

Language Centre
National University of Ireland, Maynooth

Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge

Guidelines/Specifications for
Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)



Guidelines/Specification for Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)

Purpose

Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 is a general proficiency examination of Irish. It is aimed primarily at adult learners of Irish. It is suitable for people in Ireland or abroad who are studying Irish at night classes or attending other similar courses. It is also suitable for those engaged in private study. In short, the examination is for all those who would like a qualification to attest to their ability in Irish. The examination itself, is not however, tied to any particular course of study.

In July 2011 the Department of Education and Skills accepted Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2* as meeting the Irish language entry requirement for primary education programmes. More information on where this examination is recognized is available on www.teg.ie

General information

- The examination for full accreditation is held once every year, usually in April or May in NUI Maynooth and in other centres throughout Ireland, in Europe, in the USA and Canada. Contact the Language Centre if you are interested in partial accreditation. Application forms and all current information relating to dates, examination centres, etc are available on this website.
- We work on the assumption that candidates who take these exams will have various first languages. On that basis, it was decided to write the examination questions and all guidelines in Irish.
- Candidates will not be allowed to bring a dictionary into the examination hall.
- It is important that candidates be aware of the examination's layout and the type of questions in each component. Therefore, candidates should use the sample papers to familiarize themselves with the question types in this examination.
- Consult the Frequently Asked Questions section of this website if you have any questions. Further information can also be obtained from The Language Centre, NUI Maynooth, Co Kildare, Ireland (01) 7083737 or info@teg.ie
- Candidates and teachers are also advised to study the following documents:

Siollabas Mheánleibhéal 2

Scrúduithe Samplacha Mheánleibhéal 2

Tuairisc ar Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2

The level of Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)

The level of *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2* generally corresponds to Level B2 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001). It is estimated that learners who have successfully completed *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1* will be able to undertake *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2* after approximately 500-600 extra hours of study. Below is a short description of the attainments of *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* learners in the various skills.

Speaking and listening comprehension

Learners ought to be able to participate actively in ordinary conversation with another/others, provided the conversation is held at a normal pace. In such a conversation, they will be capable of coping with a wide variety of subject-matter, as laid down in the syllabus, as well as with other subjects of particular interest to them. Learners at meánleibhéal 2 will be equipped with the necessary language skills to understand and engage in discourse and coherent argument on a given subject to a greater extent than one would expect from learners at meánleibhéal 1. At this level, learners can exchange, check and confirm information. They can comment on the personal importance of particular occurrences and experiences, convey their outlook and defend their point of view with relevant examples and arguments. Not only will they be able to express themselves satisfactorily but they will have the appropriate skills to deal with the unexpected as it arises.

Reading comprehension

Usually one could expect learners at meánleibhéal 2 to be able to cope with many different types of written texts which deal directly or indirectly with the topics outlined on the syllabus and other subjects in which they have a particular interest. One would expect learners to be able to understand the main points in ordinary texts and that they will be able to draw conclusions from and understand the indirect implications of texts. With regard to letters and e-mail messages, one would expect that learners would have little difficulty in understanding matters closely related to their own area of interest. They should be able to make appropriate use of dictionaries and learning resources (online and other) to help them in relation to specialized terms or words/phrases outside of their area of specialization.

Writing

Meánleibhéal 2 learners should be able to undertake a wide range of written tasks, once the subject matter pertains to predictable topics. Learners will, for example, know how to write a formal or informal letter; the way to start and finish a letter, address, dates, punctuation and so forth. There should be no substantial inaccuracy in it, provided that the subject matter itself is reasonably simple and predictable. The learners will have a good grasp of grammar. They will not make the kind of grammar mistakes that could lead to serious misunderstandings. They will use a wide range of vocabulary covering the majority of general topics and specific subject matter in which they have a particular interest. They will be reasonably accurate with regard to spelling and punctuation but it is probable that the influence of their mother-tongue may be detected in their writing.

Language specifications

Comprehensive details regarding the topics, functions, vocabulary, grammatical structures, communication strategies etc on which this examination is based is available in *Siollabas Mheánleibhéal 2* which you can download from this website.

Grading

The final mark a candidate receives in *Scrúdú Meánleibhéal 2* is an aggregate of the marks obtained in each of the four components of the examination (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Candidates will also receive a breakdown of the mark obtained in each component. There is no minimum pass mark for individual components.

<i>Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)</i>	
80-100%	Pass with Distinction
65-79%	Pass with Merit
50-64%	Pass
0-49%	Fail

Examination components

The examination includes four components, listening, speaking, reading and writing. The marks are distributed as follows:

<i>Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)</i>	
• Speaking	25%
• Listening	25%
• Reading comprehension	25%
• Writing & Use of Irish	25%

The different components are described in detail below. Candidates are advised to carefully study the sample papers also available on this website.

Listening comprehension

General information

- This part of the exam lasts for approximately 35 minutes.
- The three main dialects will feature but none of the speakers will have a very strong regional accent.
- Candidates will have five minutes to read the questions before the recording is played.
- Each item will be played twice **except Question 4**, which will only be heard once.
- There will be a break between each item being played and additional time between the questions.
- Where written answers are required, it is not necessary to write complete sentences.
- Where written answers are called for, the candidates must supply them in Irish. Marks will not be deducted for misspelling or incorrect grammar as long as what is written is comprehensible.
- Candidates will hear some redundant speech and some phrases not included in the *Siollabas Mheánleibhéal 2* but should be able to employ suitable strategies in order to understand the meaning of the texts.
- In preparation for this part of the exam, learners should hear a wide range of listening comprehension texts in class. See *Siollabas Mheánleibhéal 2*.
- Candidates are asked to take care with their handwriting.
- There are 4 questions in the listening comprehension component.

<i>Section</i>	<i>Number of items</i>	<i>Type of text</i>	<i>Format of answers</i>	<i>Number of marks</i>	<i>Focus of the examination</i>
1	6	3 news items (national/international news)	Short answer/ multiple choice answer	12	Listening to find specific information.
2	10-12	6 different texts (conversations, excerpts from radio programmes, messages on answering machines, and announcements).	Short answer/ multiple choice answer	12	Listening for the general meaning and gist, to identify relationships and place and context of interaction.
3	6	Excerpt from a radio interview, a conversation or a debate.	Short answer/ multiple choice answer	12	Listening for specific information and to identify speakers' views and opinions.
4	6	Monologue (directions, presentation, excerpt from a lecture, description of a journey, etc.)	Fill the gaps in 6 six sentences with the correct information	12	Listening to find key specific information.

Marking

- Each question in each section carries two marks. This gives a total of 48 marks, which represents 25% of the whole examination.
- In multiple choice questions candidates are reminded that they can only tick one box. Candidates who tick more than one box will not be awarded any marks, regardless of whether or not they choose the correct answer. In the short-answer questions spelling inaccuracies are accepted as long as the words written are recognisable.

Reading comprehension**General information**

- The reading and writing components last two hours and thirty minutes in total. The time that candidates should allocate to the different components or individual tasks is not specified.
- Where written answers are called for, the candidates must supply them in Irish. Marks will not be deducted for misspelling as long as what is written is comprehensible.

- At this level, candidates are expected to be able to use appropriate strategies to arrive at the meaning of a word or phrase. They will, for example, have to use context and examine what comes before and after the unknown word.
- In preparation for this part of the examination, learners should experience a wide range of texts and tasks in class. See *Siollabas Mheánleibhéal 2*.
- Candidates are asked to take care with their handwriting.
- There are 3 questions in the reading comprehension component.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Number of items</i>	<i>Type of text</i>	<i>Format of answers</i>	<i>Number of marks</i>	<i>Focus of the examination</i>
1	6	Factual paragraph or opinion piece from newspaper or magazine, or extract from a diary, book, etc.	Multiple choice matching (choose 6 from 8 options)	12	Reading to identify the main points, at paragraph level.
2	7	Extract from an article in a newspaper, magazine, book or webpage.	Multiple choice answer (4 options) / short answer	14	Reading for detailed understanding and to identify views and opinions. There will be a general question about the article itself, and questions about specific words and phrases in the article.
3	7	Article or interview from a newspaper or magazine, or extract from a book or diary	Cloze test (choose 7 sentences from 9)	14	Reading to identify textual structure and development.

Marking

- Each question in each section carries two marks. This gives a total of 40 marks, which represents 25% of the whole examination.
- Candidates are strongly advised to adhere to the instructions in order to minimise their chances of losing marks.
- Where written answers are called for, the candidates must supply them in Irish. Marks will not be deducted for misspelling as long as what is written is comprehensible.

The writing and use of Irish examination

General information

- The reading and writing components last two hours and thirty minutes in total. The time that candidates should allocate to the different components or individual tasks is not specified.
- In preparation for this part of the exam, learners should have regular opportunities to work on a wide range of writing tasks.
- Candidates are asked to take care with their handwriting.
- There are four tasks in this component and candidates must attempt **all four**.

Task	Number of items	Type of text	Format of answers	Number of marks	Focus of the examination
1	1	Formal or informal letter, email, report, application.	Guided writing	30	Grammatical and structural accuracy, textual coherence.
2	1	Article, review, story, essay, letter, description.	Open	30	Grammatical and structural accuracy, textual coherence.
3	15	Newspaper or online magazine article, blog.	Editing text	30	Grammatical and structural accuracy.
4	6	Sentences.	Translation	30	Grammatical and structural accuracy.

Additional information

Task 1

- Candidates must read a letter, note, message or e.mail and reply answering whatever questions were asked or giving the information sought. Pointers will be given to direct candidates on what to write in the note/e.mail/postcard. Candidates should ensure that they cover each of those pointers in their answers.
- Candidates should take the chance to show their range of ability in the language. A list of questions or a series of statements will not suffice. They should be able to develop the task's keywords without borrowing long sections from the original text.
- Candidates should write approximately **160-180 words** in this task.

Task 2

- Candidates must write a letter, a review, a description, a story, an article or essay.
- No specialist knowledge or familiarity with a subject is required.
- Candidates should write approximately **160-180 words** within the examination booklet.
- The purpose of the text and its target readership will be explained.

Task 3

- Candidates must edit one or two sections of texts.

- They must identify and correct **15 errors**.
- The errors are spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.
- The candidates must write the line number on which the error appears, give the word(s) they believe to be incorrect and then provide the correct version. For example:

<i>Line No</i>	<i>Error</i>	<i>Correction</i>
1	fhill	d'fhill

- Some lines may contain more than one error.

Task 4

- Please note that from 2015 there will be an extra question in this section.
- In this extra question candidates will have to translate 6 short sentences into Irish.
- Each sentence will carry 5 marks. This means that the new question will carry 30 marks and the entire Scríbhneoireacht agus Úsáid na Gaeilge section will now carry 120 marks.
- Candidates will have 15 extra minutes to attempt this section.

Marking

- The writing test carries 90 marks, which accounts for 25% of the total exam marks.
- In task one and in task two, assessment is based on the following: accuracy and range of structures used, vocabulary, content, structure/layout and appropriacy.
- Task three: One mark is awarded for every error identified. Another mark is given if the correction itself is completely correct in terms of spelling and grammar. Candidates should not provide more than 15 answers. One mark will be deducted for identifying items which are not in fact incorrect.

See the following examples:

Example 1: *níos suimiúla*: correction = *suimiúla*. A completely accurate correction, therefore 2 marks for identifying the error and correcting it with complete accuracy.

Example 2: *post múinteoireacht*: correction = *post mhúinteoireacht*. 1 mark is given because although the error was identified, the attempted correction is itself incorrect.

Example 3: *inár gcónaí i...*: correction = *inár chónaí*. Here the candidate loses one mark because the item identified was not in fact incorrect.

It should be noted that candidates cannot receive less than 0 and that the marks received in this question do not influence the marks a candidate receives in Tasks 1 and 2.

The oral examination

General information

- Only one candidate is examined at any one time. The examination is carried out by two examiners. One of the examiners will concentrate exclusively on assessment throughout the examination and will not take part in the conversation. The other examiner will also be attentive to the candidate's performance but will ask the candidate questions and administer the tasks the candidate must perform.
- Every oral examination is recorded.
- Candidates at this level are expected to be able to take an active part in a conversation and to deal with a wide range of subject matters that is of interest to them as well as those subjects outlined in the syllabus. Candidates at this level will be expected to be able to develop their answers, and to give reasons, examples and justifications as necessary. Candidates are also expected to be able to organize their thoughts and what they want to say correctly and to express themselves clearly and appropriately. They will have a wide range of strategies to deal with all aspects of communication.
- Below is a description of the layout of *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2*.

<i>Part</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Type of task</i>	<i>Language functions</i>
1	5-6 minutes	The candidate will be asked questions about general topics: for example background, hobbies, work, learning Irish etc. Candidates will also have to answer questions and give their opinions about current affairs, for example the media, social and legal affairs, politics etc. Expert knowledge of these matters will not be expected.	Giving information, and expressing and defending opinions.
2	4-5 minutes	The candidate is given a series of six topic-related pictures and has two minutes to look at them. The candidate chooses two of the pictures to compare and contrast. The candidate will also have to answer questions posed by the examiner.	Comparing and contrasting, expressing opinions, explaining, providing justifications etc.

Marking

- The speaking component accounts for 25% of the total marks for this examination. Candidates are assessed on a sustained performance during the whole examination and not on individual tasks.
- Examiners award marks according to five analytical criteria. Vocabulary, Grammar, Pronunciation, Fluency and Communication (this refers to candidates' ability to use communication strategies).

Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2): Guidelines

- Examiners receive comprehensive training and standardization of marks is maintained by monitoring of examiners' performance.