

MASTER JUNIOR CERT HIGHER LEVEL ENGLISH NOTES

Detailed Junior Cert / Junior Cycle Higher Level English notes for Ireland. Includes themes, tones, techniques (TTT), character notes, quote analysis, symbolism, sample PQEs, sample questions, essay structures, exam tips, and deep analysis.

MASTER EXAM GUIDE

- PQE = Point, Quote, Explain.
- A 5-mark answer is usually one strong PQE paragraph.
- A 25-mark answer should include an introduction, 3 detailed PQEs, and a conclusion.
- Always answer the question directly in the first sentence.
- Use short accurate quotes.
- Explain the EFFECT of techniques on the reader.
- Link quotes to themes and tone.
- Use words like 'suggests', 'highlights', 'reveals', and 'symbolises'.
- Keep explanations longer than quotes.
- Always mention emotional impact.

Merchant of Venice – William Shakespeare

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Themes: Justice vs Mercy, Prejudice, Friendship

Tone: Dramatic and emotional

Techniques: imagery, symbolism, repetition, irony, contrast

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'The quality of mercy is not strained'** – Mercy should be freely given.
- **'If you prick us, do we not bleed?'** – Shylock highlights prejudice.
- **'All that glisters is not gold'** – Appearances deceive.

Sample Exam Question

How does Shakespeare present prejudice?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Shakespeare presents prejudice as cruel. Quote: 'If you prick us, do we not bleed?'

Explain: Shylock reminds the audience that Jews are human beings like Christians.

Of Mice and Men – John Steinbeck

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Themes: Loneliness, Dreams, Friendship

Tone: Tragic and emotional

Techniques: imagery, symbolism, repetition, irony, contrast

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'A guy needs somebody'** – Loneliness affects everyone.
- **'Tell me about the rabbits'** – Dreams bring comfort.
- **'Live off the fatta the lan'** – Represents hope.

Sample Exam Question

How does Steinbeck present loneliness?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Steinbeck presents loneliness as painful. Quote: 'A guy needs somebody.' Explain: Crooks reveals the emotional damage caused by isolation.

The Outsiders – S.E. Hinton

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Themes: Friendship, Violence, Identity

Tone: Emotional and reflective

Techniques: imagery, symbolism, repetition, irony, contrast

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'Stay gold, Ponyboy'** – Protect innocence.
- **'Things are rough all over'** – Everyone struggles.
- **'Nothing gold can stay'** – Innocence fades.

Sample Exam Question

How is friendship important?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Friendship gives emotional support. Quote: 'We're all we have left.' Explain: The Greasers depend on each other like family.

The Tell-Tale Heart – Edgar Allan Poe

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Themes: Madness, Fear, Guilt

Tone: Paranoid and suspenseful

Techniques: imagery, symbolism, repetition, irony, contrast

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'Louder! Louder! Louder!'** – Shows guilt.
- **'The eye of a vulture'** – Represents obsession.
- **'Villains! dissemble no more!'** – Narrator confesses.

Sample Exam Question

How does Poe create suspense?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Poe creates suspense through repetition. Quote: 'Louder! Louder! Louder!' Explain: The repetition reflects panic and guilt.

The Sniper – Liam O'Flaherty

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Themes: War, Violence, Loss

Tone: Tense and tragic

Techniques: imagery, symbolism, repetition, irony, contrast

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'His face was the face of a student'** – War destroys youth.
- **'Brother against brother'** – Civil war divides families.
- **'The lust of battle died in him'** – Violence changes people.

Sample Exam Question

How does O'Flaherty show the horrors of war?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: O'Flaherty shows war as destructive. Quote: 'His face was the face of a student.' Explain: Young ordinary people are destroyed by war.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree – W.B. Yeats

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Theme: Peace and escape

Tone: Calm and reflective

Techniques: imagery, simile, symbolism, alliteration, assonance

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'Peace comes dropping slow'** – Peace arrives gently.
- **'I hear lake water lapping'** – Relaxing sound imagery.

Sample Question

How does Yeats create a peaceful atmosphere?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Yeats creates peace through imagery. Quote: 'Peace comes dropping slow.' Explain: The personification creates a soothing mood.

Dulce et Decorum Est – Wilfred Owen

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Theme: Horrors of war

Tone: Angry and bitter

Techniques: imagery, simile, symbolism, alliteration, assonance

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'Bent double, like old beggars'** – Simile showing suffering.
- **'Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!'** – Creates panic.

Sample Question

How does Owen present war negatively?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Owen presents war as horrifying. Quote: 'Bent double, like old beggars.' Explain: The simile destroys romantic ideas about war.

Funeral Blues – W.H. Auden

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Theme: Grief and loss

Tone: Mournful

Techniques: imagery, simile, symbolism, alliteration, assonance

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'Stop all the clocks'** – World should stop after death.
- **'He was my North, my South'** – Loved one meant everything.

Sample Question

How does Auden present grief?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Auden presents grief as overwhelming. Quote: 'Stop all the clocks.' Explain: The hyperbole shows extreme emotional pain.

An Irish Airman Foresees His Death – W.B. Yeats

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Theme: Death and fate

Tone: Thoughtful

Techniques: imagery, simile, symbolism, alliteration, assonance

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'I know that I shall meet my fate'** – Acceptance of death.
- **'A lonely impulse of delight'** – Flying gives excitement.

Sample Question

How does Yeats present the airman?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Yeats presents the airman as calm. Quote: 'I know that I shall meet my fate.' Explain: He accepts death without fear.

Blackberry-Picking – Seamus Heaney

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Theme: Childhood and disappointment

Tone: Nostalgic then disappointed

Techniques: imagery, simile, symbolism, alliteration, assonance

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'The flesh was sweet'** – Positive imagery.
- **'The juice was stinking too'** – Decay ruins happiness.

Sample Question

How does Heaney show disappointment?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Heaney presents disappointment as unavoidable. Quote: 'The juice was stinking too.'

Explain: Excitement eventually turns to decay.

Mid-Term Break – Seamus Heaney

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Theme: Death and grief

Tone: Sad and reflective

Techniques: imagery, simile, symbolism, alliteration, assonance

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'A four-foot box, a foot for every year'** – Heartbreaking ending.
- **'The baby cooed and laughed'** – Contrast with grief.

Sample Question

How does Heaney create sadness?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Heaney creates sadness through understatement. Quote: 'A four-foot box, a foot for every year.' Explain: Simple language makes the death more emotional.

Oranges – Gary Soto

TTT – Theme, Tone, Technique

Theme: Young love and innocence

Tone: Warm and nostalgic

Techniques: imagery, simile, symbolism, alliteration, assonance

Key Quotes + Analysis

- **'December. Frost cracking'** – Strong sensory opening.
- **'Bright with embarrassment'** – Shows nervousness.

Sample Question

How does Soto present young love?

Sample PQE Answer

Point: Soto presents young love as awkward but sweet. Quote: 'Bright with embarrassment.'

Explain: The description captures nervous excitement.

FINAL REVISION ADVICE

- Memorise 5–7 quotes for every text.
- Always explain techniques fully.
- Practise writing PQE paragraphs daily.
- Use introductions and conclusions for long answers.
- Discuss reader reaction.
- Mention symbolism and tone changes.