

GCSE



Chief Examiner's and  
Principal Moderator's Report  
Gaeilge

Summer Series 2019





## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2019 series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's section on our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk).



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## GCSE GAEILGE

### Principal Moderator's Report

#### Component 1      Listening and Speaking in Gaeilge

##### Task 1 Researched Topic/Discussion

In general, this task was extremely well addressed by candidates. Candidates chose topics in which they had a genuine interest or which related directly to their lives. A surprising number chose to research and speak on Gaeloideachas and their research varied from internet research to interviews with Principals and past pupils. Candidates spoke quite confidently and had prepared well for this task. The level of language used varied from good to excellent – the stronger candidates used language that was accurate, even when more complex structures were used. They adopted their language to the audience and task in hand and showcased their language skills to the optimum. Their language had a natural feel and a richness about it. The more challenged candidates spoke fluently but their language tended to be grammatically inaccurate and littered with *'Béarlachas'* with little evidence of *'saibhreas'*. Frequent errors tended to be *'sílim go bhfuil sé idea maith'* *'ba mhaith déanamh sin'* *'ní rinne mé sin'* *'tugann sé seans do labhairt Gaeilge'* – these are the same mistakes that arise every year in speaking tasks and with this knowledge, centres would be advised to make an effort to address them. If we continue to accept these inaccuracies, they will become endemic. In terms of recordings, we always have a few that are very difficult to moderate, either because of (i) inferior recording equipment (ii) misplacement of microphone (iii) excessive background noise from corridors, playgrounds or adjacent classrooms. Centres need to be aware that it is incumbent on them to provide appropriate examination conditions/equipment for their candidates to allow them to showcase their full potential. Candidates should also be aware that this is the prepared element of the examination - they have total control over it and if they do the research and preparation, they have every opportunity to score high marks in it. It is very ill advised in an element like this to feel that they can simply 'think on their feet' and not show evidence of thorough preparation and research.

##### Task 2 Group Discussion

This task is the task with which centres and candidates are familiar and it posed very few problems, as centres were able to draw on past experience and advice. This task was well handled by most candidates and centres acted on the advice that had been given in previous years and ensured that the group task was totally candidate generated and managed. Centres are very comfortable with this task and are relaxed with the moderator's visit. The moderators who visited centres were impressed with the maturity that the candidates displayed, both in their handling of the group dynamics and in the level of thinking displayed by some of the candidates. There is no doubt that this task poses a problem for smaller centres in which there are only one or two candidates – again a suggestion would be to perhaps contact one of the bigger centres to see if some collaboration could be organised so that candidates get the experience of partaking in a 'group' as opposed to a one to one discussion with the teacher. The moderators who visited centres would like to thank them for the welcome and the hospitality afforded to them on their visits.

## General comments

Our concern still remains, regarding the difference in the standard of language between prepared and unprepared elements of the tasks. Direct translation and colloquiums are almost endemic when candidates are asked to think on their feet. Difficult as this might be, if we want to see language development, this is an issue which we must address and it is being addressed in some centres. We would impress on centres the value of developing a *'saibhreas'* in the language and encouraging candidates to move away from the *'Béarlachas'* that can be a feature of the unprepared responses. We do not underestimate the difficulty for teachers in trying to make an impact on this fossilisation of bad habits that are now embedded, but if we want our candidates to develop their language skills and to develop accuracy and richness, then this is an issue that we must address. This is an issue that we have raised in virtually every report for every specification, since the inception of the examination and the situation does not appear to be improving. In general terms, the talking and listening element of the new specification appears to have been successful and the fact that the number of controlled assessment tasks has been significantly reduced, thus giving more time for teaching, will undoubtedly have a positive outcome on the teaching of the language.

## Marking

The standard of marking was again very high and no adjustments were deemed necessary. It was clear that centres with a large number of candidates undertook internal moderation during the marking process. This ensured consistency throughout these centres. Those with smaller groups should co-operate with other centres to ensure this important process takes place. Simple annotation of tasks, with reference to assessment objectives, is of great help during the moderation process. The moderation team would like to thank all centres for ensuring annotation was carried out.

The moderators would like to thank teachers and their excellent pupils for providing a truly excellent sample for moderation. The standard of written communication in Irish was generally of a very high standard for 16 year old pupils.

I would like to thank all the teachers involved in the teaching of this subject, the pupils and my colleagues on the team for their continued hard work, commitment and professionalism.

## Component 2                      Reading and Writing in Gaeilge

As this was the first year of the new specification there were one or two teething problems that have hopefully been ironed out at this stage. To be clear, the task requires a written response in Irish to one literary text and one non-fiction text, both written in Irish. On a general note, the standard of work produced by pupils this year was of a very high standard and it was clear that centres marked the tasks fairly and in strict accordance to the new marking scheme. The following report is designed to support teachers in future cycles and therefore should enhance the opportunity for candidates to achieve top marks.

### **Task 1 Reading and Writing (*Léamh agus Scríobh – An Téama: Saol an Duine Óig*)**

Overall the task was completed at a very high standard in most cases. The impressive amount of personal engagement by candidates this year demonstrated a rich learning experience for those pupils who produced work in the top bands. Furthermore, it was noted that most candidates demonstrated a good to very good knowledge of the texts.

In accordance with the mark scheme, those candidates who obtained Band 3 marks for AO2:

- Displayed a **very** good knowledge of the texts as well as a **high** degree of understanding of the question by making apt comparisons and cross-references as appropriate.
- Avoided irrelevant material and repetition.
- Displayed **real** personal engagement and **pertinent** references.

Candidates who achieved top marks for AO2 struck an even balance between the two texts. Some candidates produced very good work but failed to obtain top marks because they concentrated more on one piece than the other. In such cases, it can be difficult to prove a very good knowledge of the texts. As was the case with the legacy specification, Band 3 requires a good degree of personal engagement, whereas Band 2 requires some degree of the same.

AO3 is now divided into 3 subsections (AO3i, AO3ii & AO3iii). Those candidates who achieved marks in Band 5 displayed:

- Accurate spelling and punctuation;
- Proficiency in the way the language is structured;
- A very high level of grammar appropriate to the level; and
- An easy-to-understand essay.

The moderation team reported that they were again very impressed with the rich and accurate use of Irish used by many candidates. There were excellent examples of this in every centre and those pupils and their teachers should be commended for this. The best pieces of work used idiomatic language appropriately and regularly without it seeming contrived. To apply grammar at a very high level, candidates must attempt a variety of more difficult structures. The moderation team is aware that when more complex structures are attempted, errors will occur. We encourage candidates to be brave with their language choices.

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Overview

In both Papers 1 and 2 there was a broad spectrum of marks with some candidates doing considerably better than the rest. Higher ability candidates performed exceptionally well, while the less able candidates found the papers challenging. The majority of candidates fell into the middle bracket with a generally good performance. The quality of responses was similar to previous years with all questions being attempted this year. In the writing paper, the essay responses contained grammatical and spelling errors. However, overall, the papers did differentiate well between candidates. The question papers were of a similar standard as in previous years. There were several new centres entered this year and there was an evident lack of experience with the papers and the quality of some responses reflected this.

In Paper 1, candidates performed well overall, although not as well as in previous years. The papers differentiated between the candidature and the more skilled candidates were able to access most of the marks in Questions 1, 2 and 3.

Question 1 was well answered by some candidates, but with a lesser percentage awarded full marks than previously. There was some difficulty in awarding higher level marks in some centres, as candidates didn't include all the necessary information to gain the maximum mark available. This was partly due to a general difficulty in ciphering the correct information to gain the full range of marks. However, candidates should still be reminded to refer to the mark allocation for each question i.e., that 3 marks means that 3 pieces of information are required for full marks.

Question 2 was generally less well answered than in previous years, particularly by those less able candidates. There was too much literal translation of Question 3, however, overall, the quality of responses ranged from excellent to good.

Question 1 discriminated between the differing abilities. In Question 2, candidates still need more practice in the technique required for answering this type of stimulus question and should refer to CCEA examples and previous past papers and mark schemes. Some candidates tended to be repetitive and rewrite the passage, although to a lesser degree.

In Question 3, the responses were generally very good, although some pupils depended far too much on literal translations and lost the sense of the passage, while a few left some blank spaces.

In Paper 2, the standard of communication ranged from 'very clear and effective' to 'a limited selection of vocabulary and idiom appropriate to task'. Responses ranged from good to excellent. There was a slightly better response to the essay type question with most candidates being awarded marks in Bands 3 and 4. All essay choices were selected and the quality of responses was generally very good. Some candidates still have great difficulty using grammatical structures e.g. *An Chopail, aidiachtaí, briathra agus aimsirí, infinideach, ainmfhocail, saorbhriathar, uatha/iolra, tuiséal ginideach* etc., and the spelling of basic vocabulary still remains a cause for concern.

As in previous years, there were quite a few common errors/mis-spelling/confusion of high frequency words e.g. *riamh, roimh, raibh, tá is agam*. In some cases, in the essay responses, there was a lack of focus, structure and vocabulary and constant repetition of ideas. There needs to be more focus on linguistic form to complement high fluency and candidates again should be advised to examine past papers for recurring idiom and structures e.g. *is iomaí uair, mar sin féin, mar gheall ar*.

Some candidates found it difficult to organise ideas and information to a level that was engaging and therefore, were unable to access the higher bands, although fewer than in previous years. However, some candidates performed extremely well, especially those whose communication was very engaging and structured. There was cohesion and coherence evident in those scripts where a structured plan had been considered.

Those few candidates who had no plan showed a lack of organisation of ideas and there was a lesser evidence of linguistic features to support cohesion and coherence.

Some essays tended to be rather limited in terms of development of topic or theme, although again, fewer than in previous years. In some instances, effective communication was lacking. There needs to be a greater awareness of language and style as well as sensitivity to idiom. Candidates would benefit from more practice in planning and structuring essays of this type.

The marking of the paper was deemed to be consistent and well annotated by examiners – very few amendments were made and these did not affect the overall marking, as questions were marked out of a large total for extended writing type questions. As well as this, the bulk of the candidature was marked by the same examiner which ensured consistency in marking.

## Component 3 Reading in Gaeilge

### Paper 1

**Question 1:** This was generally very well answered, however, some candidates misinterpreted the question, didn't read it properly or failed to make a distinction between (a) *cúiseanna*, (b) *rioscaí don tsláinte*, (c) *réiteach* and (d) *iarmhairtí*. Question 1(a) was generally well answered and in Question 1(b) there was a varying degree of response with some answers being repeated. Question 1(c) again, was generally well answered, though weaker candidates misunderstood Question 1(d), which led to it being less well answered and there was some repetition of previous answers. The word '*iarmhairtí*' seems to have caused difficulty for those less able candidates in this case. As already mentioned, examiners did have difficulty awarding higher level marks in some cases, as candidates failed to include all the necessary information required for each sub-section. The responses were varied and ranged from excellent to very good. Candidates should also be aware of the marks allocated for each question and note that where 3–4 marks are allocated to a question, there are generally 3–4 points of information required in their response. In a few instances this year, candidates denied themselves marks by giving less than the required detail. However, it was evident that fewer candidates were leaving spaces or full parts of the question blank, as has been the case previously.

**Question 2:** Some responses proved to be less well answered by some candidates. Question 2, Part (b) was not well answered by those less able candidates who relied on their own experiences rather than information from the text, as required. '*Úsáid teanga an údair*' was being assessed in this question and some candidates excelled while the majority had average to good responses. Responses need to be succinct and to the point and would have benefitted from more engagement with the text. Candidates should be encouraged to attempt all parts of a question and refrain from leaving blank spaces and also, to refer to the use of language, author's technique and style, as far as possible. Candidates should also familiarize themselves with the example given in the CCEA booklet, as well as mark schemes which highlight the type of response required for this question.

**Question 3:** Responses to this question were varied, but generally of a good standard with some candidates attaining excellent marks. As in other years, less able candidates had difficulty with terminology and gave very literal translations. Some candidates did not manage to complete the question, although some basic vocabulary challenged the more able candidates also. As well as this, some simple vocabulary, constructions and place names were surprisingly inaccurate by quite a wide section of candidates e.g. '*oileán*', '*amach ó*', '*thiar*', '*ar leith*', '*an Íoslainn*', '*ar leithead*', '*easpa deiseanna*', '*ba mheasa an scéal*', '*cruatán*', '*ganntanas*', '*filleadh*', '*bád farantóireachta*', '*Machaire Rabhartaigh*', '*bunadh an oileáin*'. Communication was clear and effective, however, candidates should read over their

work to ensure it is coherent and has the necessary full stops and capital letters. In many instances, there were spelling and grammatical errors, as well as literal translations, leaving control of the passage inconsistent. In other responses, omitted words or phrases, or even a whole paragraph, hindered the overall sense of the passage.

## Component 4 Writing in Gaeilge

### Paper 2

**Question 1:** Questions set were attempted by the majority of candidates and the responses were wide-ranging and generally very pleasing. Some responses, however, lacked the required detail and vocabulary to deal with the topic and, as a result, some of the essays became repetitive. Several candidates failed to engage at all with this question.

**Part (a):** This question discriminated well between differing abilities, with the more able candidates being able to access the higher bands, whereas less able candidates selected a limited vocabulary appropriate for the task and there were frequent inaccuracies in linguistic structures and spelling. A lot of candidates who chose this question wrote mostly about the problem of obesity and did not really address the topic in depth. Responses varied from a high level of communication to a more basic selection of vocabulary, idiom and grammatical structures to engage the reader. Unfortunately, some candidates did not understand who they were writing to or what they were writing about. Others obviously learned a prepared essay on ‘Murtall’ and proceeded to write this without referring back to the essay title. Candidates tended to fall within Bands 3 or 4. Candidates should again be reminded not to put their e-mail addresses or telephone numbers on their answer booklets.

**Part (b):** This question was not as popular with candidates as the others and was less well answered. Part of the reason for this was the misinterpretation of the word ‘*meath*’ which led to several candidates not addressing the question in full, i.e. writing about a visit to the Gaeltacht as opposed to the predicted decline of it. Again, as above, responses varied from a high level of communication to a limited engagement with the question. A lack of punctuation still causes difficulties for some candidates, with full stops missing, no capital letters etc., being quite frequent.

**Part (c):** This was the most popular choice for candidates and responses varied from average to very good and was well answered by most candidates. However, some candidates limited their content to one or two points rather than expanding their essay to engage more with the reader. More able candidates were able to write well-structured, coherent essays, displaying a high level of grammatical accuracy, idiom and spelling. This type of essay discriminated well between the differing abilities. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of reading the question carefully before attempting it and to adhere to the topic in question. Examiners again made the following suggestions:

- (a) Essay plans should be well thought out before attempting the question. Candidates should write in paragraphs using the correct punctuation as appropriate.
- (b) Candidates should apply their skills to address basic grammar and spelling e.g. use of infinitive, tenses, *caint indíreach*, masculine/feminine/singular/plural nouns, genitive case, pronouns etc.
- (c) Content should reflect the chosen title – too often candidates become distracted and spend too much time elaborating on material which is not relevant to the task.
- (d) Candidates should avoid long-winded introductions which detract from their responses and use up the word limit before getting to the main body of their essay.
- (e) Candidates should make sure, as far as possible, that they select an essay title that is appropriate for their ability.

**Question 2:** This question proved to be difficult for the majority of candidates.

Communication in the Target Language tended to be basic with less evidence of linguistic structures, grammar and spelling with a lot of literal translation and lack of syntax. The following proved to be challenging, *'cé acu ab fhearr leat', 'iarratas', 'post páirtaimseartha', 'cúntóir siopa', 'is cuma le', 'seandaoine', 'sochái', 'coinne a dhéanamh' agus an Modh Coinníollach agus an Infinideach*. In some instances, the level of vocabulary and linguistic structures were quite low, while the more able candidates produced a fair command of idiom and structures. Grammatical structures and spelling on the whole are still limited. The basic vocabulary that would be expected at this level was lacking in some instances and would benefit from a more focused approach.

**Question 3:** In the responses to this question, some of the more basic structures posed a difficulty for some candidates e.g. sentence structure where verb comes first, ages, tenses, genitive case, *'i ndiaidh na scoile', 'in aghaidh na míosa', 'seisiún traenála', i rith na ndéaga'* and vocabulary and spelling, 'active', 'development', 'member', 'team' etc. The last line was omitted by quite a number of candidates. As well as this, punctuation, use of full stops and capital letters are causing problems for some less able candidates. However, the main difficulties remain - the inconsistency of the translation, the insertion of English words, the omission of sentences or large parts of the original text and grammatical features such as, for example, tenses, verbs and where they come in a sentence.

## Contact details

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