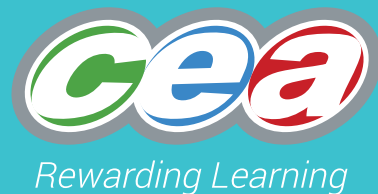


GCSE



**Chief Examiner's and  
Principal Moderator's Report  
Gaeilge**

Summer Series 2023





## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2023 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](http://www.ccea.org.uk).



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## GCSE GAEILGE

### Chief Examiner's and 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. Centres approach this task differently; in some centres, candidates choose their own topic, and this is generally successful as the candidates choose a topic in which they have a specific interest and which they can research easily. In other centres the candidates all prepare the same topic; although there is some merit in this approach, the discussions tend to be less individual and lack the spontaneity that is so refreshing. Candidates who chose their own topics chose topics in which they had a genuine interest, or which related directly to their lives. Topics included *Spórt, Polaitíocht, Gaeloideachais, Fadhbanna sóisialta, Brú scoile*, and research techniques varied from internet research to interviews with Principals and past pupils, sports personalities, peer surveys, government reports etc. 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 richness about it. The more-challenged candidates spoke fluently enough, but their language tended to be grammatically inaccurate and littered with *Béarlachas* with little evidence of *saibhreas*. Again, the more-challenged candidates tended not to translate relevant terminology into Irish and subsequently sentences such as *Tá an platform sin maith*. In a researched discussion, it would be expected that topic-specific terminology would be translated into Irish and used confidently. Frequent errors tended to be *sílim go bhfuil sé ceoltóir maith, ba mhaith liom 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 in this knowledge centres would be advised to make an effort to address them – if we keep on accepting them, these inaccuracies 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; or
- (iii) excessive background noise from corridors, playgrounds, 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 pupil-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/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 do get the experience of partaking in a 'group' as opposed to a one to one discussion with the teacher. Alternatively, perhaps AS or A2 students could be used to participate in the Group Discussion. The moderators who visited centres would like to thank those centres for the welcome and the hospitality afforded to them on their visits.

### General comments

Our concern still remains the difference in the standard of language between prepared and unprepared elements of the tasks, direct translation and colloquialisms 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 *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 bedded in, 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. If teachers feel that there is anything that CCEA can do in terms of providing training/resources etc. to address this ongoing problem, they should not hesitate in contacting us.

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 generally consistent. In some instances, the adjustment was because centres were too lenient, especially in Task 1 – centres do need to be aware that candidates need to show evidence of genuine research, and they also need to make an effort to use language that shows development and richness of vocabulary and grammar. In centres where marks were lowered, the adjustment was made because candidates either showed evidence of little preparation or the level of language they produced had many inaccuracies and were prolific with *Béarlachas* or English constructions or vocabulary.



## Component 2 Reading and Writing in Gaeilge

On behalf of the moderation team, I would like to congratulate centres on the overall standard of both their pupils' work and the accuracy of marking. 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 were marking the tasks fairly and accurately. The following report is designed to support teachers in future cycles and therefore should enhance the opportunity for candidates to achieve top marks.

### **Reading and Writing (*Léamh agus Scríobh – An Téama: An tUaigneas agus An Brón*)**

Overall, the literary response task was completed to a very high standard in most cases. The impressive amount of personal engagement and analysis by candidates this year demonstrated a rich learning experience for those pupils. The point – evidence – explain – expand model (PEEE) was used very effectively by most pupils who achieved top band marks for AO2. Furthermore, it was noted that this enabled candidates to clearly demonstrate 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;
- A high degree of understanding of the question;
- Real personal engagement and pertinent references.

The pupils who achieved Band 3 marks for AO2 struck an even balance between the two texts. Some of those candidates who did not achieve Band 3 marks for AO2 tended to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of one text and less knowledge of the other, resulting in a somewhat unbalanced piece.

In terms of AO3, the moderation team enjoyed reading some rich and accurate use of Irish, and centres must be highly commended for this. We were particularly impressed by how natural and appropriate the use of idiom was in the best pieces of work. In order for those candidates who did not achieve Band 3 marks to do so, they would need to attempt more complex structures. The present tense should be accurately used throughout.

As stated in the mark scheme, it is possible to achieve top marks even if there are some errors where more complex structures are used. Therefore, we encourage candidates to attempt such structures. As a moderation team, we are stringent in our adherence to the entire mark scheme and the instructions regarding marking and moderation, therefore we fully embrace positive marking and are sensitive to what can be reasonably expected from a GCSE pupil.

### **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 and is strongly encouraged. 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. Centres should annotate why marks were given, rather than highlighting errors by candidates. The moderation team would like to thank all centres for ensuring annotation was carried out.

## General

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.

## 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 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 to 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, and seemed to find the paper more difficult. The papers differentiated well between the candidature, and the more able 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 smaller percentage awarded full marks than previously, although there was some difficulty in awarding higher level marks in some centres as candidates did not 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 and that three marks means that three pieces of information are required for full marks. Question 2 was generally less well answered as in previous years, particularly by those less able candidates, although examiners did notice a notable improvement in the standard of answers for Question 2(b). There was also too much literal translation of Question 3. However, overall, the quality of responses ranged from excellent to good to mediocre, with some candidates omitting large chunks of the translation or all of it in some cases.

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 are still leaving 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 limited to good to excellent. All essay choices were selected, and the quality of responses varied as described above. 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/misspelling/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 their high fluency, and candidates again should be advised to examine past papers for re-occurring idiom and structures e.g. *is iomaí uair, mar sin féin, mar gheall ar, gan fágtha agam ach.*

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 less evidence of linguistic features to support cohesion and coherence.

Some essays tended to be rather limited in terms of development of topic/ theme, although, again, fewer than in previous years. In some instances, effective communication was lacking. Again, as in other years, 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

- Q1** This was generally well answered; however, some candidates misinterpreted the question or didn't read it properly. Part 1(a) was generally well answered, and in Part 1(b) there was a varying degree of response with some answers being repeated which led to it being less well answered and some repetition of previous answers. 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 good. Candidates should also be aware of the marks allocated for each question and, where three to four marks are allocated to a question, then there are generally three or four 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.
- Q2** Some responses proved to be less well answered by some candidates. Some candidates excelled while the majority had average to good responses, with some candidates writing about the author's use of colour and pictures when they were asked about the use of language. Although, as mentioned above, there was a notable improvement in the standard of answers for Part (b), in Part (a) some candidates seemed to just read the first part of the instructions and described how the homeless lived instead of explaining the author's attitude to the government. Responses need to be succinct and to the point, and would have benefitted from more engagement with the text. Candidates should still be encouraged to attempt all parts of a question, and refrain from leaving blank spaces, and to also refer to the use of language, author's technique and style as far as possible. They should also familiarise themselves with the example given in the CCEA booklet as well as mark schemes which highlight the type of response required for this question.

**Q3** Responses to this question were varied but generally of a good standard, with some candidates attaining excellent marks. However, it did also prove to be difficult, but this proved to be good for distinguishing and differentiating between the various abilities. As in other years, less able candidates had difficulty with terminology, and gave very literal translations; while some 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 placenames were surprisingly inaccurate by quite a wide section of candidates. 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 frequent omitted words/phrases, or even a whole paragraph, hindered the overall sense of the passage. Again, several candidates omitted this question, either by not attempting it or by running out of time.

## Component 4

## Writing in Gaeilge

### Paper 2

- Q1** 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. Responses were spread fairly evenly over all three question choices in Question 1. Responses varied from excellent to mediocre. Most responses fell into Band 3 for AO3 (i) and AO3 (ii) and Band 2 for AO3 (iii).
- (a)** Candidates wrote mostly about their own experience of *an Ghaelscolaíocht*, and in a lot of responses candidates listed a daily school routine rather than highlighting the benefits or drawbacks of *an Ghaelscolaíocht* in general.
  - (b)** Candidates who performed well in this question set out arguments in support of the motion clearly. The weaker candidates spoke about the role their parents have today in bringing up children with no comparison made to the role parents had in the past.
  - (c)** This question proved to be a popular choice with responses ranging from very good to mediocre. Candidates who performed well highlighted arguments for/against the motion clearly. Weaker candidates concentrated on describing their experience of *Gaeloideachas* from the perspective of their own school, and would have been better to have chosen Part 1(a) where they would have gained a higher mark for a similar response.
- Q2** This question was generally well answered by most candidates. Communication was good but the usual errors were in evidence in both Question 2 and 3, *an chopail*, literal translation, sentence structure i.e. no verb at the start of a sentence, *saorbhriathar* etc. 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.

**Q3** This proved to be a good discriminatory question, where the stronger candidates performed very well and the weaker candidates had difficulty with terminology and structure. As well as this, punctuation, use of full stops and capital letters are still 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.

I would like to thank all the teachers involved in the teaching of this subject and my colleagues on the team for their continued hard work, commitment and professionalism. I would particularly like to thank all the pupils for their efforts in such difficult times. *Go raibh gach rath Dé oraibh.*

## Contact details

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