rhetorical questions** provokes you to think about the topic under discussion and draws you into the debate. If the piece is narrative, you might say that the **anecdotes** engaged you.

> **Here are some verbs you may wish to use:**

Clarifies, excites, provokes, interests, fascinates, angers, proves, shows, emphasises, personalises...

It is **essential to quote from the text when answering a question on style**. Mention dialogue, colloquialisms and so forth but be sure to explain why they are effective, e.g. 'The use of informal language and dialect in the passage brings the reader into the community and into the mind of the main character, Alice', or 'The first person narration draws us into the story and helps us to empathise with John as we see the events unfolding from his perspective and we hope for a positive outcome.'

**Use varied language when answering the comprehension questions. There is a list of useful vocabulary at the end of this lesson.**







## Sample Answers: 2010 – Higher Level Paper 1

### QUESTIONS

- (i) Al Gore asserts that we are “confronting a planetary emergency”. In your own words outline the argument he makes in support of this view. (15)
- (ii) Al Gore includes several quotations in his speech. Select the quotation that made the greatest impact on you. Give reasons for your choice. (15)
- (iii) Identify and comment on four elements of effective speech-writing evident in this text. (20)

#### Text 2 – Question A

(i) Al Gore asserts that we are ‘confronting a planetary emergency’. In your own words outline the argument he makes in support of this view.

#### Note:

You could focus on the planetary emergency on its own or you could bring in our failure to deal with it. As this is a **fifteen mark question**, you would be expected to write **three well-developed points**. Use a separate paragraph for each new point.

#### Plan:

1. Effect on people – livelihoods, homes ruined by drought/flooding/rising sea levels
2. Animals pushed to extinction – ‘web of life’ frayed
3. Urgent situation but not enough being done by major powers

#### Sample Answer:

Al Gore makes a strong case for the idea that we are ‘confronting a planetary emergency. He outlines the effect on humanity and other creatures as well as pointing out our failure to face up to and tackle this ‘inconvenient truth’. (***This brief introduction touches on the three points that will be dealt with in this answer.***)

According to Gore, there is hardly a place in the world that is not being negatively affected by climate change. Some countries are struggling with ‘massive droughts’ which destroy farmers’ livelihoods, while at the same time millions of people in other countries are forced to evacuate their homes due to flooding and rising sea levels. Whole cities around the globe are threatened by storms and wildfires. Extremes of heat and cold have killed tens of thousands.

*It is not just people who are suffering the effects of our rapidly-changing planet.* Al Gore tells us that we are destroying our forests and driving an increasing number of species into extinction. This destruction of the world around us is akin to waging a war on our own planet and is, Gore claims, putting our very survival at risk. We depend on ‘the web of life’ but are wiping it out at such a rate that we will be eradicated with it.

Gore makes it clear that the ‘planetary emergency’ is *exacerbated* by our reluctance to recognise the seriousness of the situation and take steps to remedy it. He says we must act ‘boldly, quickly and decisively’ if we are to have any hope of avoiding the worst of the consequences. However, he believes that the two largest offenders in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – the United States and China – are not doing enough to tackle the problem. These major world powers have an important role to play in helping to make life on earth sustainable.

Try to link →  
your  
paragraphs  
whenever  
possible.

← ‘Exacerbated’ means ‘made worse or more severe’. It is important to use a rich and varied vocabulary in your answers.





(ii) Al Gore includes several quotations in his speech. Select the quotation that made the greatest impact on you. Give reasons for your choice. (15)

**Note:**

- The choice of quotation is up to you. There is no right or wrong answer here. However, if you choose a quotation that genuinely made a strong impression on you, you are likely to get a better mark than if you simply choose one at random.
- As this is a **fifteen mark** question, you would be expected to write **three well-developed points**. Use a separate paragraph for each new point.

**Plan:**

- 1. Idea of team work to achieve meaningful results is a good one.**
- 2. Simple language, powerful message**
- 3. Represents people from the developing world / ordinary people**

**Sample Answer:**

The quotation which made the strongest impression on me is the African proverb that says 'If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together'.

The **first thing** that struck me favourably about this quotation was the idea that endurance and long-term results depend on team work. This is especially relevant in the context of Al Gore's argument (*Justify your choice in the context of the passage.*) as he is adamant that in order for us to have a positive influence on our future on this planet, we need to work together. Humankind has for too long been focused on competition and that is the reason for our 'burning massive quantities of coal, then oil and methane' in the race to have the latest and the greatest in industry and technology. But now we must pull together in the long journey to repair the damage we have done to our planet.

The **second thing** that appealed to me about this proverb was the simplicity of its message and the straightforward, uncomplicated language used. It is no less powerful for that, in fact it is more striking because it is so easily understood. There is no avoiding the truth contained within those words. The repetition of the word 'go' drives home the idea that we are all on a journey. The proverb doesn't tell us what we must do, but rather offers us possibilities by using the phrase 'If you want to go...' I like this as it puts the onus on us to make the right choice and at the same time gives us hope that we can still make a difference if we form an alliance. This simple proverb is both instructive and positive and is one which I will easily remember.

**Finally**, I liked the fact that Al Gore chose to use a popular African saying in his speech. The rest of his quotations are from prophets, poets, authors and playwrights but this proverb is the voice of the ordinary people, which *I think is appropriate* as the message is that each and every one of us – not just scientists and politicians - has a role to play in our future. I noticed that Gore consciously chose quotations representing different nationalities but this was the only one from the developing world. *I thought this was a nice touch* as it is the developing world that has gained least from all the 'progress' made by burning of fossil fuels over the last hundred years or so, but has arguably suffered most from the devastating effects of climate change. (**Each paragraph must show evidence of personal response as you were asked which quotation made the greatest impact on you.**)







(iii) Identify and comment on four elements of effective speech-writing evident in this text. (20)  
*Note:* Speech writing uses the language of persuasion and/or argument. What are the key features of these language genres? Remember to comment on the effectiveness of each feature you identify. The question clearly requires you to write four points. Use a separate paragraph for each new point. You may also wish to add a brief introduction and/or conclusion.

**Plan:** 1. Inclusive language / 'we' / engaging, puts responsibility on all of us  
2. Quotations / illustrations lend force to argument and make it memorable.  
3. Urgency of tone clear in language: 'emergency', 'threat to survival of civilisation' etc.  
Also, constant urging to move fast.  
4. Rhetorical devices are persuasive

**Sample Answer:**

One of the most effective features of Al Gore's speech is the use of **inclusive language** throughout. The personal pronouns 'we' and 'our' are used repeatedly and this has the effect of *engaging* (Use verbs such as 'engaging' to show the effect the feature of style has.) the listeners and making it seem as if this speech is a conversation rather than a lecture. Al Gore does not distance himself from his audience by saying 'you' or 'they' but instead appears to take his share of the blame for what is happening to our planet. The result is that the audience is likely to feel that they are on the same side as the speaker and thus more inclined to agree with his point of view.

Gore also **uses quotations and illustrations to great effect.** (This is the topic sentence. The rest of the sentences in this paragraph will develop this idea.) The quotations are cleverly chosen from poets, playwrights and authors from a variety of countries and this gives the impression that Gore's argument is one which is supported by intelligent and learned people around the world. Further weight is added to Gore's case by his use of compelling and sobering illustrations. He says that millions of people have already 'been displaced by massive flooding in South Asia, Mexico and Africa' and that 'whole cities' are threatened by wildfires and storms. These examples are likely to make the audience realise the catastrophic effects of climate change and the danger it poses for everyone, everywhere.

Another way in which Gore makes his argument convincing is by **the urgency of his tone.** His language is carefully chosen to create fear and concern in the audience. Phrases such as 'planetary emergency', 'threat to the survival of our civilisation', 'all this destruction' and 'wage war on the earth itself' are highly emotive and may well evoke a sense of panic in the listeners. (Short quotes woven into the fabric of the sentence are more effective than entire sentences copied from the extract.) This makes them more receptive to any solution Gore proposes to the dreadful scenario he has placed before them. Gore urges his audience to act quickly and stresses the 'urgency of making the right choice now' as we stand at this 'fateful fork' in our history. This is a powerful technique in speechwriting as the audience is led to believe that they must decide on a course of action immediately and while they are still under the influence of Gore's compelling argument.

Gore's use of **rhetorical devices** in this speech is particularly impressive and is a common feature of effective speech-writing. Repetition is used to drive home the points being made and to help them stick in the listener's mind. The word 'act' is used repeatedly and this motivates the audience to do something concrete about the problem of climate change. Another idea which is repeated is that of humans waging war on the planet. This is a clever use of imagery as it drives home the idea that climate change equates to violence, suffering and death. Similarly clever is the use of rhetorical questions towards the end of the speech. The language in these questions is emotive, forcing the audience to wonder if they have 'the moral courage' to save the planet for the next generation.

All in all, this is a most convincing speech and one which is likely to have a profound effect on all who hear or read it. (←If you wish, you can include a brief conclusion.)

In Summary :  
→ Rephrase and Stance → Key Term  
→ Short, incorporate quote → Explain significance of quote → Key term – end of Paragraph





**Leaving Cert English Higher Level 2008 – Chief Examiner’s Report 2008**  
**Examples of standard Higher Level**

*N.B. Candidates’ work is typed as written, except where, because of ambiguity arising from the hand-written script, it has been edited to indicate the likely meaning. Square brackets are used to indicate where such editing has occurred.  
A brief commentary on the item appears after each example.*

**Example 1 Paper 1 Section 1 – Comprehending Text 2, Question A**

(i) **“A game of high risk!” Give three pieces of evidence from the text which suggest that Eva was “about to make the biggest mistake” of her life. (15)**

There is ample evidence from the text to suggest that Eva was “about to make the biggest mistake” of her life. The three most prominent pieces of evidence are undoubtedly the mysterious nature of the violin and its owner, the friendly advice Eva receives against buying such a violin and the large sum Eva is willing to spend on the violin without being guaranteed either “documents of identity” or “rightful ownership”.

It is certain that there is “high risk” involved as Eva does not know any personal information regarding the current owner of the violin. Eva admits that the origins of the violin are “suspicious at best” and that she was offered it by a man who she “at least” thought was Russian. Eva is clearly in a situation where she is relying on and trusting a stranger to be completely honest. The use of “he told me” shows how little control Eva has over the selling of the violin. In my opinion her lack of knowledge and trusting nature leave her in a vulnerable position which is “high risk”.

The advice Eva receives from her friend Zach, “manager of the orchestra” she plays in is also evidence that she is about to make a big mistake. Zach warns her that it is either “fake, or worse – it’s the real thing and the Russian doesn’t have a rightful claim on it”. This shows the possibility that Eva may be risking a huge amount on the violin which could end in her being “arrested”. The fact that Eva considers Zach to be “logical, reasonable and right!” leaves the impression that his views are correct and Eva is, in fact, making a big mistake.

Eva is placing a huge amount of money, all that she has, on the hope that she will acquire the violin in legitimate circumstances. She exclaims “everything my father had left me and more for a violin”. This means that Eva has an incredible amount to lose which makes it extremely high risk to enter into a deal where she fears nothing will prevent Alexander from “grabbing it and making off”. Overall these pieces of evidence show that this could very well be the “biggest mistake” of Eva’s life.

**Marks awarded ex 15: 15**

Comments :

- Clear engagement with the question
- Excellent points, aptly supported with relevant illustration
- Competent, controlled expression



**KEY**  
O = Evidence  
O = Key Terms  
O = Explanation





(ii) *What impression of the character of Eva Tyne is created in this extract?*  
*Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)*

This extract gives a clear impression of the character of Eva Tyne. From reading it I gathered that Eva is **spontaneous**, a little **naïve** and also very **adventurous**.

It is evident that Eva is a very **spontaneous** person as she immediately jumps at the chance to purchase the violin. "That name was all it took and I was in the passenger seat of a battered car driving at speed over the East River to Alexander's apartment". This shows how Eva puts little thought into her actions beforehand as she takes no time to stop and consider the consequences of her actions. Eva is completely acting on impulse as she races to Alexander's apartment and I feel this is proof of her spontaneous character.

I also think the extract gives the impression that Eva Tyne is a very **naïve** character. The piece gives clear evidence that Eva knows little to nothing about both the violin or its background and yet once she was "promised" its identity she starts "agreeing there and then to pay 600,000 dollars". By not asking any follow up questions and her obvious lack of consideration for possible pitfalls, the extract gives the impression to the reader that Eva is a very naïve individual who takes things at face value.

Eva Tyne is also shown to be an **adventurous** character in this extract. She seems to enjoy the high risk experience and is excited by the fact that she is not sure of what the outcome may be. Eva describes the feeling as "like sitting in a darkened cinema waiting for a horror movie to begin". In my opinion this gives the impression that she enjoys taking risks and has a highly imaginative adventurous personality.

It is clear from this extract that Eva Tyne's character **acts on impulse, is slightly naïve and unquestioning and enjoys the thrill of risks**.

Marks awarded excellent 15: 15

**Examiner's Comment:**

- Sustained focus on characteristics of Eva's character
- Effective use of quotation throughout

**Key :**

**O** = Opening / Closing Statement

**P** = Point

**Q** = Quote

**E** = Explain





(iii) One reviewer of the novel *Tenderwire* described it as “a compelling and well-written thriller”. From your reading of the extract, do you agree with this view? Refer to the text in support of your answer. (20)

Yes, I agree with the view that the novel ‘Tenderwire’ is both a “compelling” and “well-written” novel. The extract clearly shows the thrilling and suspenseful style of the novel which [was] created by a number of different techniques used.

**Firstly**, the author employs the use of **rhetorical questions** throughout the passage. This technique is used to focus the reader on the story and also to bring the reader into the mind and thoughts of Eva Tyne. By using rhetorical devices the author is able to build anticipation and suspense by explicitly creating an atmosphere of tension. Eva constantly reassesses her actions and possible outcomes which gives the writing suspense. “How was I to transport it to Tompkins Square Park where I had arranged to meet Alexander?” “You might be arrested?” These questions contribute to the overall effect which makes it a **compelling and well-written extract**.

**Secondly**, The author also employs the **use of dialogue as a dramatic device**. The well-written dialogue between Eva and both Zach and Alexander makes this extract **compelling** as it makes the reader feel as though they are witnessing the action. “It’ll be seized within days of your performance”. The dialogue also adds to the thriller genre as the words of Zach are conflicting with the promises of Alexander. “It is the real thing, I promise you!” In my opinion this enhances the **quality of the extract and makes it more interesting**.

**Thirdly**, The author uses **similes and metaphors** along with **well-written descriptive narrative** to make the extract **intriguing**. The author describes the violin in a majestic way to emphasize its importance “holding it out like a cushion on which a crown is placed”. This, in turn, presented the thrilling “high risk” atmosphere of the story as Eva decides whether or not to purchase it.

**Lastly**, In my opinion, the authors use of **excellent similes** such as “flicker like fire” and “like two dead puppies” added greatly to the extract and made it **compelling** to read as it appealed to the imagination and was very cinematic. It is this cinematic quality which makes the story come alive and become so **thrilling**.

In my opinion these aspects contribute to what is, undoubtedly a **thrilling and well-written** novel.

**Marks awarded excellent 19: 20**

**Examiner’s Comment:**

- Very good focus on relevant features of the writer’s style
- Structured response well supported by textual reference
- Expression slightly repetitive

Plan  
PQ E  
(Importance of Explaining)  
Goalposts  
Index Margining  
Structured Transitions:  
Firstly etc....  
Timing!

In Summary →







### LIST OF DESCRIPTIVE WORDS

*If you are asked why you liked a text, the following words may help:*

**Absorbing, Attention-grabbing, Compelling, Engrossing, Enjoyable, Exciting, Fascinating, Gripping, Interesting, Intriguing, Remarkable, Riveting, Stimulating, Thought-provoking**

*If you are describing a character in a text, the following words may help:*

- A** active = always doing something: "She's an active person and never wants to stay in." active, aggressive, ambitious,  
argumentative = always arguing with people: "He won't accept what you say - he's argumentative and loves to disagree." arrogant  
assertive = being confident, so people can't force you to do things you don't want to do: "It's important to be assertive at work."  
**B** bad-tempered, boring, bossy, broad-minded,  
**C** careful, careless, caring, cautious, charming, cheeky, cheerful, clever, conceited, confident  
conscientious = doing something carefully, because you want to do it well: "She's a conscientious student and always does her homework."  
Considerate, courageous  
coy = pretending to be shy so that you don't have to give information: "He's very coy about his qualifications; maybe he doesn't have any."  
crafty  
creative = someone who can make or design things, or can think of solutions to a problem: "She's creative and artistic."  
credulous = believes things too easily, gullible  
curious  
**D** Deceitful, demanding, determined  
docile = quiet and submissive: "She's a docile child and always does what she's told."  
dogmatic = wanting others to accept your ideas without discussion: "He's a dogmatic politician and always thinks he's right."  
domineering = trying to control other people: "He's loud and domineering in the office; it's difficult to get him to listen to us."  
dull  
**E** easy-going, eccentric, efficient, emotional, energetic, energetic, enthusiastic, excitable, extroverted = outgoing and lively: "She's extroverted and loves going out with people."  
exuberant = full of unrestrained enthusiasm or joy  
**F** Faithful, fair  
fickle = changing your mind and being erratic or unpredictable, especially with regard to affections or attachments; capricious.  
Firm, flexible, forgiving, frank, friendly, funny, fussy  
**G** Generous, gentle, good-natured, grumpy, gullible = believes things too easily, credulous  
**H** happy-go-lucky = not worrying about what might happen in the future.  
Hard-working, helpful, honest, hopeful, horrible, humble, humorous





**I** Imaginative, impulsive = doing things without thinking first. Inconsiderate, independent (Note - no 'a' in the spelling), independent,, individualistic, insightful, intelligent  
introverted = opposite of extroverted: "He was introverted as a teenager, but became more confident as he got older."  
inventive = able to think up new ideas: "As head of Marketing, he can often think of inventive ways to keep his customers happy."  
irritating = annoying others: "He can be very irritating to work with."

**J** jolly  
**K** kind  
**L** Likeable, logical, loud-mouthed = someone who talks a lot and often says offensive things. loyal  
M manic = behaving in a slightly crazy way: "We're a bit manic at the moment - we're rushing to finish the work before our deadline."  
manipulative = trying to get people to do what you want, by influencing or deceiving them: "She's very manipulative when she wants something." Methodical, modest, moody  
**N** Naïve, nervous  
**O** old-fashioned, open-minded, opinionated = having strong opinions: "He's opinionated and dogmatic - the last person you want to negotiate with." optimistic  
**P** passive = not assertive - doing what other people want you to do without arguing: "He's passive at work, but domineering at home."  
perfectionist = someone who wants perfection: "Her boss is a perfectionist - no spelling mistakes are allowed." Persuasive, picky, playful, pleasant, polite, practical  
pragmatic = being practical and aware of your limitations: "She's pragmatic at work and only does what she can." Prudent, purposeful  
**Q** quick-tempered = getting angry quickly: "He was quick-tempered when he was young, but he's more relaxed now." quick-witted, quiet  
**R** Realistic, reliable, reserved = keeping your ideas and thoughts to yourself: "He's reserved, but polite."  
resourceful = able to act effectively or imaginatively, especially in difficult situations, responsible, rude  
**S** scatter-brained = someone who often forgets things: "Don't you remember where you put your wallet? You're so scatter-brained!" secretive, self-confident, self-controlled, selfish, selfless, sensible, sensitive  
serious = not light-hearted: "He's a serious student and always does his homework."  
Shy, sincere sincere = saying what you believe (opposite of insincere): "He's sincere in his beliefs." slapdash = doing your work quickly and carelessly: "He's got a very slapdash attitude - I doubt he'll ever become a lawyer."  
sly = doing things in a secretive way: "You never know what he's up to - he's sly and manipulative."  
sociable  
spiteful = trying to hurt other people because you didn't get what you wanted: "If she doesn't get what she wants, she can be quite spiteful."  
Spontaneous, strong-minded, strong-willed, stubborn, stupid  
**T** tenacious = Holding or tending to hold persistently to something, such as a point of view. Thorough, thoughtful thoughtless = not thinking about people or the







consequences of your actions: "I'm sure he didn't mean to be rude - he can be thoughtless at times." Tolerant, tough, trusting, trustworthy

**U** Unconventional, understanding, unpleasant

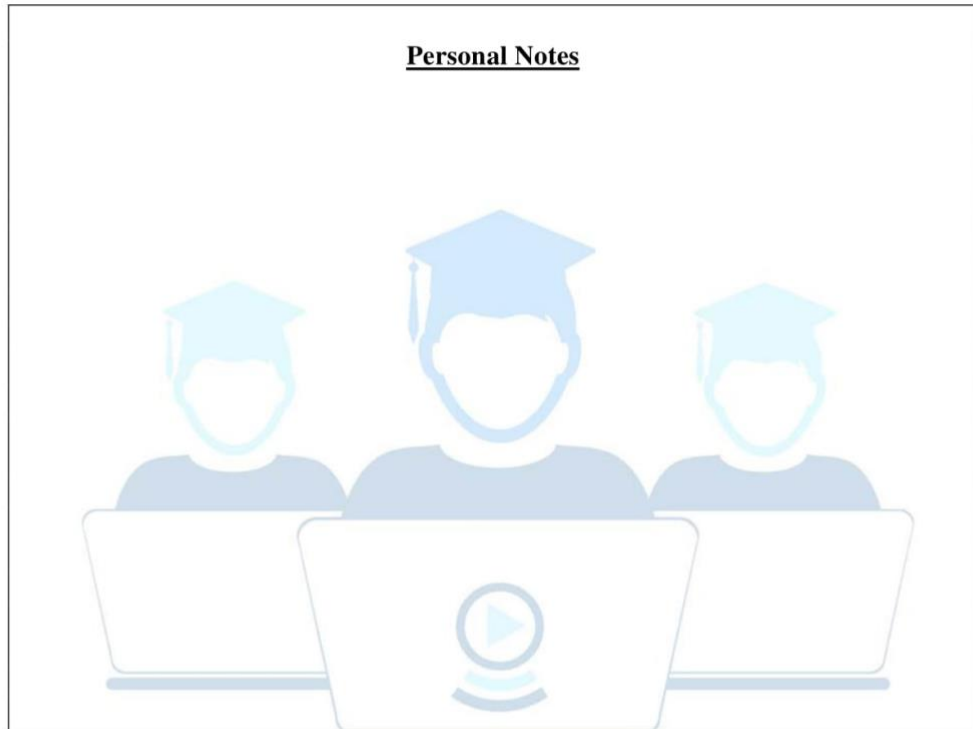
**V** Vain, volatile = quickly changing moods

**W** Wise, witty, worried

**Z** Zany



### Personal Notes



Online-Grinds.ie

