

1. HEBREW STUDIES

The aims of the course are, (i) to pursue the aims of the Intermediate Certificate course in Hebrew Studies at a level appropriate to the needs of and capacities of senior post-primary pupils, and (ii) to enable students to deepen their understanding of the history, religion and civilization of the Hebrew people by focussing in greater depth upon major themes regarding institutions, religious ideas and roles as they were expressed and developed during the course of Israelite history.

As in the Intermediate Certificate course, these aims are to be pursued primarily through the study of prescribed Hebrew texts which focus upon major topics. A study (in the vernacular) of the wider background to these texts and topics, especially regarding historical detail, is also necessary.

The Leaving Certificate course in Hebrew Studies will be examined at both Ordinary and Higher levels, and separate Ordinary and Higher Level examination papers will be set.

The same examination syllabus is prescribed for both Ordinary and Higher Level examinations. However, while a descriptive approach to the study of the prescribed topics is recommended at Ordinary Level, a more analytical approach is required at Higher Level.

The syllabus is divided into four sections, A, B, C and D, each of which covers two major topics from Israelite history. The texts prescribed for the study of the eight topics are as follows:-

Section A

1. Family

The texts in this section are designed to enable the student to gain insight into the structure, roles, values and purpose of the family, as perceived by the Hebrews throughout the people's Biblical and early post-Biblical development.

Old Testament Gen 2.18; 15.1-5; 21.1-8; 24.1-27, 61-67;
Ex 20.1-17; Deut 24.1-4; 25.5-10;
Ruth 4; Ps 128; Prov 31.10-31.

Mishnah: Ta'Anit 4m.8; Av 5m.21 (first half); Peah 1m.1.

2. Government and Monarchy

The texts in this section are designed to provide the student with an understanding of –(a) the place of Monarchy in Israelite society, and the tensions and conflicts to which it give rise; (b) the religious understanding of the monarchic institution in the Hebrew faith.

Old Testament: Gen 42.12-27; Deut 17.14-20;
Judg 9.1-21 ; 1 Sam 8;24;
2 Sam 15.1-16; Kings 1.15-53.

Mishnah: Av 3 m.2 (first part); Sot 7 m.8; Sonh 2 m.3.

Section B

1. Prophetic Protest

The texts in this section are designed to provide the student with an understanding of – (a) the role and position of the prophet in relation to both the leadership and the masses; (b) the nature and substance of prophetic protest even as it continued in early post-Biblical times.

Old Testament: 2 Sam 12.1-25; 1 Kings 18.17-39; 21;
Amos 5.4-24; 1s 58; Jer 1; 22.11-19.

Mishnah: Av 1 m.2, 10, 18; 2m.3; 5m.17; 6m.5.

2. Wisdom

The texts in this section are designed to provide the student with an understanding of – (a) the context and background of wisdom teaching; (b) the values and ideas contained in wisdom literature, and their early post-Biblical expression and development.

Old Testament: Prov 2.1-8; 24.13-34; Eccles 3.1-15; 12.

Mishnah: Av 1m. 12, 14; 2m.5, 12; 3 m. 18; 4m.1,2; 6m.5.

Additional reading recommended, but not prescribed-

Old Testament: Job; 1 Kings 3. 5-14; 4.29-34 (in English version); 5.9-14.

Mishnah: Ber 9 m.5.

Section C

1. Worship (Sacrifice and Prayer)

The texts in this section are designed to provide the student with an understanding of – (a) the role and development of worship amongst the Hebrews; (b) the place of sacrifice and liturgy; (c) the position of the Temple; (d) the role of the Priesthood and the Levites.

Old Testament: Num 6. 22-27; Deut 6.4-9; 12.11-19;
1 Kings 8.1-21; Ps 20; 24; 122; 134.

Mishnah: Sot 7m.6; Ber 1m.3; 4m.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; 5m.1, 2, 3, 5;
Av 2m. 13; Tamid 6m.4.

2. Festivals and Symbols

The texts in this section are designed to provide the student with – (a) a knowledge of the form and substance of the Festivals in Hebrew life, both Biblical and early post-Biblical; (b) an understanding of the form, substance and significance of the religious symbols that figure prominently in the life of the Jewish people within both the calendar and daily contexts.

Old Testament: Ex 12; 13.1-16; Lev 23; Josh 5.4-12 (Pass); 1 Sam 20.18-42 (N. Moon);

1 Kings 8.55-66 (Tab); 2 Kings 23.21-25
(Pass); Neh 8.3-18 (Tab); 1 Mac 4.52-59;
Num 15.37-41; Deut 6.4-9; 11.13-31.

Mishnah: Sukkah 1m.1; 3m.4; Pesachim 10m. 1, 5; Bikkurim 3m.3, 6;
Yoma 6m.2; 8m.1,9; Rosh Hashanah 4m.8, 9;
Megillah 1m.8; 3m.6; (Pu and Ch.).

Section D

1. Election and Covenant

The texts in this section are designed to enable the student to understand how the idea of covenant is used to define the relationship between the people and God.

Old Testament: Gen 15.7-21; Ex 19.1-8; Deut 26.5-9, 16-19;
29.9-28; 30.19-20; Josh 24.1.-28;
1 Sam 12.7-25; 2 Sam 7; 2 Kings 23.1-8;
Jer 31.31-34; Neh 9-10.1 (= 9 in English version).

Mishnah: Av 1 m.1; 3 m. 15; Ta' Anit 2m.4.

2. Messianism

The texts in this section are designed to enable the student – (a) to perceive the nature of Messianism expressed across Biblical and early post-Biblical literature; (b) to understand the idea in relation to the historical circumstance that nurtured it.

Old Testament: Dent 30.1-10; 1s 11.1-10; 40.1-11; 54;
Jer 31.1-20; 32.6-15; 36-44; Ezek 37;
Micah 4.1-5; Mal 3.19.24; Zach 9.9-17; Ps 20.

Mishnah: Ber 1 m.5; Sot 9m. 15.

Ordinary Level Examination Paper

This paper will have four sections corresponding with the four sections of the syllabus. It will carry a total of 400 marks, 100 marks for each section. Time allowed will be 3 hours.

In each section of the paper, two passages of prescribed Hebrew text will be given, one relating to each of the two topics in the corresponding section of the syllabus. A group of questions (which may include a question on Hebrew grammar) will be set on each passage. The questions will demand a satisfactory understanding of the given passage and a knowledge of the wider background to the events and issues referred to in the passage, especially in regard to historical details. Candidates must deal with one passage only in each section.

Candidates are encouraged to support their answers with appropriate quotation or reference, whenever possible. It will be an advantage to them if they give supporting quotation in Hebrew, and if they translate the quotations given. Square script should be used.

Candidates are reminded that their answers to all questions attempted should reveal evidence of their understanding of the issues raised by the questions, and should not concentrate excessively or exclusively upon simple repetition or memorised notes.

Higher Level Examination Paper

This paper will have the same format and content as the Ordinary Level Paper, *except* that one question on each of the eight prescribed topics will be different from the questions set on the corresponding topics on the Ordinary Level Paper.

A higher standard of answering in general will be expected on this paper than on the Ordinary Level paper, and candidates will be expected to give evidence of a deeper level of analytical understanding of the texts and topics studied.