

Lárionad na Gaeilge: Taighde, Teagasc agus Tástáil

Maynooth University



*Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2 (A2)*

Chief Examiner's Report  
**2017**



Ollscoil  
Mhá Nuad  
Ollscoil na hÉireann  
Má Nuad



An Roinn  
Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta  
Department of  
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



Crannchur  
Náisiúnta



## Background

The European Certificate in Irish (*Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge, TEG*) is an examination system for adult learners. The system is broadly based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)* (Council of Europe, 2001). The system was developed as a resource for adult learners who wish to have a recognized qualification in Irish. *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2* was held for the first time in May 2005. The examination is based on a comprehensive syllabus which is available on the website [http://www.teg.ie/fileupload/syllabi/A2\\_syll.pdf](http://www.teg.ie/fileupload/syllabi/A2_syll.pdf) Other details relating to the examination, information for candidates and sample papers are also available on the website, which also hosts sample teaching materials.

## The syllabus

*Siollabas Bhonnleibhéal 2* is based on the communicative method of language learning, and is built around general topics, language functions and grammatical and vocabulary items. The aims of the syllabus relating to each of the four language skills (speaking, listening comprehension, reading comprehension and writing) are expressed as ‘Can do’ statements – ‘The learner will be able to ....’ As there are three major dialects in the Irish language, the syllabus contains information about what the learner should understand about each dialect, i.e. what they should be able to recognise and produce. The importance of language awareness in the language learning process is recognised. As English is the mother tongue of a majority of Irish learners, differences in pronunciation need to be explained (for example there are almost twice as many consonant sounds in Irish as there are in English), as well as differences in sentence structure between Irish and English. The syllabus contains information on all these aspects of the language.

## Number of candidates

The table below shows the number of candidates who sat *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2* from when it was established in 2005.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of candidates</i>
2005	14
2006	57
2007	80
2008	132
2009	144
2010	142
2011	149
2012	133

<b>2013</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>58*</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>146*</b>

\* Including candidates who did partial accreditation

### **Feedback from candidates**

All candidates are invited to give feedback to Lárionad na Gaeilge about the examination they sat. They are asked to complete a questionnaire and share their opinions about the administration and layout of the examination. This valuable feedback helps Lárionad na Gaeilge to continually improve the examination system for the European Certificate in Irish.

### **Brief description of the candidates**

Information about the candidates is collected each year through the application forms. Details from the application forms and the examinations are combined with the examination results for analysis.

#### *Age, gender and nationality of candidates*

Over 60% of all candidates in 2017 were male. Of those who did full accreditation, 36% were between 26-45 years of age, 24% were in the 46-64 age group and a similar number were above 65 years of age. 48% of candidates were Irish, 26% were from Australia, 12% were French and approximately 10% were from the United States of America. The vast majority of candidates who did partial accreditation were Irish.

#### *Brief description of the employment profile of candidates*

The table below shows findings relating to the employment profile of all candidates in 2017.

<b><i>Employment profile of candidates</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage</i></b>
Student	57%
Working	32%
Retired	6%
Unemployed	2%
Working in the home	3%

#### *Candidates' reasons for sitting the examination*

Candidates were asked why they sat *Scrúdú Bhoneibhéal 2*. Some candidates gave more than one reason. The findings for 2017 are shown below and relate only to those who sought full accreditation.

<b><i>Candidates' reasons for sitting the exam</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage</i></b>
To help me progress in my employment	5%
To help with my children's education	17%

For love of the language	76%
For other reasons	19%

### *Candidates' knowledge of Irish*

Candidates were asked if they had previously studied the language in the Irish education system. The findings which relate to candidates seeking full accreditation in 2017 are shown below.

<i>What is the highest level at which you studied Irish in the education system?</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
I did not study Irish at school	60%
Primary school	0%
Second level school	38%
Third level	2%

## Examination centres

In 2005 and 2006 the examinations were only held in Maynooth University. However, as demand grew additional centres were established and *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2* is now held in the following centres (depending on demand):

- Maynooth University
- An Spidéal (Spiddal), Co. Galway
- Gaoth Dobhair (Gweedore), Co. Donegal
- Letterkenny
- Castlebar
- Limerick
- Cork
- Killarney
- Kilkenny
- Belfast
- Charles University, Prague
- Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris
- University of New York, New York
- University of Toronto
- University of Ottawa

## The examination

Marks in *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2* are allocated as follows:

- Speaking 35%
- Listening comprehension 25%
- Reading comprehension 25%
- Writing 15%

## Grading

The final mark a candidate receives in *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2* is the combined total of the marks obtained in each of the four component parts (speaking, listening comprehension, reading comprehension and writing). A minimum pass mark is not required in the individual components.

The table below shows the grading of marks in the examination.

<i>Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2 (A2)</i>	
80 - 100%	Pass with distinction
65 - 79%	Pass with merit
50 - 64%	Pass
0 - 49%	Fail

### Grades awarded in 2017

The table below shows a breakdown of the grades awarded to candidates who sat *Scrúdíú Bhonnleibhéal 2* in 2017.

(a) Full accreditation

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of candidates</i>
Pass with distinction	31%
Pass with merit	28%
Pass	27%
Fail	14%

(b) Partial accreditation (Oral exam)

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of candidates</i>
Pass	63%
Fail	37%

### *The listening comprehension examination*

The first part of the examination consists of listening comprehension. Candidates are allowed five minutes to read the questions before the audio tracks are played. This part of the examination lasts about 25 minutes in total. The layout of the listening comprehension examination is outlined in the table below.

<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 task</i>
<b>1</b>	6	Three short announcements	Short answer (one word, number or phrase)	12 marks	Listening for specific information.
<b>2</b>	6	Three short informal conversations	Short answer (one word, number or phrase)	12 marks	Listening to find simple factual information.
<b>3</b>	9	A longer conversation	Short answer (one word, number or phrase) / Multiple choice answer (four options)	9 marks	Listening to find simple factual information.
<b>4</b>	6	A longer conversation	Multiple choice (three options: true/false/not stated)	12 marks	Listening to find simple factual information.

### Marks awarded in the listening comprehension examination

The table below shows the marks obtained by candidates in the listening comprehension examination in 2017.

2017	
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	90.5%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	9.5%

### Listening comprehension examination – advice and suggestions for candidates and teachers

In general, candidates did very well in the listening comprehension examination.

Nevertheless, it is useful to focus on the following points:

- Candidates should use the five minutes before the CD is played to read the questions carefully. They should underline key words and important phrases in the question. This should help them to identify the required information when they are listening to the track. For example: ‘*Cá bhfuil máthair Chaomháin ag dul ar saoire i mbliana?*’ [*Where is Caomhán’s mother going on holidays this year?*]
- Special effort should be applied to teaching and learning questions in Irish. It is clear that at times some candidates have difficulty understanding questions such as ‘*Cé chomh minic ....?*’ [*How often ...?*] and think that the word ‘*Cé*’ refers to a person.
- Some candidates give a number of answers where only one is required. In most of these cases only one of the answers is correct. However, no mark can be awarded to the candidate as it is not possible to ascertain that he/she understood the audio text correctly. For example, in the case of the question ‘*Cá bhfuil máthair Chaomháin ag dul ar saoire i mbliana?*’ [*Where is Caomhán’s mother going on holidays this year?*] it is possible that the audio text will mention that she was in Italy and America last year, and that this year she is going to France. Candidates who write ‘*An Fhrainc agus An Iodáil*’ [*France and Italy*] will not be awarded any marks. The correct answer is to write ‘*An Fhrainc*’ [*France*] on its own.
- Candidates often waste time writing complete sentences or additional information that is not required. For example, in answering the above question, some candidates wrote an answer such as ‘*Bhí sí san Iodáil agus i Meiriceá anuraidh agus tá sí ag dul chun na Fraince i mbliana.*’ [*She was in Italy and America last year and she is going to France this year.*] The stronger candidates avoid this type of answer. They understand that unsolicited information is not required, and that they do not have the time to write long answers in the listening comprehension examination.
- When a question requires ticking a box (Questions 3 and 4), candidates are reminded that they should tick only one box, unless it is clearly indicated that there may be more than one correct answer. In cases where only one correct answer is required, candidates who tick more than one box will not be awarded any marks.

- Candidates should write numbers wherever possible – for example for prices, time, dates etc. Writing numbers as words wastes time and does not gain any additional marks.
- Although, candidates did well in general in the listening comprehension examination, they clearly require constant practice in order to be able to find and identify specific information in audio texts. It appears that even candidates who do well have a tendency to sometimes write the answer before listening to the complete track. For example, with regard to the question ‘*Cén post atá ag Seán anois? [What job does Seán have now?]*’ it is likely that a number of jobs will be mentioned in the course of the track, but Seán has **only one of these** at the moment.
- Teachers should use a wide range of texts and listening tasks to help learners become familiar with the different dialects, develop their vocabulary and develop appropriate strategies that will help them in the listening comprehension component of the examination.
- Although candidates are not penalised for spelling errors (in the listening comprehension examination) they should be careful with their handwriting to ensure that what they write is legible to the examiner.

### ***The reading comprehension examination***

Candidates are given ninety minutes to complete the reading comprehension and writing components of the examination. No directions are given as to the length of time candidates should spend on each component or on the different tasks. The layout and details of the reading comprehension examination are shown in the table below.

<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 task</i>
<b>1</b>	6	Dialogue between friends / relatives	Multiple choice matching (choose 6 from a total of 9 items)	12 marks	Reading to identify the correct response.
<b>2</b>	6	Short statements or questions and answers	Multiple choice answers (three options)	12 marks	Reading to identify the correct answer
<b>3</b>	6	Three short texts of a similar type (book or film reviews, description of TV programme etc.)	Multiple choice answers (three options)	12 marks	Reading for detailed understanding of a subject
<b>4</b>	6	Newspaper / magazine article	Multiple choice questions (3 options: true/false/not stated)	12 marks	Reading for detailed understanding of a subject and to identify the main points.
<b>5</b>	12	Interview from magazine/ newspaper	Cloze test (open)	12 marks	Reading to identify the appropriate lexical items.



### Marks awarded in the reading comprehension examination

The table below shows the marks attained by candidates in the reading comprehension examination in 2017.

2017	
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	79%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	21%

### Reading comprehension examination – advice and suggestions for candidates and teachers

Candidates did reasonably well in this section of the examination. However, attention is drawn to the following points:

- With regard to Question 1 in the reading comprehension examination, candidates are strongly advised to read the conversation a number of times to get a feel for the subject. They should then read each additional sentence carefully a number of times before they fill in the gaps. Candidates are reminded that it is enough to write the correct letter in each gap. When they have completed the conversation, candidates should read it again a number of times to ensure that their choices make sense.
- If candidates are asked to tick a box, or to select one from a selection of options (Questions 2, 3 and 4) they should choose **only one answer**. Marks cannot be awarded if a candidate has chosen more than one option. If there can be more than one correct answer, this is clearly indicated in the question.
- Feedback received from candidates clearly indicates that they are overly concerned with understanding every word in every text. It is important to emphasise to learners that they can use a variety of strategies to deal with phrases or words they do not understand. Practice on these strategies should be woven into the reading comprehension tasks in the classroom. The following are examples of possible strategies (depending, obviously, on the text in question).
  - can the context of the text be used to work out the meaning of the word?
  - if the word is a verb, can the learner identify the root?
  - is the word similar to any word that the learner knows in any other language?

Candidates should be reminded not to waste too much time on words or phrases that they cannot remember. It is possible that they may be able to answer the question even if they do not understand every word.

- Question 5 creates the most difficulty for candidates in the reading comprehension examination. They are reminded that it is usually a noun, adjective or verb that is missing from the gap, rather than a preposition. It is very important that candidates read the entire text in Question 5 carefully, before they attempt to fill in any of the blanks. While they are filling the gaps they should consider what comes after each space, as well as what came before it. **They should write one word only in each gap**. Some candidates have a tendency to write phrases or even full sentences. No marks can be awarded in such cases.

- Teachers are advised to use a wide variety of texts and tasks when preparing candidates for this part of the examination. See, for example, the sample materials on the website at <http://www.teg.ie/links-resources/teaching-materials.290.html>

### ***The writing examination***

In this examination candidates' ability to write short informal texts is assessed, as well as their knowledge of the basic structure of the language from the point of view of grammar and vocabulary. The details of the writing examination are laid out below.

<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 task</i>
<b>1</b>	1	Short paragraph	Guided writing task, based on a series of pictures	12 marks	Grammatical accuracy and language structures
<b>2</b>	1	Email or informal note	Guided writing task based on a theme and prompts	12 marks	Grammatical accuracy and language structures
<b>3</b>	10	Email, short letter or note	Cloze test (Open)	10 marks	Grammatical accuracy and language structures

### ***Marks awarded in the writing examination***

Only 15% marks of the total marks for the exam are allocated to writing at this level. The table below shows the marks attained by candidates in the writing examination in 2017.

<i>2017</i>	
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	79%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	21%

### *Writing examination – advice and suggestions for candidates and teachers*

Candidates, in general, performed a little better in this section of the examination in comparison to other years. Those candidates who performed poorly are strongly advised to concentrate on the points noted below:

- In Question 1 in the writing examination, the account should be written in the third person, and not in the first person. At times candidates used a mixture of the first and third persons.
- Constant practice in writing the language is essential. As candidates prepare for this examination, they do not need to write long passages. Different writing tasks could be given to learners as homework, for example, but it is important that they understand exactly what it is they are being asked to write. They could be asked to fill forms, read and respond to email messages, write short notes, write an account of a picture, etc.
- When the teacher is correcting the learners' written work, it is not enough to provide the correct form of a word or grammatical point. The learners must be enabled to reflect on how the language works, and on their own common mistakes. Learners should be helped to constantly monitor and review their own written work. The syllabus emphasises language awareness, and teachers are advised to use the suggestions provided in the syllabus – available on the website [http://www.teg.ie/\\_fileupload/syllabi/A2\\_syll.pdf](http://www.teg.ie/_fileupload/syllabi/A2_syll.pdf)
- Simple sentences are all that is required in the writing examination in *Scrúdí Bhoonleibhéal 2*. It is recommended therefore that candidates keep their sentences short, and only give the information required. For example, in Question 1, candidates are asked to write a sentence or two about each picture. Many candidates ignore this instruction and write five or six sentences. There is a greater chance that candidates will make a mistake if they write too much, or if they try to say something simple in a complicated manner. In short, candidates should follow the instructions given.
- It is also important that candidates adhere to the subject of the question. The written work of some candidates has the appearance of passages or sentences learned off by heart. Such sentences or passages should not be used unless they are directly relevant to the subject of the question.
- Candidates should allow themselves time at the end of the examination to check their written work, and correct it if necessary. Some of the things to check are:
  - punctuation (especially *síntí fada* [long accents] and capital letters);
  - spelling;
  - use of verbs and tenses;
  - pronouns and prepositions;
  - the number of words.
- Below is an account of the most common mistakes made by candidates in the writing examination. Teachers and candidates are advised to pay special attention to these points, and to other common mistakes that learners make when writing.
  - (1) Omitting the hyphen. '*Bhí mé an tuirseach ach bhí an tsaoire an deas.*'  
(Correction: *Bhí mé an-tuirseach ach bhí an tsaoire an-deas.*)  
[I was very tired and the holiday was very nice.]

- (2) Omitting the inverted comma. *'Tá sí fiche bliain daois'* (Correction: ... *d'aois.*)  
[*She is twenty years old.*]
- (3) Omitting the *séimhiú* or lenition after *'beirt'* [two people]. This is common, even amongst candidates who do well in the examination.
- (4) Candidates have a tendency to be negligent regarding the use of the *síneadh fada* (accent to indicate a long vowel sound). Not only is the *síneadh fada* often omitted, but it is sometimes inserted in different places in the same word in the same text. Learners should be asked to review and analyse their writing as part of language awareness, and their attention drawn to bad habits such as this. It is important to remember that the words inserted in the gaps in Question 3 must be correctly spelled. Candidates often find the correct word, but spell it incorrectly. No marks can be awarded in this case.
- (5) The present tense of the verb *'taitin'* [to enjoy] is often spelled incorrectly, or a non-standard spelling is used. For example *'táitnonn'*, *'taithníonn'* (Correction: *taitníonn*).
- (6) Candidates often mix their tenses in sentences such as *'Is múinteoir mé agus thaitin mo phost liom'* (Correction: ...*agus taitníonn mo phost liom.*)  
[*I am a teacher and I enjoyed my job very much* (Correction: *I enjoy my job very much*).]
- (7) Omitting the *séimhiú* or lenition after *'ní'* where a *séimhiú* should be inserted. For example, *'Ní bíonn am agam'* (Correction: *Ní bhíonn am agam*).  
[*I don't have time.*]
- (8) Some candidates do not know the personal numbers, and write sentences such as *'Bhí trí duine eile sa rang.'* (Correction: *Bhí triúr eile sa rang.*)  
[*There were three others in the class.*]
- (9) Often candidates incorrectly put a *séimhiú* or lenition after *'le'*. For example *'Chas me le chara nua.'* (Correction: *Chas mé le cara nua.*)  
[*I met a new friend*]
- (10) Candidates are often confused by the difference between a country (*an Ghearmáin*) [Germany], a language (*an Ghearmáinis*) [German], and an adjective (*bia Gearmánach*) [German food].
- (11) Certain words are often incorrectly spelled. For example, *'inin/nion'* (Correction: *iníon* [daughter]), *'arais'* (Correction: *ar ais* [back]), *'thanig'* (Correction: *tháinig* [came]) and *'alán'* (Correction: *a lán* [a lot]).
- (12) Candidates are often confused between the plural and comparative forms of the adjective. For example: *'na daoine óige'* (Correction: *na daoine óga*),  
[*the young people*]
- (13) Using *'Dé Domhnach'* instead of *'Dé Domhnaigh'* [Sunday].
- (14) Using capital letters for nouns that are neither proper nouns nor at the start of a sentence.

- (15) It is very important that candidates make a great effort to spell words given in the text of the questions correctly in their own writing. Spelling errors of this type show carelessness in writing.
- (16) Some candidates do not understand that lenition - a *séimhiú* – should follow the word ‘ó’ [from]. For example, ‘ó Baile Átha Cliath’ (Correction: ó Bhaile Átha Cliath).
- (17) The first *síneadh fada* [long vowel sound accent] is often omitted from the word ‘cónaí’ [to live].
- (18) Putting a *síneadh fada* or long accent in ‘mo’ [my]. For example, ‘mó chairde’ (Correction: mo chairde) [my friends].
- (19) Misunderstandings about using the possessive adjective ‘mo’ [my] and the *séimhiú*, or lenition on the first consonant of a word. Some candidates think that the adjective or qualifying word should be lenited because the noun is. Phrases such as ‘Is cuntasóir m’fhear chéile’ (Correction: Is cuntasóir m’fhear céile) are common. [My husband is an accountant.]
- (20) Candidates have a tendency to write ‘Ba mhaith liom ...’ [I would like ...] when they mean ‘Is maith liom...’ [I like ....].
- (21) Candidates are confused by the meaning and use of the phrases ‘ag siúl’ [walking] and ‘ag súil’ [expecting].
- (22) Candidates often incorrectly put a *síneadh fada* or long accent on the letter ‘i’. For example: ‘Tá mé ag obair í mbliana’. (Correction: Tá mé ag obair i mbliana.) [I am working this year.]

### **The oral examination**

Each candidate is examined individually. There are two examiners present, one of whom interacts with the candidate, asking questions and directing the conversation. The oral examinations are recorded for monitoring purposes, and also for training and research. The oral examination in *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2* is outlined below.

<i>Section</i>	<i>Length of time</i>	<i>Type of task</i>	<i>Language functions</i>
<b>1</b>	4-5 minutes	The candidate is asked questions about his/her daily life (place of residence, family, work, hobbies, holidays, travel, etc.)	Giving information
<b>2</b>	2-3 minutes	Role-play: (a) The candidate is given a card five minutes before the examination begins. The card contains key words relating to a particular event: planning holidays, describing a weekend etc. The candidate answers questions posed by the examiner relating to dates, places, price, journeys etc. (b) Then the candidate asks the	Giving information Seeking information Expressing simple opinions

		examiner about an event similar to that on the role-card. (No prompts are given).	
3	2-3 minutes	Telling a simple story: The candidate is given a series of six pictures and has one minute to look at them. Then the candidate describes what is happening in the pictures. The pictures show scenes from daily life – eating in a restaurant, walking in the mountains, etc.	Describing a series of related pictures and what is happening in them

*Marks awarded in the oral examination*

The table below shows the marks attained by candidates in the oral examination in 2017.

(a) Full accreditation

2017	
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	71%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	19%

(b) Partial accreditation (Speaking)

2017	
Grade	Percentage of candidates
Pass	63%
Fail	37%

*Oral examination – advice and suggestions for candidates and teachers*

Although, the overall results in this section of *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2* were satisfactory, candidates who undertook partial accreditation did not perform as well in 2017 as they did in previous years. The points below, in particular, deserve attention:

- Sometimes candidates are not aware of the layout and sequence of the oral examination. When this happens they can be uncomfortable and nervous when undertaking the tasks and answering the questions. Oral tasks (based on those laid out in the sample examination *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2*) should be an integral part of any teaching programme or preparatory course for this examination. The teacher could construct tasks based on those in the sample examination.
- Candidates at this level are expected to be able to express themselves through simple sentences and short phrases that are closely connected with their own lives (see *Siollabas Bhonnleibhéal 2*). It is expected that they will be able to use the vocabulary and phrases they know to extend and develop somewhat the subjects of conversation

that occur in the examination. See how Candidate 3 develops the points in the sample below. It is understood, however, that any candidate at this level will have some mistakes and faults in their speech.

- Examiner: Cad a rinne tú an deireadh seachtaine seo caite?  
*[What did you do last weekend?]*
- Candidate 1: Ní dhearna mé aon rud.  
*[I didn't do anything.]*
- Candidate 2: Ní dhearna mé faic mar bhí mé tinn.  
*[I didn't do anything because I was sick.]*
- Candidate 3: Ní dhearna mé mórán. Bhí slaghdán orm agus d'fhan mé sa teach. Bhreathnaigh mé ar chluiche peile ar an teilifís.  
*[I didn't do much. I had a cold and I stayed in the house. I watched a football game on the television.]*

The third candidate's answer shows the type of development and extension that is expected at Beginner Level 2. Candidates must take the opportunity to display their vocabulary and knowledge to the examiner.

- Examiners understand that candidates are nervous in the oral examination and they are happy to repeat questions if the candidate did not understand it the first time. It is important that the candidate knows phrases to help communicate with the oral examiner, such as '*Ní thuigim an cheist sin*' [*I don't understand that question*], '*Ní thuigim an focal x*' [*I don't understand the word x*], or '*Ar mhiste leat é sin a rá arís, le do thoil?*' [*Could you repeat that please?*]
- With regard to Part 2 of the oral examination (the role-play), it is vital that candidates understand that ***they themselves will have to pose questions to the examiner***, as well as answering the examiner's questions. Candidates are advised to pay particular attention to interrogative forms in Irish, and to practise them as much as possible through a variety of classroom tasks.
- In general, candidates have a tendency to use English words or phrases when they cannot think of the corresponding Irish version. There is no great harm in doing this once or twice, but if a candidate does it too often he/she will lose marks, particularly if the phrase or word in question is outlined in *Siollabas Bhonnleibhéal 2*. In the examination in 2017, for example, some candidates used the English name of their occupation. Although the list of occupations in the syllabus is not exhaustive, candidates are expected to know the title of their job or occupation in Irish.
- Candidates are reminded that a simple description is what is required in Part 3 of the oral examination (the series of pictures). They should spend the minute they are given to look at the pictures thinking about the story shown in the pictures and about the main words and phrases they will use when talking about them.
- Candidates at the different levels have a tendency to make many of the same mistakes when speaking the language. In order to tackle this problem, learners must be helped to recognise the errors they make in speaking and writing, and to correct them. As stated earlier, it is not enough for the teacher to draw a learner's attention to a mistake – the learner must be guided to constantly monitor his/her own work. The following are some of the most common grammatical errors made by candidates in the oral examination:

- (1) Many candidates use the past tense when they should use the present continuous tense. For example, ‘*Cad a dhéanann tú nuair a bhíonn am saor agat?*’ [*What do you do in your free time?*]  
‘*Chuaigh mé go dtí an phictiúrlann*’. (Correction: *Téim go dtí an phictiúrlann*.) [*I went to the cinema. (Correction: I go to the cinema.)*]
- (2) Using the plural form after the word ‘*cúpla*’ [*a few*].  
For example: ‘*Bhí mé féin agus cúpla cairde ann*’ (Correction: *...cúpla cara*.) [*I and a few friends were there.*]
- (3) Gender of nouns. Candidates are not expected to know the gender of every noun, but are expected to know the gender of the most common nouns – those outlined in *Siollabas Bhonnleibhéal 1* and *Siollabas Bhonnleibhéal 2*
- (4) Lack of agreement between the noun and the adjective. For example: ‘*rang mhór*’ (Correction: *rang mór*) [*a big class*].
- (5) Some candidates mix the plural form of the noun and comparative form of the adjective. For example: *Tá triúr cailíní óige agam*’ (Correction: *...cailíní óga...*) [*I have three young girls.*]
- (6) Answering questions incorrectly, for example, giving ‘*Is ea*’ or ‘*Tá*’ as an answer to the question ‘*An dtaitníonn do phost leat?*’ [*Do you like your job?*], instead of ‘*Taitníonn*’ or ‘*Ní thaitníonn*’ [*I do/don’t like it.*]
- (7) The verb ‘*cónaigh*’ [*to live*]. ‘*Tá mé i mo cónaí*’, instead of ‘*Tá mé i mo chónaí*’ [*I live*]. This problem could be due to incorrect pronunciation of ‘*ch*’ [x]. However, it is more likely to be a grammatical problem, as it also occurs in writing. Candidates constantly have difficulty with the possessive adjective ‘*mo*’ [*my*]. They often leave out the *séimhiú* or lenition after ‘*mo*’, for example, ‘*mo post*’ (Correction: *mo phost*) [*my job*]  
‘*mo deirfiúr*’ (Correction: *mo dheirfiúr*) [*my sister*] etc.
- (8) Prepositions are not correctly used. For example:  
*Fágaim an teach ar a 8.00 sa maidin.*’ (Correction: *...ar maidin*), [*I leave the house at 8:00 in the morning.*]  
*Téim ag snámh ar an deireadh seachtaine*’ (Correction: *...ag an deireadh seachtaine*) [*I go swimming at the weekend.*]  
or  
*Buailim Seán gach Déardaoin sa teach tábhairne*’ (Correction: *Buailim le Seán...*) [*I meet Seán every Thursday.*]
- (9) ‘*San*’ is used instead of ‘*sa*’ and *vice versa*. For example,  
*Tá dúil agam san spórt*’ (Correction: *... sa spórt*) [*I like sport*]  
or ‘*Tá sé sa óstán*’ (Correction: *... san óstán*) [*He is in the hotel.*]
- (10) Use of the irregular noun ‘*bliain*’ [*a year*]. Candidates have considerable difficulties with this noun.



- (11) Omitting to put an *urú* (eclipsis) after the preposition ‘i’ [in]. For example, ‘*Tá mé ag obair i garáiste*’ (Correction: ... *i ngaráiste*). [*I am working in a garage*].
- (12) Sometimes tenses are mixed up. For example: ‘*An bhliain seo caite, pósfaidh mé*’ [*Last year, I will get married.*] (Correction: *Phós mé an bhliain seo caite.*) [*Last year I got married.*]
- (13) There is uncertainty about interrogative forms. In order for candidates to undertake the role-play task in Part 2, it is vital that they can ask basic questions, for example: ‘*Cén áit...?*’ [*Where ...?*]; ‘*Cén t-ainm atá ar...?*’ [*What is ... called?*]; ‘*Cén costas atá ar...?*’ [*How much is ...?*] etc.

### **General suggestions**

- Teachers and candidates are strongly advised to study carefully the sample examinations and the accompanying instructions on the website at <http://www.teg.ie/exam-levels/bonnleibhéal-2-a2.308.html>
- The website also provides sample teaching materials suitable for teachers who are preparing candidates for *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2*. Instructions for teachers, worksheets and sound files can be found at <http://www.teg.ie/links-resources/teaching-materials.290.html>
- Teachers and candidates who intend to attempt any of the examinations in the European Certificate in Irish (TEG) are asked to read the information and advice given on the website at <http://www.teg.ie/info-advice.148.html> and <http://www.teg.ie/faqs.150.html> very carefully.