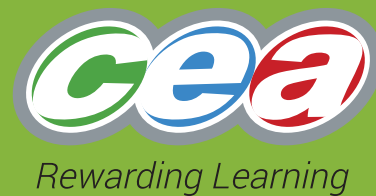


GCE



Chief Examiner's Report
Irish

Summer Series 2022



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2022 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.

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GCE Irish

Chief Examiner's Report

Subject Overview

Examiners reported that candidates approached all aspects of the Irish examinations this series with confidence and a high level of linguistic skill. There was evidence that good practice in centres ensured that candidates were very familiar with sitting formal assessments and with the requirements of the different assessment objectives in each section of the exam. All questions appeared to be accessible to all candidates, and some questions proved to be good discriminators with only the more able candidates achieving full marks.

There was no evidence of time pressure in any of the papers, and examiners reported that the best answers were planned and, in some cases, revised to reach the higher mark bands.

At AS Level, students appeared to have bridged the gap between GCSE and AS Level very well. Section C in Paper 2 continues to be a good discriminator, with the better candidates showing a flair for the grammar of Irish.

At A2 Level, candidates continued to produce some excellent work which, in some cases, far exceeded the standard required for this level.

Teachers and candidates are to be commended for the standard of work submitted this year at AS and A2 Level.

Assessment Unit AS 1 Speaking

Overview

Centres prepared diligently and appropriately for the AS oral component, and Visiting Examiners reported no issues for concern.

Examiners were warmly welcomed by schools, and appropriate accommodation was in place. The Briefing Meeting continues to be a good opportunity for the examiner to put students at their ease, and candidates should be encouraged to attend these.

Centres had the option of choosing whether their candidates would enter for the oral examination. It was clear that the majority of candidates prepared just as they would have done in previous years. Several examiners commented that there were also a few candidates who seemed to have focussed their efforts on the other papers in the knowledge that the best result from two pathways would stand.

Schools should be aware that the Examiner who visits the school may, at times, be accompanied by the Principal Moderator, and that this is a normal part of the examination process for the purposes of quality control.

Presentation

The presentation component of the AS oral continues to provide candidates with access to the full range of marks, and many candidates produce highly-detailed, knowledgeable and informed pieces of work. Centres must remember, however, that the AO4 marks are available to those candidates who relate their presentation to the culture and society of the countries and communities where the language is spoken. A lengthy description of foreign holidays, for example, will gain few if any marks in AO4.

Conversation

In the general conversation there were many candidates whose fluency and preparedness meant that their performance far exceeded the required standard for full marks at AS level. Centres and candidates are to be congratulated for achieving these high levels of performance.

There were some candidates who relied too heavily on GCSE tracts of pre-prepared speech which limited their ability to answer specific questions. Examiners will often allow some leeway to use these set-pieces at the beginning of the examination to allow the candidate to feel settled, but candidates should be aware that the examiner will aim to find the candidate's highest level.

In terms of the procedure of the examination, centres are reminded that candidates have access to the 60 word pro-forma (AS Preparation Sheet) during their presentation. Centres should also have a copy of the AS Preparation Sheet available to the visiting examiner. This is a very useful tool for candidates who lose their place or become unnerved during the examination.

Assessment Unit AS 2 Listening, Reading and Use of Language

Overview

Candidates demonstrated a range of abilities within both papers. A good percentage of candidates were able to access the top marks in the listening, reading and writing components, while others found some aspects challenging, especially when being assessed under AO3.

Section A Listening

Generally this section was answered very well by all candidates, and the paper was successful in discriminating between candidates of varying abilities. Even the weaker candidates were able to access some of the material while others showed a very high level of understanding.

- Q1** Overall, this question was very well handled, and most candidates gained between 6 and 10/10.
- (a) *Aire* – this proved challenging regarding spelling although most candidates spelt *sláinte* correctly.
 - (b) *Toitíní* was answered correctly by most candidates.
 - (c) *Conspóideach* and *conspóide* were generally well spelt and well answered.
 - (d) This question was well answered.
 - (e) Most candidates were able to spell the answers correctly.
 - (f) Candidates had a choice of answers and most were able to answer this section.
 - (g) This question posed very few difficulties.
 - (h) This question was answered very well.
- Q2** Overall, this question was very well understood and showed a very high level of understanding. Most candidates gained between 10 and 15/15. The language of the paper was at the level of the candidates. They showed a good level of comprehension and were able to gain high marks.

- (a) Some candidates misinterpreted the question ‘when’.
- (c) *Bríomhar* and *fuinniúil* proved challenging. Although the most able candidates were able to answer this question.

Section B Reading

Generally this section was answered very well by all candidates, and the paper was successful in discriminating between candidates of varying abilities. Even the weaker candidates were able to access some of the material, while others showed a very high level of understanding.

- Q1** This question was answered well by most candidates as they are awarded marks for answers taken directly from the text. Candidates are advised not to lift whole paragraphs from the text as it may not always demonstrate understanding of the question posed.
- Q2** This question gave candidates the opportunity to show their understanding of the language under A02. Most candidates manipulated the translation very well and were able to gain between 10 and 20/20. Some challenging vocabulary included *foilsíodh*, *de chuspóir acu*, *na hardáin éagsúla chumarsáide*, *comharthaí* and *leas*.

Section C Use of Language

- Q1** This question proved very challenging for the candidates and only the more able candidates dealt well with choosing the correct word and inserting it in the correct place in the sentence.
- Q2** This question was generally very well handled although Part (e) was the most challenging for the candidates.
- Q3** This question was generally very well answered.
 - (a) Some candidates answered with *thug* instead of *thairg*.
 - (d) *Tar* proved challenging for some.
- Q4** This question proved challenging for some candidates. Only the candidates with a clear understanding of the genitive case were able to manipulate this question. Teachers are reminded to check the list of grammar structures for this level as detailed in the Specification.
- Q5** This question was generally very well answered. Candidates, however, did find Part (a) and Part (d) challenging.

Assessment Unit AS 3 Extended Writing

Overview

There was abundant evidence in the answers submitted that candidates had been given the opportunity to write extended pieces of writing in the target language, and teachers are to be commended for maintaining good practice throughout. It is obvious from answers submitted that candidates enjoy studying *Na Gearrscannáin* and can give detailed views and insights into the themes and characters, not to mention the intentions of the film makers. A few centres study Anne and these answers were generally good.

Teachers and candidates are reminded that very long answers generally lead to repetition and irrelevant material, and will therefore not access the higher mark bands. Longer essays also tend to transgress under AO3. The rote learning of essays is to be discouraged because they do not always fit the bullet points on the exam paper. Candidates are reminded that

they need to deal with all three bullet points if they are to access the higher mark bands.

Long introductions serve no purpose and cannot be credited under any of the AOs. Candidates should start straight away to address the first bullet point. It is advisable to mark essays in class with students using the mark scheme so that students can see where they can gain optimum marks. Top marks in AO4 will only be awarded to answers where “Detailed knowledge, views, arguments and insights are presented clearly”. It is not enough to tell the story of the film or the character if your answer is to be in the top band. There needs to be some level of insight into why a character is presented a certain way, or why a writer chose to take the plot in a certain direction, for example.

- Q1** The majority of candidates answered the questions on *Yu Ming Is Ainm Dom*. Candidates showed that they had been taught to address all three bullet points in equal measure and this was credited under AO2.
- (a)** This question was well handled by the candidates who chose it. All three bullet points were addressed appropriately.
 - (b)** This question proved more challenging for candidates. The second and third bullet points were not handled well. *An dearcadh atá ag daoine in Éirinn ar an Ghaeilge* sometimes led to candidates giving their opinion on how the Irish language is viewed by people in Ireland in general. Candidates are reminded that the bullet points relate to the primary question on the film and not to normal society.
- Q2** This question was generally very well handled by the candidates who attempted it.
- (a)** In the first bullet point, students had difficulty with *sula dtosaíonn an scrúdú béil*.
 - (b)** This question was well handled by most candidates, but only the more able dealt well with giving their own opinion on how the theme of fear was handled in the film.
- Q3** This question was generally well handled and *Clare Sa Spéir* continues to be a popular choice in centres.
- (a)** This proved to be the more popular option of the two options, and students dealt well with how the character develops through the course of the film.
 - (b)** This option was generally well handled, but some candidates found the third bullet point challenging.
- Q4** Overall, the answers produced were very good although this text is not as popular as the short films.
- (a)** This question was not as popular as Option (b), but those who attempted it produced solid answers that showed an insight into the theme. All three bullet points were dealt with well.
 - (b)** This was the more popular option by far and candidates produced some very good work. Some weaker answers gave all the information known about the character and made no attempt to manipulate the material in a way that answered the bullet points.

Assessment Unit A2 1 Speaking

Overview

Centres prepared diligently and appropriately for the A2 oral component. This has always been a strong element of the exam for students and this year was no different.

Accommodation in the centres was very good and visiting examiners recorded their thanks for the hospitality they received in the various centres.

Centres had the option of choosing whether their candidates would enter for the oral examination. It was clear that the majority of candidates prepared just as they would have done in previous years. Several examiners commented that there were also a few candidates who seemed to have focussed their efforts on the other papers in the knowledge that their best result from the two pathways would stand.

Schools should be aware that the Examiner who visits the school may, at times, be accompanied by the Principal Moderator, and that this is a normal part of the examination process for the purposes of quality control.

Discussion

The Introduction and Discussion component of the A2 oral continues to provide candidates with access to the full range of marks, and many candidates produce highly-detailed, knowledgeable and informed pieces of work. Centres must remember, however, that the AO4 marks are available to those candidates who relate their introduction and discussion to an aspect of Irish culture, a period of history or a region, as specified in the very useful document GCE (A2) Modern Languages, Instructions and Guidance to Teachers and Candidates, which can be viewed on the CCEA website. A lengthy discussion of an individual or a single entity is not advisable.

Centres are reminded that the five bullet points of the Summary Sheet are to aid the examiner in preparing for the discussion. It may also be used to help candidates who lose their way or become unnerved during the discussion. It is not intended to provide a pre-determined set of questions, and there is no requirement to cover all five points during the discussion. It is sometimes the case that the discussion evolves largely from the first point.

Conversation

In the general conversation there were many candidates whose fluency and preparedness meant that their performance far exceeded the required standard for full marks at A2 level. Centres and candidates are to be congratulated for achieving these high levels of performance this year.

There were some candidates who relied too heavily on their native or near-native fluency, and showed a lack of preparedness for the examination. For these candidates, the oral is often an opportunity to showcase their abilities, but some are under-achieving because they are slow to give and justify opinions, develop ideas and use appropriate specific vocabulary. Teachers and students are reminded to use the mark schemes for this component as guidance.

Assessment Unit A2 2 Listening and Reading

Overview

The candidates performed mostly very well in this section. The paper was accessible to all candidates and there was a good range of marks.

Section A Listening

Q1 Overall, the answers produced were very good.

- (a) Some candidates had difficulty with the spelling of *dul i ngleic le* and *le huaigneas*. The more able candidates were able to score full marks.
- (c) Some candidates left out the word *beagnach* and therefore lost one of the two marks. Candidates are reminded that where two marks are available, two pieces of information will be required.

Q2 This question was dealt with well by most candidates.

- (d) Some candidates had difficulty with the word *licence*.
- (f) Some candidates left out the type of fish.

Section B Reading

Overview

This paper allowed the candidates to show their flair for the language. The most able candidates were able to gain top marks in all sections. The paper allowed for differentiation and examiners reported that they used the full range of marks.

Q1 This question proved to be challenging for all but the most able candidates. Part (b) and Part (d) proved the most challenging.

Q2 This question was manipulated very well by most candidates. The candidates can use the language from the passage which makes the paper accessible.

Q3 The answers to this question demonstrated that candidates are adept at reading and summarizing passages, and they were able to access the top bands in many cases. Where candidates performed very well, they were able to summarize the main points within the word limit.

Q4 The translation into the target language remains the most challenging part of this unit. The most able candidates were able to present the original information using excellent grammar and structures, but it was evident that weaker candidates struggled with rendering some of the vocabulary and complex structures accurately. Even where minor errors occurred, the candidates could still gain 4/5 marks for the section.

Assessment Unit A2 3 Extended Writing

Overview

Once again, it was reassuring to mark pieces of extended writing in the target language that exemplified best practice in this area of the specification. It was obvious that candidates had been given opportunities to discuss texts at length and prepare answers under exam conditions.

Some essays were exceptional and showed an aptitude for the study of literature far beyond this level. As always, there were some weak answers which showed a lack of preparation on behalf of the students since other candidates in the same centre had been taught to a high level.

This year again, there were essays that were learned by heart, and this practice should be discouraged. The essay doesn't always fit the question asked, and cannot, therefore, reach the higher mark bands in either AO2 or AO4. Under AO2, the essay must remain focussed on the requirements of the question throughout: "Material relates very well to the task." If, in a poetry exam, for example, the candidate writes everything they know about the poet and all themes covered by them in the poems on the CCEA specification, it will not show an "excellent understanding of the requirements of the question". Under AO4, an essay cannot be general because it must show "detailed views, arguments and insights" about the text in question. To gain very high marks, candidates and teachers are reminded that it is not enough to write all you know about the text. An essay on a poem, for example, must exhibit some understanding of poetic techniques, while, similarly, an essay on *Lá Fhéile Míchil* must take some account of the fact that it is a play. Some high level candidates are not gaining top marks because they fail to present insights and views but rely heavily on relaying the events of the play or the traits of the character.

There was no evidence that candidates were pressed for time, and examiners commented that some candidates had time to plan their work before starting to write.

With regard to AO3 – target language, it is worth noting that some answers were exceptional and far exceeded the requirements for this level. In these cases, full marks were awarded. There were some answers which, despite the candidate's obvious fluency in the language, only scored moderately well under AO3. Teachers and candidates are reminded that to achieve marks within Band 5 under AO3, essays need to exhibit "frequent examples of accurate and complex structures". Increasingly, candidates are relying on fluency in the language and spellings/phrases such as these are common: *Ní chuig/thuig leis deileáil leis/ Níl clú dá léad aige/Níor leor sé léi* and the medical miracle that was – *Thiocfadh léi díomá a fheiceáil ar a ae!*

Teachers are asked to make candidates aware of the fact that if they are asked for their opinion on a character, the examiners are not looking for a moral judgement on the character; they are looking for an opinion as to how the character has been presented, a view as to why they are presented as they are and, perhaps, some level of insight as to what the writer was trying to achieve in presenting the character in this way.

Q1 Anam na Teanga

- (a) There were some very insightful answers written on this short story, but the weaker candidates re-told the story. Candidates should be able to pinpoint the finer details of the language and the juxtapositioning of the life of the old man with that of the new-born.
- (b) As mentioned above, there were those who gave judgemental opinions on the son in the story, but there were also some excellent essays that dealt with the context of the story and were able to plot very effectively the development of the relationship the son has with his father.

Q2 Lá Fhéile Míchíl

- (a) This question was answered very well. Students showed that they had adequate knowledge of the theme and were able to offer mature opinions on the nature and causes of the tragedy.
- (b) There were some excellent essays on this option. Teachers and students are to be commended for their insights into the character. Some students drew very complex parallels between the Irish situation and the France of Mère Michèle's past, but pinpointed how her lack of understanding of the differences led to her role in the tragedy that befalls Nuala and Emmet. There were, however, some essays that summarised her role in the play and offered very little by way of insight.

Q3 Filíocht

- (a) This option was not answered by many candidates.
- (b) This option was by far the more popular. As mentioned in the overview above, some candidates do not gain the high marks they are capable of by failing to mention poetic techniques such as poetic voice, alliteration, assonance, imagery, rhythm and rhyme. Some candidates are relying too heavily on summarising the content of the poem.

Some answers gave overly long introductions on the life and work of the poet. This gains no marks and wastes valuable time in an exam situation. Conclusions, in turn, tend to repeat points already made, and are in danger of transgressing under the Band 5 mark scheme for AO2: "minimum repetition".

The more vague answers concentrated on the island and on Ó Direáin's love for the island, but made no reference to the context of the poem – that it was written at Christmas 1942. Some answers gave the impression that the candidate had been preparing for a general essay on Ó Direáin's sense of place and they were thrown by this specific poem.

Some essays were excellent but there were varying degrees of detailed view and insights. Teachers are advised to use the CCEA Mark Schemes as common practice when marking students' essays. This will let students see what they need to do to gain optimum marks under each assessment objective.

Contact details

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