

EXAMEN D'ADMISSIBILITE ECRIT
Seconde Section Internationale, Session 2017

Vous écrirez directement vos réponses sur les copies prévues. Vous devez rendre la totalité des documents à la fin de l'épreuve en les plaçant dans votre copie.

Aoife has been living in New York City and working for a photographer, Evelyn, for a few years. She is going back to her native country, Ireland, to look for her missing father.

Gabe came to the airport with her. They ate waffles at a stand in the departure lounge, or at least Gabe did; Aoife watched him, smoked a cigarette and fingered the softened edges of her passport.

'It's going to be OK,' he said, taking her hand. 'You know that, right? You'll find him.

5 People can't just disappear.'

She cleared her throat, turned her hand inside his so that they were palm to palm. 'Listen, Gabe...'

'Yeah?'

'I have a favour to ask.'

10 There was a pause. 'Oh,' he nodded, 'sure. What is it?'

She saw that he'd thought she was about to say something else, something about them moving in together. It would have been so appropriate, so expansive a gesture, to say yes, to agree to it here, at the airport, as they said goodbye. She found herself, just for a moment, picturing the place where they would live together. It would have plants along the windowsills and photographs tacked to the backs of doors, and they would eat off plates in bright, ceramic colours. There was

15 no better time to say, let's move in together, than now: she saw that but she tried to blot it from her mind, tried to press on.

'There's...' she attempted to think her way quickly around the various perils in her path, to weigh up the different risks she was incurring, '...a file. At Evelyn's. A blue file. There are some things in it I should have... things I've got a bit behind with. I was wondering if... if you might go over there and get it. Maybe... you could take a look at it for me. Tell me what's in it. Here are the keys. Would you mind?'

20

'No. I can go tonight.'

Aoife pressed his hand, relief surging through her.

25 'Take this, too.' She pushed the key to her apartment across the table but he shook his head.

'No, you keep it, it can be—'

She leant forward, over the table between them, and dropped the key into the pocket of his shirt just as he finished his sentence:

30 '—a guarantee that you're coming back.'

There was an awkward, silent moment, while he gazed at her, as if trying to memorise her features, and she bit her lip, gabbling that of course she was coming back, there was no question about it.

Gabe lowered his eyes, put his hand over the key, over his heart. 'Thanks,' he muttered.

35 'Might come in handy.' He glanced at his watch. 'You should get going.'

They walked to the departure lounge, she clasped her arms around him until the last second, until she walked through the door.

When she'd stepped through to the other side, she turned and found that he was watching her from behind a glass wall. She went right up to it and pressed her face to it, near to his, so near
40 that her eyelashes fluttered on the cold screen between them. He breathed on the glass and a nimbus of condensation billowed between them, and suddenly a fingertip was etching lines, curves, shapes into the mist. Letters. She watched as Gabe wrote something on the glass, a final message. Four words. Or possible three. It was hard to tell as the gaps between them seemed to compress and expand, like the air in an accordion, and it ended with the curved coat-hanger hook
45 of a question mark. But what was the question, that was the question.

Aoife looked at the string of letters, which undulated and swayed, like bunting in the wind, and felt tears gathering in her eyes, bitter and alkaline. She looked at Gabe. There was nothing else to do. She gave him her half-smile, head tilted, and a small shrug.

It was the wrong thing, she saw that straight away. Gabe took a step back from the glass, where the letters were being eroded by transparency. His face was hurt, dismayed, and she had to
50 resist the urge to bang her forehead into the glass, to shout, please, it's not my fault. I just can't.

At the gate, which was filled with people crunching peanuts or napping or sifting through their bags, Aoife took a pen from her bag and crouched to write on her left hand, fast, before switching the pen over to write on her right. She wrote what she could remember of the words she
55 had seen. She had the mad idea that she could show it to someone, ask someone on the flight perhaps. She wrote with concentrated urgency, as if the act would rewind the moment of him standing behind the glass, his face falling, as if inking these things on her skin might undo the whole thing.

She climbed the steps to her plane, carrying the words with her.

Adapted from *Instructions for a Heatwave* by Maggie O'Farrell, 2013.

COMPREHENSION (20 points)

Answer the questions in order. Make sure you respect the number of words specified. When the number of words is not specified, answer in one sentence. 'In your own words' means you have to reformulate the ideas of the text.

1. Who is Gabe?
2. a) l. 6-7 'Listen Gabe...' What does Gabe imagine Aoife is going to say?
b) How does this make her feel? (*approximately 40 words*)
c) What does she actually want him to do?
d) Does she find it easy to ask this favour? Answer 'yes' or 'no', then quote three words or phrases (*groupes de mots*) from the text to support your answer.
3. a) Why do you think Aoife gives Gabe the key (l. 25)? (*approx. 30 words*)
b) Why does he want her to keep it? Explain in your own words.
4. How does Gabe send 'a final message' (l. 42-43) to Aoife?
5. Why does Aoife feel 'tears gathering in her eyes' (l. 47)? Explain in your own words.
6. Quote two elements from the text for each of the following:
 - a) Aoife's answer to Gabe's message
 - b) Gabe's reaction to her answer
7. a) What is the last thing Aoife does before getting onto the plane?
b) ' [...] as if the act would rewind the moment of him standing behind the glass, his face falling, as if inking these things on her skin might undo the whole thing.' (l. 56-58) Explain in your own words what Aoife wishes and why. (*approx. 30 words*)
c) 'It's not my fault. I just can't.' (l. 51) What do you think Aoife can't do? Give two different ideas.
8. How would you describe the atmosphere created in this text? Choose two different adjectives and justify each adjective by explaining in your own words. Feel free to make reference to key aspects of the writing like place, symbolism, vocabulary, metaphor, etc. (*approx. 60-80 words*)

WRITING (20 points)

Treat both subjects. On the whole, you should write approximately 300-350 words. Please indicate the number of words you used at the end of each subject.

Up to ten points are available for the content of your answer, and up to ten points for the quality of your writing.

1. Write the passage from line 38 to line 51 from Gabe's point of view (in the first person). Start with the following sentence: 'I watched her step through to the other side from behind a glass wall.' Don't forget to imagine his thoughts and feelings. (*150-200 words*)
2. Do you ever find it difficult to communicate with people you are close to? (*150-200 words*)