

Comparative Literature: Higher Level Past Exam Questions

- **General Vision & Viewpoint** - 2012, 2010, 2007, 2005, 2003
- **Literary Genre** - 2012, 2010, 2008, 2005, 2004, 2001
- **Theme or Issue** - 2011, 2009, 2008, 2006, 2004, 2002, 2001
- **Cultural Context** - 2011, 2009, 2007, 2006, 2003, 2002

General Vision & Viewpoint - 2012, 2010, 2007, 2005, 2003

THE GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT (2012)

1. "The general vision and viewpoint of a text can be shaped by the reader's attitude to a central character."

Compare the extent to which your attitude to a central character helped shape your understanding of the general vision and viewpoint of at **least two texts** on your comparative course. (70)

OR

2. "Various aspects of texts can provoke a range of emotional responses in readers which aid the construction of the general vision and viewpoint."

(a) With reference to **one text** on your comparative course, what aspects of the text shaped your emotional response and helped you to construct the general vision and viewpoint of that text? (30)

(b) With reference to **two other texts** on your comparative course, compare the aspects of these texts that shaped your emotional response and helped you to construct the general vision and viewpoint of these texts. (40)

A GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT (2010)

1. "The general vision and viewpoint of a text can be determined by the success or failure of a central character in his/her efforts to achieve fulfilment."

In the light of the above statement, compare the general vision and viewpoint in **at least two texts** you have studied in your comparative course. (70)

OR

2. (a) How did you come to your understanding of the general vision and viewpoint in **any one** of the texts you read as part of your comparative course? (30)

(b) Write a comparison between **two other texts** on your course in the light of your understanding of the general vision and viewpoint in those texts. (40)

THE GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT (2007)

1. "A reader's understanding of the general vision and viewpoint is influenced by key moments in the text."

(a) Choose a key moment from one of your chosen texts and show how it influenced your understanding of the general vision and viewpoint. (30)

(b) With reference to two other chosen texts compare the way in which key moments influence your understanding of the general vision and viewpoint of those texts. (40)

OR

2. "The general vision and viewpoint is shaped by the reader's feeling of optimism or pessimism in reading the text."

In the light of the above statement, compare the general vision and viewpoint in **at least two texts** you have studied in your comparative course. (70)

THE GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT (2005)

1. "Each text we read presents us with an outlook on life that may be bright or dark, or a combination of brightness and darkness."

In the light of the above statement, compare the general vision and viewpoint in **at least two texts** you have studied in your comparative course. (70)

OR

2. (a) With reference to **one** of the texts you have studied in your comparative course, write a note on the general vision and viewpoint in the text and on how it is communicated to the reader. (30)

(b) Compare the general vision and viewpoint in **two other texts** on your comparative course. Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts. (40)

THE GENERAL VISION AND VIEWPOINT (2003)

1. "The general vision and viewpoint of texts can be quite similar or very different."

In the light of the above statement, compare the general vision and viewpoint in at least two texts on your comparative course. (70)

OR

2. (a) What did you enjoy about the exploration of the general vision and viewpoint in **any one** of the texts you read as part of your comparative study? Support your answer by reference to the text. (30)

(b) Write a short comparison between **two other texts** from your course in the light of your answer to part (a) above. Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts. (40)

Literary Genre – 2012, 2010, 2008, 2005, 2004, 2001

LITERARY GENRE (2012)

1. "Authors make use of a variety of techniques to shape memorable characters."

Identify and compare the techniques used to shape one or more memorable characters in at least two texts you have encountered on your comparative course. (70)

OR

2. (a) With reference to one text on your comparative course, discuss the author's use of setting (or settings) as an effective feature of good story telling. (30)

(b) With reference to two other texts on your comparative course, compare how the authors use settings as an effective feature of good story telling. (40)

LITERARY GENRE (2010)

1. "The unexpected is essential to the craft of story-telling."

Compare how the authors of the comparative texts you have studied used the unexpected in their texts. You may confine your answer to key moments in the texts. (70)

OR

2. "Aspects of narrative contribute to your response to a text."

(a) With reference to **one** of your chosen texts, identify at least two aspects of narrative and discuss how those aspects contributed to your response to that text. (30)

(b) With reference to **two other texts** compare how aspects of narrative contributed to your response to these texts.

In answer to question (b) you may use the aspects of narrative discussed in (a) above or any other aspects of narrative. (40)

LITERARY GENRE (2008)

1. "A good text will have moments of great emotional power."

(a) With reference to a key moment in **one** of your texts show how this emotional power was created. (30)

(b) Take key moments from the **other two texts** from your comparative course and compare the way in which the emotional power of these scenes was created. (40)

OR

2. "The creation of memorable characters is part of the art of good story-telling."

Write an essay comparing the ways in which memorable characters were created and contributed to your enjoyment of the stories in the texts you have studied for your comparative course. It will be sufficient to refer to the creation of **one** character from each of your chosen texts. (70)

LITERARY GENRE (2005)

1. Write a talk to be given to Leaving Certificate students in which you explain the term *Literary Genre* and show them how to compare the telling of stories in **at least two texts** from the comparative course. (70)

OR

2. "Powerful images and incidents are features of all good story-telling."

(a) Show how this statement applies to **one** of the texts on your comparative course. (30)

(b) Compare the way in which powerful images and incidents are features of the story-telling in **two other texts** on your comparative course. Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts. (40)

LITERARY GENRE (2004)

1. "Literary Genre is the way in which a story is told."

Choose **at least two** of the texts you have studied as part of your comparative course and, in the light of your understanding of the term *Literary Genre*, write a comparative essay about the ways in which their stories are told. Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts. (70)

OR

2. "Texts tell their stories differently."

(a) Compare **two** of the texts you have studied in your comparative course in the light of the above statement. (40)

(b) Write a short comparative commentary on a third text from your comparative study in the light of your answer to question (a) above. (30)

LITERARY GENRE (2001)

1. Write an essay on **one or more** of the aspects of literary genre (the way texts tell their stories) which you found most interesting in the texts you studied in your comparative course. Your essay should make clear comparisons between the texts you choose to write about. (70)

OR

2. "No two texts are exactly the same in the manner in which they tell their stories."

(a) Compare **two** of the texts you have studied in your comparative course in the light of the above statement. Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts. (40)

(b) Write a short comparative commentary on a third text from your comparative study in the light of your discussion in part (a) above. (30)

Theme or Issue - 2011, 2009, 2008, 2006, 2004, 2002, 2001

THEME OR ISSUE (2011)

1. "A reader's view of a theme or issue can be either changed or reinforced through interaction with texts."

Compare the extent to which your understanding of a theme or issue was changed or reinforced through your interaction with at least two texts on your comparative course. (70)

OR

2. "The study of a theme or issue can offer a reader valuable lessons and insights."

(a) Identify and discuss at least one valuable lesson or insight that you gained through the study of a theme or issue in one text on your comparative course. (30)

(b) Compare at least one valuable lesson or insight that you gained, from studying the same theme or issue (as discussed in (a) above), in two other texts on your comparative course.

The valuable lesson or insight may be the same, or different, to the one discussed in (a) above. (40)

THEME OR ISSUE (2009)

1. "Important themes are often expressed in key moments in texts."

Compare how the authors of the comparative texts studied by you used key moments to heighten your awareness of an important theme. (70)

OR

2. (a) Choose a theme from **one** text you have studied as part of your comparative course and say how it helped maintain your interest in the text. (30)

(b) Compare how the theme you have dealt with in part (a) is treated by the authors of **two other texts** from your comparative course to maintain the reader's interest. (40)

THEME OR ISSUE (2008)

1. "The comparative study of a theme or issue allows the reader/viewer to gain a variety of viewpoints on that theme or issue."

(a) Describe the viewpoint on your chosen theme or issue that emerges from **one** of your comparative texts. (30)

(b) Compare the viewpoints on the same theme in the **other two texts** that you have studied. (40)

OR

2. "There are key moments in a text when a theme comes sharply into focus."

Compare how key moments from the texts you have studied brought a theme or issue into sharp focus. (70)

THEME OR ISSUE (2006)

1. "In careful reading/viewing of key moments of texts we often find important themes or issues which are developed in the text as a whole."

(a) Compare how key moments of two texts you have studied in your comparative course raised an important theme or issue. (40)

(b) In the case of a third text show how a key moment helped in your understanding of the same theme or issue discussed in part (a). (30)

OR

2. "The dramatic presentation of a theme or issue can add greatly to the impact of narrative texts."

Write an essay comparing how the presentation of a theme or issue, common to the texts you have studied for your comparative course, added to the impact of the texts. (70)

THEME OR ISSUE (2004)

1. "Exploring a theme or issue through different texts allows us to make interesting comparisons."

Write an essay comparing the treatment of a single theme that is common to the texts you have studied for your comparative course. (70)

OR

2. "Any moment in a text can express a major theme or issue."

(a) Choose a moment from each of two texts you have studied for your comparative course and compare the way these moments express the same theme or issue. (40)

(b) Show how a third text you have studied expresses the same theme or issue through a key moment. (30)

THEME OR ISSUE (2002)

1. "A theme or issue explored in a group of narrative texts can offer us valuable insights into life."

Compare the texts you have studied in your comparative course in the light of the above statement. Your discussion must focus on **one** theme or issue. Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts. (70)

OR

2. (a) Compare the treatment of a theme or issue in **two** of the texts you have studied as part of your comparative course. Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts. (40)

(b) Discuss the treatment of **the same theme or issue** in a third text in the light of your answer to part (a) above. (30)

THEME OR ISSUE (2001)

1. "Narratives can broaden our understanding of a theme or issue."

Compare the texts you have studied in your comparative course in the light of the above statement. Support your comparisons by reference to the texts. (70)

OR

2. "A key moment in a narrative text can illustrate a theme or issue very powerfully."

(a) Choose **one** of the texts you studied as part of your comparative course and show how an important moment from it illustrates a theme or issue. (30)

(b) Write a short comparative commentary on **one key moment** from each of the other texts you have studied in the light of your discussion in part (a) above. (40)

Cultural Context - 2011, 2009, 2007, 2006, 2003, 2002

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT (2011)

1. "A reader can feel uncomfortable with the values and attitudes presented in texts."

Compare the extent to which the values and attitudes that you encountered, in at least two texts on your comparative course, made you feel uncomfortable. (70)

OR

2. "The roles and status allocated to males or females can be central to understanding the cultural context of a text."

(a) Show how this statement might apply to one text on your comparative course. In your answer you may refer to the roles and status allocated to either males or females, or both. (30)

(b) Compare how the roles and status allocated to males or females, or both, aided your understanding of the cultural context in two other texts on your comparative course. (40)

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT (2009)

1. "The main characters in texts are often in conflict with the world or culture they inhabit."

In the light of the above statement, compare how the main characters interact with the cultural contexts of the texts you have studied for your comparative course. (70)

OR

2. "Understanding the cultural context of a text allows you to see how values and attitudes are shaped."

(a) Show how this statement applies to **one** of the texts on your comparative course. (30)

(b) Compare the way in which values and attitudes are shaped in **two other texts** on your comparative course. Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts. (40)

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT (2007)

1. Imagine that you are a journalist sent to investigate the cultural context of the worlds of the three texts from your comparative course.

(a) Write an article on the cultural context that you found most interesting. (30)

(b) In a second article compare the cultural contexts of the other two worlds with each other. (40)

OR

2. "The cultural context can have a significant influence on the behaviour of the central character/characters in a text."

Compare the way in which the behaviour of the central characters in **at least two** of your texts is influenced by the cultural context of those texts.

(70)

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT (2006)

1. "The cultural context of a narrative usually determines how the story will unfold."

(a) Compare the way in which the cultural context influenced the storyline in **two** of the texts you have studied in your comparative course.

(40)

(b) Show how the cultural context influenced the storyline in a third text you have studied. (30)

OR

2. "Understanding the cultural context of a text adds to our enjoyment of a good narrative."

In the light of the above statement write an essay comparing the cultural contexts of the texts you have studied in your comparative course.

Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts. (70)

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT (2003)

1. Write an essay in which you compare the texts you have studied in your comparative course in the light of your understanding of the term, the cultural context. (70)

OR

2. (a) With reference to **one** of the texts you have studied in your comparative course, write a note on the way/s in which the cultural context is established by the author. (30)

(b) Compare the ways in which the cultural context is established by the authors of **two other texts** on your comparative course. (40)

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT (2002)

1. "A narrative text creates its own unique world in which the reader can share."

Write a response to the above statement in which you compare the texts you have studied as part of your comparative course. Support the comparisons you make by reference to the texts. (70)

OR

2. (a) What is your understanding of the term Cultural Context in relation to any **one** of the texts in your comparative course? Support your view by reference to **at least one** key moment from your chosen text. (30)

(b) Compare **two other texts** from your comparative course in the light of your understanding of the term Cultural Context as you have discussed it in part (a) above. Support the comparisons you make by reference to **at least one** key moment from each of these two texts. (40)