

Leaving Cert English Ordinary Level 2018
Sample Answer for Paper 1 Comprehension
Text 1- Speech by Joanne O’Riordan

Question A - 50 Marks

(I) From your reading of TEXT 2, what impression do you form of Joanne O’Riordan? Support your answer with reference to the text.

The impression I form of Joanne O’Riordan is that she is positive and self confident but also a typical teenager.

Despite living with the rare disability, Total Amelia, Joanne seems to be highly positive in her outlook. She is grateful for the ‘amazing’ opportunity to address the UN, she regards being in New York in the week of her 16th birthday as ‘simply unbelievable’. At no point does she express any self pity but instead a determination to live her life to the full. She refers to herself as being ‘very lucky’ and says that her family ‘never allowed anyone to hold me back’. She ends her speech on a positive note, challenging her audience to do as she does and ‘think outside the box’. Her final words are positive and life affirming: ‘Just because I have no limbs does not mean I will be limited’.

As well as being positive, Joanne is also very confident. Making a speech in front of the United Nations would be a challenge for any sixteen year old yet she does it in style. She has no false modesty about her own achievements saying that her ability to type 36 words a minute is an ‘incredible achievement’. She says that when she was enabled to do all the things her friends were doing she was ‘able to be as good as them, if not better’. She expresses her determination to ‘make her own journey in life’ and is confident that ‘given the chance’ she ‘can and will succeed’.

Despite all of her challenges and achievements I think that Joanne is a typical teenager. She is excited about visiting New York for the first time. She is delighted that technology has enabled her to use her mobile phone, send texts, tweet and update her Facebook.

Like most teenagers she looks forward to her independence saying she wants to 'live an independent life'.

(II) Based on your reading of TEXT 1, do you think Joanne O’Riordan is an effective communicator? Make at least two points explaining your choice, supporting your response with reference to Joanne’s speech.

I think that Joanne O’Riordan is a very effective communicator. She uses a variety of rhetorical devices to make her speech easy to understand and enjoyable to listen to. These include a strong opening, the use of trios, rhetorical questions and a clear structure.

Her speech opens very well. She addresses her audience, introduces herself and thanks her audience for listening to her. She also introduces and explains her genetic condition from the start but also explains that it has never held her back. Her whole speech is well structured as it starts with an account of her early life, to where she is today and looks forward to the future with positivity. This makes it very easy to follow and understand.

On several occasions she organises her ideas into groups of three, for example her use of technology ‘at home, in school or when interacting with others’. She also talks about how it gives her the opportunity to ‘grow, learn and adapt’. Grouping her words in threes make them pleasing to listen to and easy to remember. She also uses several slogans to sum up her ideas such as ‘Think outside the box’ and ‘No limbs, no limits’. These ‘soundbites’ are easy to remember and understand.

Joanne involves her audience in several ways, for instance using rhetorical questions such as : ‘I can’t rely on my parents, my brothers, sister and others all my life. Can I?’. She also addresses them directly, telling them that she wants to ‘live an independent life, just like you’. She issues a challenge to her audience to build her a robot. All of these rhetorical devices enhance her speech, engage her audience and show what an effective communicator she is.

(III) (A) The documentary film to be made about Joanne O’Riordan is entitled, ‘No Limbs, No Limits’. Imagine a documentary is to be made about your life. Suggest a title for the documentary. The title you choose should reveal something about yourself. Outline two reasons why you think this would be a good title for your film.

The title of the documentary film about my life would be entitled ‘No Date, No Debs’. It is the inspirational story of a leaving cert student and his race against time to find somebody, anybody, to go to his debs with him. It would have everything you want in a film; tension, heartbreak, humiliation and hopefully a happy ending.

I think the title would be easy for people to relate to as most people in Ireland have been to a debs at some stage and it is part of Irish life, like the Rose of Tralee and the All Ireland. I think the title sums up the fact that as a leaving cert students I have to worry about exams and points and a college place but what’s really important is the debs. It’s a familiar theme for American movies like American Pie but it’s never been done in Ireland. Using repetition and alliteration would make the title catchy and memorable. It would also look good on a film poster.

(B) The theme of this examination paper is “Inspiring People”. Identify someone, other than Joanne O’Riordan, Gary or Paul O’Donovan or Kailish Satyarthi, who inspires you and explain why you find this person inspiring.

The person who inspires me is Edmund Hillary, one of the first two men to reach the summit of Everest. I admire him for this great achievement but also what he did with his life afterwards.

Firstly, I believe that Hillary and Tenzing’s ascent of Everest is one of the great achievements of the twentieth century. Although many people have climbed Everest since, they are, sometimes literally, following in Hillary’s footsteps. The final approach to the summit, a difficult rock-climb, is still named the ‘Hillary Step’ in his honour. Their expedition achieved the first summit of Everest with very basic equipment and very

limited assistance, without any of the satellite phones, GPS and helicopter back-up that climbers use today. Also Hillary was very much an outsider, he didn't have a military background or a famous climbing reputation, he was a beekeeper from New Zealand who joined the British expedition by sheer force of will and ability. His physical endurance and mental determination got him all the way to the top of the world.

I also admire him for how he lived his life after this great achievement. Although he could have used his fame and celebrity to make himself rich by endorsements and commercial activity he instead used it to help other people. The charitable foundation he set up helped the local Tibetan people by building schools, hospitals and high altitude aircraft landing strips. He established a climbing school for local Sherpas to pass on his skills and knowledge, ensuring that local people who worked on the expeditions that followed his own would have the skills needed to climb safely. As well as working for other people he also continued to challenge himself. Instead of being content with his great achievement he continued climbing other mountains and exploring challenging regions, even leading a expedition to the South Pole. Even into his eighties he was still physically active and adventurous.