

GCSE



Chief Examiner's Report Irish

Summer Series 2018



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Irish for this 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 microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

Contents

Assessment Unit 3	Reading	3
Assessment Unit 4	Writing	4
Contact details:		9

GCSE IRISH

Chief Examiner's Report

Introduction

This was the first year of the revised specification and a small number of centres entered candidates for examinations in the two skill areas available. Pupils and teachers are to be commended for their hard work and preparation for the new examinations.

General Comments

The initial impression gained from a review of performances in this year's examination was that there was a significant increase in the number of scripts containing a lot of blank spaces. This was especially evident in the Foundation Writing papers. Although great effort is made to identify and credit positive achievement it was generally noted by assistant examiners that valuable marks were lost by candidates who did not fully take note of the questions being asked in the Reading papers and gave information which did not target the answers. Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of carefully reading the rubric for each question. This is a crucial part of the question and gives the detail needed for a correct answer. Some candidates tried to hedge their bets with answers and write out chunks of text and this is to be discouraged. Candidates should also take time to ensure that their handwriting is clear and legible.

Assessment Unit 3 Reading

Foundation Tier

A small number of candidates were entered for this tier in this first series of the new specification for GCSE Irish. Overall the performance in this paper was reasonable although centres should be reminded that the assessment is designed for candidates who have completed two years of study of GCSE Irish and tests all of the contexts for learning.

Assistant examiners made the following comments on the performance in each individual question.

Section A

- Q1** This question was well handled and candidates were familiar with the vocabulary required.
- Q2** Candidates found this question accessible.
- Q3** Candidates dealt well with this question and were familiar with the vocabulary needed to complete all of the sentences.
- Q4** Candidates handled this question well and recognised the vocabulary necessary for the answers.
- Q5** This question proved difficult to a majority of candidates. The numerical term 'go leith' was not understood by a lot of candidates and a wide range of answers were provided for Herbie's age. Similarly 'múinte' was not well known as a term and many guesses were provided which were incorrect.
- Q6** Candidates handled the new translation element of the paper well, although a small minority of candidates failed to answer all six elements. Candidates should be

encouraged to look at the number of marks available for each question and to use this as an indicator as to how many pieces of vocabulary would be generally required. This was pertinent for Question (a) which was worth three marks. It was noticeable the number of candidates who simply wrote 'soccer' and appeared to ignore the other two marks for 'five-a-side'.

- Q7** Candidates dealt with this question well and were familiar with the vocabulary required.
- Q8** This Question was well handled and candidates recognised the relevant vocabulary.

Section B

- Q9** A more challenging question which tested candidates' deduction skills. On the whole, the question was well answered but it was obvious where candidates who struggled at the element of the assessment simply guessed the correct answers.
- Q10** This question requires close reading of the stimulus material and then the identification of the individual elements which will provide the correct answer to the questions in Irish. Less able candidates found this a struggle and there was a significant number of questions not answered at this level. Candidates should be reminded that it is important to focus on and identify the correct response to answer each question accurately. They should not copy wholesale chunks of the text in the hope that they may stumble on the right answer.
- Q11** This question was well handled and candidates were familiar with the vocabulary required.
- Q12** This question was challenging to a majority of candidates who were required to complete the sentences accurately using words from a pool supplied.

Higher Tier

A small number of candidates were entered for this tier in this the first series of the new specification for GCSE Irish. The overall performance in this paper was good although centres should be reminded that the assessment is designed for candidates who have completed two years of study of GCSE Irish and tests all of the contexts for learning.

Assistant examiners made the following comments on the performance in each individual question.

Section A

- Q1** This question was well handled and candidates were familiar with the vocabulary required.
- Q2** Candidates dealt successfully with this question and understood the vocabulary required.
- Q3** Candidates engaged well with this question and were able to accurately deduce the correct response from the stimulus material.
- Q4** This question proved difficult for the majority of candidates. The numerical term 'go leith' was not well handled and a wide range of answers were provided for Herbie's age. Similarly 'múinte' was not well known as a term and many guesses were provided which were incorrect.
- Q5** This question was well handled and candidates were familiar with the vocabulary required. A minority of candidates had difficulties accurately interpreting 'deireadh na seachtaine' for Question (d).

- Q6** This question was challenging and required very close reading of the stimulus material. There was a wide variety of answers given for each element of the question which may imply an element of guesswork by some candidates. The description of the thief in answer to Question (d) was varied and it was surprising how few candidates accurately translated the amount of money the man and his wife lost due to the unfortunate experience (£300).
- Q7** This question was well handled and candidates were familiar with the vocabulary required.
- Q8** Candidates appeared to engage well with the new translation element of the Reading paper. Question (a) was well answered and candidates appeared comfortable with the familiar vocabulary. Responses to Questions (b) and (c) were more mixed and candidates should be encouraged to make sure they correctly translate the appropriate tense in each case. Question (d) was challenging and it was not clear that the concept of 'retirement' or 'giving up football' was well understood from the Irish 'D'éirigh Seán as an pheil'.

Section B

- Q9** Candidates dealt successfully with this question and recognised the vocabulary required.
- Q10** This question was well handled and candidates were familiar with the vocabulary required.
- Q11** This question proved challenging for the majority of candidates. It required very close reading of the stimulus material and accurate identification of the correct response in each subsequent question. Careful deduction was required here and not all candidates engaged with the question successfully.
- Q12** This question required meticulous reading of the stimulus material and then the pinpointing of the individual elements which provided the correct answer to the questions in Irish. Less able candidates found this a struggle and there was a significant number of questions not answered at this level. Candidates should be reminded that it is important to focus on and identify the correct information to answer each question accurately. They should avoid copying wholesale chunks of the text in the hope that they may include the right answer.

Assessment Unit 4 Writing

The new specification for GCSE Irish was launched this year with a modular examination for the writing skill worth 25% in comparison to the 30% previously awarded for the Controlled Assessment writing element of this examination. The candidature entry for this part of the award in its first year was relatively small.

Foundation Tier

This examination now has 4 parts to complete, increasing in difficulty as the questions progress.

- Q1** This question had 2 similar parts with 5 marks for each part, requiring the candidates to list single lexical items that could be found in a school bag and clothes that could be purchased on a shopping trip respectively. Candidates scored low marks in this question and it was disappointing to note that candidates had difficulty providing single words, with many examples of anglicised versions of words such as 'pan' and 'skirta'. There were also many blanks left instead of responses to the question.

- Q2** This question required candidates to answer 5 questions posed in the target language about a trip they had been on with 2 marks available for each response. It was concerning to note that some candidates did not attempt to respond to the questions posed at all and others provided information which was totally irrelevant, such as ‘ta ceathair i mo thealach’ and as such, the response could not be credited. Misinterpretation of and/or a lack of understanding of the questions posed meant that scoring was also low in this question. In Question 2(d), those candidates who did not understand the question simply repeated the verb ‘rinne’. In Section (e), the question posed was ‘Ar mhaith leat dul ar ais arís?’ Some candidates provided a statement which could have been justification for a desired return to the location, such as ‘bhí sé suimiúil’, but this did not actually answer the set question and as such was not credited.
- Q3** This question required candidates to translate some short sentences into the target language. Candidates did not appear to be prepared for this task. Vocabulary, verb use and sentence construction proved problematic. Phrases such as ‘in the countryside’ and ‘my area’ were often omitted. Candidates should be mindful to attempt all tasks and familiarisation with basic sentence construction and general grammatical concepts, such as aspiration and prepositions is necessary. In addition, candidates should make an effort to learn vocabulary on a range of topics and focus on the use of accurate spelling. Centres are reminded that as the skill of translation is new to the assessment suite at GCSE. As this is the case, candidates should be given ample time preparing for this part of the examination.
- Q4** In this question all candidates chose Option 4(a), Context 1, involving a description of their best friend. Marks are awarded for both Communication (a possible 20) and Grammar and Structures (a possible 10). With regard to marks for Communication, it should be noted that most candidates did not provide enough detail in addressing the specified bullet points for a response in the top band at this level. While the task involved a description of a best friend, most candidates however, became confused between describing themselves and describing others. Candidates found it difficult to use third person singular possessive adjectives and personal pronouns. The past tense part of the question was answered reasonably well in comparison to the other specified bullet points which all involved the use of the present tense. While candidates were able to include some stock phrases which they had learnt off to describe what they had done with their friend, they did find it challenging to try and structure sentences spontaneously. Scores were low with regard to ‘Grammar and Structures’ as the range of grammar and structures used by candidates was very limited and often inaccurate. The use of basic language was evident in the work of a significant proportion of candidates but at times even simple language was used inaccurately. Candidates are reminded that responses for each bullet point should be equally balanced. They should be of a similar length and accuracy of response is required for each bullet point.

Higher Tier

- Q1** This question was the overlap question for this skill (Question 2 on the Foundation paper) and it required candidates to answer 5 questions posed in the target language about a trip they had been on with 2 marks available for each candidate response. A significant proportion of candidates were able to fully or partially communicate an appropriate response for each question, achieving full or almost full marks. It was disappointing to note that a small proportion of candidates did not attempt to respond at all to the questions posed or provided information which did not address the questions posed, and as such, the response could not be credited. Misinterpretation of and/or a lack of understanding of the questions posed meant that scoring for some candidates was low.

- Q2** This question was based on the candidate's daily routine and it needed to be answered in the present tense. A number of candidates used the wrong tense, thus reducing the possible marks available to them and indicating that the use of the present tense challenges some candidates. The rubric of the question asked candidates to make sure to use a variety of vocabulary. Some candidates used the same verb throughout without really changing the context of their sentences. E.g. Téim go dtí an siopa/Téim go dtí an dioscó/Téim go dtí an club óige etc. This compromised the awarding of full marks. Candidates are reminded that the use of a variety of vocabulary is key to the successful completion of this task.
- Q3** This question required candidates to translate some short sentences into the target language. Candidates did not appear to be prepared for this task. Vocabulary, verb use and sentence construction proved problematic for a significant proportion of the candidates entered for this element of the examination. Centres and candidates are reminded that to achieve full marks for each sentence a highly accurate and competent translation with only minor errors and clear meaning needs to be evident. In addition, all elements of the sentence need to be translated to achieve full marks. Many candidates omitted parts of sentences. Surprisingly, a number of candidates were not familiar with the word for 'tennis'. The state 'open' was not addressed by a number of candidates with the verb 'oscail' being used inaccurately. Similarly, candidates were also not familiar with vocabulary for many words and phrases, such as 'fresh', 'drinks', 'advice', 'available' and the verbs 'get' and 'keep'. Some candidates used substitutes such as 'nua' for fresh (úr) or drink types – uisce, tae, bainne instead of 'deochanna'. Candidates are reminded, however, that as these are not accurate translations with the same meaning they cannot be credited. Candidates should be mindful to attempt all tasks and attempt each aspect of the translation. Familiarisation with basic sentence construction and general grammatical concepts, such as aspiration and the use of prepositions is necessary. In addition, candidates should make an effort to learn vocabulary on a range of topics and focus on the use of accurate spelling. Centres are reminded that as the skill of translation is new to the assessment suite at GCSE. As this is the case, candidates should be given ample time preparing for this part of the examination.
- Q4** The majority of candidates chose Option B/Context 2 based on a description of the candidate's area. A small number of candidates chose from the other two options on the use of technology and applying for a part-time job. Marks are awarded for both Communication (20) and Grammar and Structures (10). With regard to marks for communication, it should be noted that most candidates did not provide enough detail in addressing the specified bullet points for a response at a higher level. Candidates are reminded that to attain top band marks, very clear and concise language must be used with excellent knowledge of the topic. Excellent knowledge equates with detailed knowledge, containing several points in relation to the specified bullet point with relevant and topic-related vocabulary. Also, ideas and opinions should be expressed and justified for a candidate to be awarded top band marks. This aspect was lacking in a large number of candidates' responses. Responses for each bullet point should be equally balanced with a similar length and accuracy of response is required for each bullet point. To attain the top band in Grammar and Structures, candidates need to use 'more complex language with an excellent range of appropriate vocabulary and structures'. Candidates tended to score less well in this aspect of the question as a wide range of grammar and structures and the use of more complex language were not evident in the work of a significant proportion of candidates. Candidates now have to write an extended and unprepared piece of writing for the first time in a number of years and this has undoubtedly been challenging.

Conclusion

Various points relevant to the candidates' performances in each skill area have been highlighted and it is hoped that both candidates and teachers note them and consider them not as criticism but information intended to enhance the performance of future candidates. The Senior Examining team fully understand the pressures of undertaking a new specification and encourage teachers and candidates to make use of the materials available on the Irish microsite on the CCEA website. The Core Minimum Vocabulary List which is included in the CCEA GCSE Irish specification is also a very useful learning resource. It has been updated for the new specification and the vocabulary is now presented with translation and in topic areas to make it more accessible to students.

As Chief Examiner I would like to thank the Senior Examining Team who did so much work in preparing for the new examinations. A word of thanks must also go to CCEA staff who guided and supported us during the year. The valuable work carried out by the Assistant Examiners was also very much appreciated. Finally, I wish teachers and candidates every success as they prepare for the 2019 examinations.

Contact details

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

- **Specification Support Officer: Joan Jennings**
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension: 2552, email: jjennings@ccea.org.uk)
- **Officer with Subject Responsibility: Seán McNally**
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension: 2325, email: smcnally@ccea.org.uk)



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

