

Leaving Cert English Ordinary Level 2018
Sample Answer for Paper 1 Comprehension
Text 2- Interview with Gary Donovan

Question A - 50 Marks

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

The impression I form of Gary Donovan is that he is hard working, self aware and very positive.

You can see from the first few paragraphs how Gary Donovan is hard working. His daily schedule looks exhausting with a 20 kilometre row, followed by weight lifting, followed by more rowing on a rowing machine. He makes light of the pressure this puts on his body, he refers to the 'blisters on blisters' on his hands as 'standard'. Despite this gruelling schedule he only take a couple of weeks off after a major competition and even then is 'eager to get back'. Aside from the physical training, he also works hard at his diet, his nutrition, his weight. Rowing is obviously his passion and he gives it everything.

He is also very self aware. I was very impressed that after making a huge mistake in his rowing career he was able to take a good look at himself and recognise where he had gone wrong. He is very open about the fact that he missed a National Championship, having been out the night before. Although he actually slept though his alarm, the incident does seem to have acted as a wake up call for him to take his sport more seriously. The fact that he could learn from his mistake shows great self awareness. It is unusual for an older brother to look to his younger brother for example and a role model, but Gary O'-Donovan was able to recognise his younger brother's greater commitment and drive.

Finally, above all, Gary is very positive. He says himself that he puts a 'big emphasis on having a bit of fun'. Despite all the pressure and training he says that they have a 'brilliant time' and that they wouldn't do it if they weren't 'having fun'. He is keen to emphasise and appreciate all the 'cool things' they have done, the homecoming, the Graham Norton

Show and the People of the Year. He seems to be determined to get as much out of life as possible. This positivity extends to his brother and their teammates, giving them a lot of credit for his achievements.

All in all, Gary O'Donovan is hard working, self aware, very positive and a great Olympic champion.

(II) Based on your reading of the above article, including its headline, do you think it originally appeared as a front-page article or as an article in the Sports Section of the newspaper? Make at least two points explaining your choice, supporting your response with reference to both the article and its headline.

I think that this is an article from the Sports Section of the newspaper for several reasons. Firstly it is a very long article which would be unusual for a front page article. Most front page articles are short and to the point so as to capture reader's attention and encourage them to read on inside the paper. Similarly the headline is very long for a front page article. Usually banner headlines are very short and catchy, sometimes using colourful language and puns to get instant attention. The headline for this article is too long and unwieldy for this purpose. Front page news tends to be very current and up to date, whereas this piece is looking back at Gary O'Donovan's achievements. A front page article would usually be printed the day after a big Olympic win rather than weeks later.

The style of the piece is much more suited to an article in the sports section. It is quite a lengthy profile and interview which provides the reader with an insight into the motivation of Gary O'Donovan rather than an up to date news bulletin. The style of the article is quite conversational with long quotes of exactly what O'Donovan says. It also provides a lot of context and atmosphere, capturing a day in the life of an Olympic winner.

(III) (A) The documentary film to be made about the O'Donovan brothers is entitled, Pull like a Dog. 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 student 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 as-

sistance, 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.