

Lárionad na Gaeilge: Taighde, Teagasc agus Tástáil

Maynooth University



*Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)*

**Chief Examiner's Report 2021**



## Background

*Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* is a general proficiency examination for 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 who are attending similar courses and who would like a qualification to attest to their ability in Irish.

The examination tests knowledge not only as described in the syllabus for this level but also that included in the syllabi for *Bonnleibhéal 1 (A1)*, *Bonnleibhéal 2 (A2)* and *Meánleibhéal 1 (B1)*. Many candidates who undertake *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* have already passed the examination at *Meánleibhéal 1 (B1)*. The specifications which form the basis for *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* are broadly based on the descriptors for level B2 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001)*. It is estimated that candidates who have achieved *Meánleibhéal 1 (B1)* ability will be able to undertake this examination after an additional 350-400 hours of study. It should be noted that the examination itself is not, however, tied to any particular course of study.

## Number of candidates

The table below shows the number of candidates who sat *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* since it was first established in 2006. Since 2012 partial accreditation is also offered to TEG candidates who wish to have only their oral Irish skills assessed and certified.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of candidates</b>
<b>2006</b>	4
<b>2007</b>	19
<b>2008</b>	35
<b>2009</b>	50
<b>2010</b>	65
<b>2011</b>	100
<b>2012</b>	129
<b>2013</b>	188*
<b>2014</b>	150*
<b>2015</b>	188*
<b>2016</b>	186*
<b>2017</b>	222*

<b>2018</b>	205*
<b>2019</b>	205*
<b>2020</b>	231*
<b>2021</b>	218*

\*Includes candidates who did TEG 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, content and layout of the examination. This valuable feedback helps Lárionad na Gaeilge to continually improve the TEG examination system.

### Candidate profile

Background information about the candidates is collected through the application forms. Depending on the number of candidates, this data is periodically analysed to help us create a profile of those who undertake the examinations at each of the different levels. The information in this section relates to candidates who undertook full accreditation in 2021.

#### *Age, gender and nationality*

Women accounted for 61% of candidates. 60% of candidates were in the 18-25 age bracket and nearly 10% were aged 26-45. The majority of candidates were Irish.

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

Candidates were asked why they sat *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)*. Many candidates offered more than one reason. The findings from 2021 are below.

	<b><i>Candidates' reasons for sitting the exam</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage</i></b>
1	To meet the entry requirements for a course in secondary education	24%
2	For love of the language	31%
3	To help me progress in my job	19%
4	To help mé meet the entry requirements for a course in primary education	32%
5	To satisfy the requirements for translation/interpretation courses	3%
6	At the request of my employer	3%
7	To help with my children's education	3%

8	For other reasons	3%
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### Examination centres

In 2006 *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* was only held in Maynooth University. However, as demand grew additional centres were established and *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* is, thus far, held in a growing number of centres in Ireland and abroad. See [here on our website](#) for the latest information regarding dates and exam centres.

### The examination

Marks in *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* are allocated as follows:

Speaking	25%
Listening comprehension	25%
Reading comprehension	25%
Writing	25%

### Grading

The final mark a candidate receives in *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* is the combined total of the marks obtained by the candidate in each of the four component parts (speaking, listening comprehension, reading comprehension and writing). A minimum pass is not required in the individual components.

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

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

### Grades awarded in 2021

The table below shows a breakdown of the grades awarded to all candidates who sat *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)* in 2021.

(a) Full accreditation

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of candidates in 2021</i>
Pass with distinction	16.5%
Pass with merit	21.1%
Pass	18.4%
Fail	44%

(b) Partial accreditation (Speaking)

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of candidates in 2021</i>
Pass	62.5%
Fail	37.5%

***The listening comprehension examination***

The first part of the examination consists of the listening comprehension examination. Candidates are allowed five minutes to read the questions before the audio texts are played. This part of the examination lasts about 35 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>Marks</i>	<i>Focus of the examination</i>
<b>1</b>	6	3 news items	Short answer/ multiple choice answer	12 marks	Listening to find specific information.
<b>2</b>	10-12	6 different texts (conversations, excerpts from radio programmes, messages on answering machines, and announcements).	Short answer/ multiple choice answer	12 marks	Listening for the general meaning and gist, to identify relationships and place and context of interaction.
<b>3</b>	6	Excerpt from a radio interview, a conversation or a debate.	Short answer/ multiple choice answer	12 marks	Listening for specific information and to identify speakers' views and opinions.
<b>4</b>	6	Monologue (directions, presentation, excerpt from a lecture, description of a journey, etc.)	Fill in the gaps	12 marks	Listening to find key specific information.

***Marks awarded in the listening comprehension examination***

The table below shows the marks attained by candidates in the listening comprehension examination in 2021. There was a decrease in the number of candidates achieving a pass in this component in comparison to recent years.

<b>Listening comprehension</b>	<b>2021</b>
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	54%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	46%

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

- Candidates attempting the examination at this level need an extensive vocabulary. Therefore, it is important that candidates preparing for the examination listen to a wide range of audio texts, in which a range of subjects are discussed. It is clear that candidates sometimes do not have satisfactory knowledge of the vocabulary or common phrases used in news reports. Candidates are recommended to listen to the national and international news reports on RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta and on Nuacht TG4. It would be useful for teachers to use the exercises based on Nuacht TG4 available on the Lárionad na Gaeilge website at <http://vifax.nuim.ie/> See also the materials available on the website [Céim ar Aghaidh](#).
- Candidates are Given five minutes to read the questions in this section before the audio tracks are played. They should remember that they will have 50 seconds to read Question 4 and, therefore, it is recommended that they spend the five minutes reading Questions 1-3 and underlining the most important words and phrases in each question.
- Candidates only hear the audio text for Question 4 once, and they have to fill in the gaps while they are listening to the item, and at the end of the item. The candidates have 50 seconds before the track is played, and they should spend this time reading the sentences so that they will be able to find the correct information.
- Usually candidates do not have great difficulty with questions where they have to find particular information or identify the views or opinions of the speaker. They sometimes have problems when a question is asked about something that was expressed indirectly, or when they have to understand the gist of the audio text. In questions such as this the answer is not given directly, and the candidate has to put different bits of information from the track together and use the context to work out, or choose, the correct answer.

***The reading comprehension examination***

When the listening comprehension examination is over, candidates are given two and a half hours (150 minutes) to attempt the reading comprehension and writing & use of Irish components of the examination. No directions are given as to the length of time candidates should spend on each component, or on the various 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>Marks</i>	<i>Focus of the examination</i>
<b>1</b>	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 marks	Reading to identify the main points, at paragraph level.
<b>2</b>	7	Extract from an article in a newspaper, magazine, book or webpage.	Multiple choice answer (4 options) / short answer	14 marks	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.
<b>3</b>	7	Article or interview from a newspaper or magazine, or extract from a book or diary	Cloze test (choose 7 sentences from 9)	14 marks	Reading to identify textual structure and development.

### Marks awarded in the reading comprehension examination

The table below shows the marks achieved by candidates in the reading comprehension examination in 2021. There was a significant increase in the number of candidates who failed to achieve a pass in this section in comparison to recent years.

<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	<b>2021</b>
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	55%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	45%

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

- Candidates preparing for this examination should use a wide range of texts and tasks. It is vitally important that they have an extensive vocabulary dealing with every aspect of everyday life (see *Meánleibhéal 2 (B2) Syllabus and guidelines for candidates*).
- Candidates often have difficulty with questions where they have to find the main points or identify views or opinions. It is therefore suggested that particular time is devoted to tasks of this type.
- In Questions 1 and 3 candidates only have to write one letter in each gap. They should ensure that the letter is clearly written so that the examiners can be certain which letter it is supposed to be.
- It is essential that candidates follow the directions given in each question. Unless otherwise stated, only one answer is required, and no marks will be awarded if the candidate chooses two answers. In Question 2 candidates often have to choose one answer from four options: for example, *Cén fáth a bhfuil an cás cúirte ag cur isteach ar Shíle? Roghnaigh **an ráiteas is fearr** ón liosta thíos' [Why is the court case bothering Síle? Choose the **best statement** from the list below.] It is likely that some of the statements could be **true to some extent** but that one of the statements fully describes why the court case is bothering Síle. Even if candidates are not totally certain, it is better to choose one statement than two. If they choose one statement they have a chance of earning marks. On the other hand, no marks can be awarded to a candidate who chooses more than one statement in a question such as this.*



### ***The examination of writing and use of Irish***

Candidates' ability to write formal and informal texts in a specified context will be assessed. They should be able to organise the written pieces coherently and demonstrate their ability in the language with regard to grammar, structure and vocabulary. The details of this section are outlined in the table below.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Type of text</b>	<b>Format of answers</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>Focus of the examination</b>
<b>1</b>	1	Formal letter (application for job or place on course, competition entry etc.)	Guided writing	30 marks	Grammatical and structural accuracy, textual coherence.
<b>2</b>	1	Article, review, story, essay.	Open	30 marks	Grammatical and structural accuracy, textual coherence.
<b>3</b>	15	Newspaper or online magazine article, blog.	Editing text	30 marks	Grammatical and structural accuracy.
<b>4</b>	6	Sentences.	Translation	30 marks	Grammatical and structural accuracy. Ability to correctly convey meaning.

### ***Marks awarded in the examination of writing and use of Irish***

The table below shows the marks attained by candidates in the examination of writing and use of Irish in 2021. Like the other components in the exam, there was an increase in the number of candidates who failed to achieve a pass in this component in comparison to recent years.

<b><i>Writing and Use of Irish</i></b>	<b>2021</b>
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	43%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	57%

### ***Examination in writing and use of Irish – advice and suggestions for candidates and teachers***

- This section is where the least number of candidates succeed in attaining high marks in 2021. It is clear to the examiners that many of candidates' problems are related to being overly concerned with writing long passages. Candidates are strongly advised to adhere

to the word limit outlined in Questions 1 and 2. When planning their time in this part of the examination, they should ensure that they will have enough time to re-read their writing carefully and edit as necessary. If candidates keep to the word limit, they should have enough time to thoroughly review what they have written.

- At this level it is not acceptable to misspell common Irish words, to misspell words given in the question itself, or to omit things such as *síntí fada* [accents denoting long vowels], capital letters, question marks etc. Teachers should draw learners' attention to the importance of the reviewing step in the writing process and help them to notice and correct their own common mistakes. Learners should be helped to develop strategies to demonstrate their skills, and to tackle any problems with their writing. Teachers are advised to read the following article by Lindgren and Sullivan: 'Stimulated Recall as a Trigger for Increasing Noticing and Language Awareness in the L2 Writing Classroom' in *Language Awareness* 12 / 3, pp.172-186, 2003 (and available on the Routledge-Language Awareness website at <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a907968297>). Although the article relates to a computerised learning package, noticing and language awareness are emphasised.
- Candidates are given directions as to the number of words to be written in each question. The number of words is the same each year. Therefore, candidates should not waste time during the examination counting words and then trying to reduce what they have written. They are advised to practise answering questions within the correct word limit, so that they will have a good idea about how much to write on the examination day itself.
- With regard to Question 1, candidates are advised to keep to the subject of the text and follow the pointers given. They are reminded that they must cover all the points in their written answers. They should be able to develop the points **without** taking long pieces directly from the text of the question itself.
- In Question 2 candidates are informed of the audience for the piece of writing. For example, in the case of a newspaper article or a description of an event for a friend, the subject should be made suitable for that target group, and the correct register should be used throughout.
- It is very important that what candidates write for Question 2 is based on the given title. For example, if the question asks for '*Léirmheas ar chlár teilifíse a chonaic mé le gairid*' [*A review of a television programme I saw recently*], then it is not adequate to describe the programme and what happened, or to describe the characters or guests. What is required in this case is a review. For example, candidates must write about what was good about the programme, what they enjoyed about the programme and why, any aspects that were not good and the reasons why. Candidates are strongly advised not to memorise passages for this part of the examination.
- In Question 2 candidates are not given much guidance (apart from the target reader) to direct them in their writing. Therefore, particular importance is attached to the layout and organisation of their writing. For example, there should be an appropriate introduction and ending to the piece, and the main points should be suitably developed.

- It is important that candidates try to demonstrate their ability in vocabulary and language structure to the examiner. At *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2* level a certain amount of variety and flexibility is expected in candidates' written work. For example, the same verbs should not be used continually, and they should be able to use a wide vocabulary as outlined in *Meánleibhéal 2 (B2): Syllabus and guidelines for candidates*.
- Examiners have noticed a certain improvement in candidates' answers to Question 3, i.e. the editing task. However, care is still needed. Candidates often lose marks through carelessness when writing the corrected versions of words. See for example the incorrect form '*i mo déagóir*'. A good number of candidates corrected this as '*i mo dheagóir*' when the actual correct form is '*i mo dhéagóir*' [(I am) ... a teenager].
- Candidates are strongly advised not to 'correct' anything unless they are fully sure it is incorrect.
- In Question 4, the translation question, candidates are advised to carefully read and edit their translations. They should also ensure that they have translated all of the sentences and not to omit any words.
- Below is an account of the most common errors in candidates' writing. See also the comments in the Report on the Lower Intermediate Examination.

(1) Inaccuracy when using various tenses in Irish.

(2) Uncertainty in using indirect speech. Higher-scoring candidates say '*ceapaim go bhfuil/is dóigh liom go raibh*' [I think it is/I think it was] whereas lower-scoring candidates say '*ceapaim tá/is dóigh liom bhí*'.

(3) Candidates continually experience problems using the *séimhiú* or lenition in different contexts. For example,

*'an bhuntáiste'* (Correction: *an buntáiste*), [the advantage],

*'an pictiúrlann'* (Correction: *an phictiúrlann*) [the cinema],

*'áit maith'* (Correction: *áit mhaith*) [a good place],

*'duine dheas'* (Correction: *duine deas*) [a nice person].

Some candidates put a *séimhiú* or lenition after the preposition '*le*', for example '*eolas le bhailiú*' (Correction: *eolas le bailiú*) [information to be collected] and in the verbal noun, for example '*ag fhoghlaim*' (Correction: *ag foghlaim*) [learning]. Many candidates have a tendency to omit the *séimhiú* after '*mar*' [as], for example, '*Ag obair mar cócaire*' (Correction: *Ag obair mar chócaire*) [working as a cook].

(4) The plural possessive adjective used without an '*urú*' [eclipsis]. For example, '*Bíonn siad an-tógtha lena fadhbanna féin*', (Correction: *lena bhfadhbanna féin*),

[They are very concerned with their own problems.]

*'Beidh ár cairde ag dul ar laethanta saoire linn'* (Correction: *ár gcairde*).

[Our friends will be going on holidays with us.]

(5) Misunderstandings about the use of the words '*clann*' [children in a family] and '*muintir*' [wider family – lit. people].

- (6) Problems using the hyphen, for example:  
*'an deas'* (Correction: *an-deas*) [*very nice*],  
*'go h-iontach'* (Correction: *go hiontach*) [*wonderful*].
  - (7) Putting a *síneadh fada* [accent denoting a long vowel sound] on 'ba'. For example,  
*'Bá dhuine iontach é'* (Correction: *Ba dhuine iontach é*) [*He was a wonderful person*].
  - (8) Confusion between the plural and comparative forms of the adjective. For example:  
*'na daoine óige'* (Correction: *daoine óga*) [*young people*].
  - (9) Using 'ar feadh' instead of 'le'; for example, *'Tá post agam anseo ar feadh trí bliana anois...'* (Correction: *Tá post agam anseo le trí bliana anois...*).  
*[I have a job here for the last three years]*.
  - (10) The word 'áfach' [however] cannot be used at the start of a sentence as in English.
  - (11) Use of prepositions. For example, *'Ba mhaith liom cur isteach leis an bpost'*  
 (Correction: *Ba mhaith liom cur isteach ar an bpost*) [*I would like to apply for the job*] and *'Cuairt a thabhairt le/chuig/do...'* (*Cuairt a thabhairt ar...*) [*to visit...*].
  - (12) If writing a letter, candidates should be able to deal correctly with the vocative case of whatever name is given in the instructions. For example, 'A Sheáin', 'A Áine', 'A Shiobhán', 'A Jonas' etc.
  - (13) Some words that are frequently spelled incorrectly are: 'leath uair' (*leathuair*) [*half an hour*], 'aoibheann' (*aoibhinn*) [*glorious*], different versions of the word 'traidisiúnta' [*traditional*] and of the verb 'taitin' [*to enjoy*] in the different tenses.
  - (14) Candidates often demonstrate uncertainty about using numbers. For example, the ordinal numbers are not always used correctly. There is also a lack of consistency in implementing the rules for using personal numbers.
- There are some examples of answers received from candidates on pages 15-22 at the end of this document.

### **The oral examination**

Candidates' ability to take an active part in a conversation will be assessed, and their ability to deal with a wide range of topics as 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 organise 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.

The details of the oral examination are laid out in the table below.

<i>Part</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Type of task</i>	<i>Language functions</i>
<b>1</b>	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.
<b>2</b>	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.

#### *Marks awarded in the oral examination*

The table below shows the marks attained by candidates in the oral examination in 2021. Among those candidates who undertook full accreditation and partial accreditation there was an increase in the number of candidates who failed to achieve a pass in comparison to recent years.

##### (a) Full accreditation

<i>The oral examination</i>	<b>2021</b>
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	62%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	38%

##### (b) Partial accreditation

<i>Partial accreditation</i>	<b>2021</b>
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	62.5%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	37.5%

### *The oral examination – advice and suggestions for candidates and teachers*

- In Part 1 of the examination candidates are asked two types of questions. The first type relates to the candidate's life, for example background, work, hobbies, his/her experience of learning Irish and so on. In general candidates do well answering this type of question. Then, the candidate is asked about more abstract matters. The topics in question could include current affairs, politics, social matters, the media etc. Candidates have more difficulty with this type of question. Sometimes lack of vocabulary is an obstacle in expressing their opinions about subjects such as current affairs. Candidates and teachers are reminded that there is an additional requirement at *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2* level that shows the transition from language and topics that are personal and subjective to dealing with more general and objective language and subjects (see *Siollabas Mheánleibhéal 2*).
- Candidates are expected to be able to develop their answers appropriately. They should be able to connect different topics, give reasons for their opinions, provide relevant examples when necessary and emphasise the most important points.
- In Part 2 of the examination candidates are given a sheet showing four topic-related pictures (for example four types of holiday or four kinds of dwelling). Candidates have to choose two of these pictures and speak about them. Candidates are reminded that ***it is not enough to simply describe whatever is shown***. They should be able to compare and contrast, talk about advantages and disadvantages, and give their own opinions.
- Candidates at this level are expected to be able to take an active part in a conversation where opinions are exchanged and defended. They are not expected to stop frequently to think of words, and it is envisaged that they will have good control of the basic grammatical structures, especially tenses.
- Although it is accepted that, even at this level, the influence of mother tongue will be heard in candidates' speech from time to time, they should be able to pronounce words clearly and intelligibly, and should understand the use of emphasis in sentences and the rhythm of Irish. Some of the biggest problems candidates experience with pronunciation in Irish are the [x] sound in '*sa chathair*' [*in the city*] and the [x'] sound in '*le chéile*' [*together*]. Candidates often have problems pronouncing *séimhiú* or lenition [softening of the initial consonant of a word] and it is recommended that teachers focus particular attention on that aspect of phonetics.
- Candidates should know the Irish name of their job and the organisation in which they are working. At this level it is not acceptable to say '*Tá mé ag obair sa motor tax section*' or '*Tá mé ag obair sa Health Service*' when the term '*Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte*' [*Health Service Executive*] is in common use. If candidates do not know a particular word or phrase, at this level they should be able to use an alternative, or to say what they want to express in a different way, instead of resorting to English.
- It is important that candidates know the ordinal numbers well, as they will need them when talking about the pictures in Part 2.
- Below are some of the most common mistakes made by candidates at this level in the oral examination. Many of them are the same mistakes made at the lower levels of TEG.

Therefore, it is really important that teachers help learners to recognise and correct their own mistakes as early as possible in the learning process.

(1) The genitive case, for example:

*'Contae an Clár' (Correction: Contae an Chláir) [County Clare]*

*'Bhí mé sa Fhrainc ar feadh seachtain' (Correction:...ar feadh seachtaine) [for a week]*

*'Níl go leor obair...' (Correction: ...go leor oibre) [... enough work]*

(2) Incorrect tenses. At this level candidates should be competent in using the present, present continuous, past and future tenses, and should be able to use the conditional modus reasonably well.

(3) Numbers, for example:

*'Seasca míle daoine' (Correction: Seasca míle duine) [Sixty million people]*

*'Trí' as an answer to questions such as 'Cé mhéad leabharlann sa cheantar?' [How many libraries in the area?] instead of 'Trí leabharlann' or 'Trí cinn'.*

(4) Problems using nouns. The most common problems are nouns with the definite article, nouns with adjectives and nouns with prepositions. For example :

*'Tá an foireann go maith' (Correction:...an fhoireann) [The team is good.]*

*'Tá fadhb mór anseo leis an t-uisce' (Correction: Tá fadhb mhór anseo leis an uisce) [There is a big problem with the water here.]*

*'Bíonn féile mór ar siúl...' (Correction: ...féile mhór) [A big festival is on ....]*

(5) Difficulties with indirect speech. For example,

*'Is dóigh liom bhí an dráma go hiontach' (Correction: ... go raibh an dráma go hiontach) [I think the drama was wonderful]*

*'Sílím bhí cúrsaí eacnamaíochta maith ag an am' (Correction: ...go raibh cúrsaí eacnamaíochta maith ag an am). [...that economic matters were good at the time.]*

### General suggestions

- Candidates and teachers are reminded that the exam in question here is at upper intermediate level. It is recommended that anyone who has been successful in *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1 (B1)* should spend approximately 500-600 hours studying the language before attempting *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)*. This entails a mixture of courses and classes, private study, language practice etc.
- Teachers and candidates are strongly advised to study carefully the two sample examinations and the accompanying instructions on the website at <http://www.teg.ie/exam-levels/meánleibhéal-2-b2.310.html>
- The website also provides sample teaching materials suitable for teachers who are preparing candidates for *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2 (B2)*. Instructions for teachers, worksheets and sound files can be found at <http://www.teg.ie/links-resources/teaching-materials.290.html> Remember that these are only sample teaching materials and teachers will need to adapt and supplement them in order to address the needs of their own particular group of learners.

- There are other teaching and learning resources that would be useful to teachers and learners at this level. See, for example, the exercises based on Nuacht TG4 on the Lárionad na Gaeilge website at <http://vifax.nuim.ie/> The website [www.teagascnagaeilge.ie](http://www.teagascnagaeilge.ie) hosts a great deal of teaching materials that would be useful for this level. In particular, some of the material set out for first year would be very useful for teachers preparing students for *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2*. Naturally, some of the material will have to be adapted to suit the needs of your own class.
- 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 at <http://www.teg.ie/info-advice.148.html> and <http://www.teg.ie/faqs.150.html>



The following is **Question 1** in the examination of Writing and Use of Irish (*Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2*).

*Tá fógra sa nuachtán faoi phost thar lear. Ba mhaith leat cur isteach ar an bpost. Léigh an fógra agus na nótaí thíos. Bain úsáid as **na nótaí go léir** agus scríobh litir chuig an fhostóir. Scríobh **160-180 focal**.*

*There is an advertisement in a newspaper advertising a job overseas. You would like to apply for the job. Read the advertisement and the notes below. Using **all the notes** write a letter to the employer. Write **160-180 words**.*

## Bliain thar lear

Ar mhaith leat bliain a chaitheamh ag obair agus ag staidéar i Stáit Aontaithe Mheiriceá?

Tá teaghlach Éireannach atá lonnaithe i Nua-Eabhrac ag lorg duine chun aire a thabhairt do bheirt pháistí (aois 6 agus 10) ar feadh bliana.

Ní mór d'iarthóirí taithe a bheith acu ar a bheith ag obair le páistí.

Is í an Ghaeilge teanga an teaghlaigh agus caithfidh iarthóirí a bheith líofa sa Ghaeilge.

Ní mór d'iarthóirí ceadúnas glan tiomána a bheith acu agus scileanna cócaireachta.

Beidh deis ann freastal ar ranganna nó ar chúrsaí oideachais páirtaimseartha.

Má tá spéis agat sa deis iontach seo, seol litir chuig:

Máirín Uí Chuinn, 4532 Henry Street, NY10010.

bliain ag obair i nAonra...cúrsaí  
oilúna...cúntóir ranga i  
mbunscoil...

as ceantar Gaeltachta  
...oideachas trí Ghaeilge...

2020 scrúdú tiomána...cócaire  
maith mar...

Ba bhreá leat Spáinnis a  
dhéanamh mar....

The following are three examples of answers given to this question, and a short commentary on each. Names, addresses and other information have, naturally, been changed.

#### EXAMPLE 1

Seoladh  
Baile Átha Cliath  
Éire  
Dáta

Máirín Uí Chuinn  
4523 Henry St  
NY 10010

A bhean Uí Cuinn, a chara,  
Táim ag scríobh an litir seo maidir leis an bhfógra a chonaic mé sa nuachtán. Tá an-suim agam sa phost, mar tá an-chuid taithí agam i gcúrsaí oiliúna agus ag obair le páistí óga.

Chaith mé trí bliana ag obair i naíonra i gContae Uíbh Fhailí nuair a d'fhág mé an mheánscoil agus tar éis sin, bhí post agam mar chúinteoir ranga i mbunscoil.

Is as ceantar Gaeltachta i gContae na Gaillimhe ó dhúchas mé agus fuair mé mo chuid oideachais trí Ghaeilge. Mar sin, tá sí ar mo thoil agam.

Rinne mé mo scrúdú tiomána i 2020 agus tá ceadúnas glan agam. Is cócaire maith mé agus rinne mé cúrsa sa chocaireacht nuair a bhí mé i gContae Uíbh Fhailí.

Bhí mé sásta a léamh go mbeidh deis ann freastal ar ranganna. Ba bhreá liom Spáinnis a dhéanamh mar tá mé tógtha leis na teangacha go léir.

Beidh mé faoi chomaoin agat dá thabharfá seans dom obair leat agus le do chlann, agus dá mbeadh aon cheist agat fúm, ná bíodh leisce ort ríomhphost a sheoladh chugam ag [mise@eircom.net](mailto:mise@eircom.net).

Le gach dea-mhéin  
Máire Éilis Nic Gabhann

### Commentary on Example 1

This piece of writing is a very good example of the standard expected in writing at this level. With regard to the layout, an appropriate greeting and ending is used. All the points that were to be discussed are covered and are somewhat developed. It is accepted that candidates cannot develop the points very much within the specified word limit. Phrases and expressions are used that show the correct register for this type of letter. It is a formal or official register, i.e. ‘a chara’, ‘Beidh mé faoi chomaoin agat ....’ [I would be grateful if you ...] and ‘Le gach dea-mhéin’ [With best wishes]. With regard to accuracy, the piece is reasonably free from serious errors. A very good understanding of the use of verbs is demonstrated, as well as of tenses and prepositions. The punctuation and spelling are good. There are a few spelling errors – ‘cocaireacht’ and ‘chúinteoir’. These mistakes should not be made as the words ‘cócaireachta’ [cooking] and ‘cúntóir’ [assistant] are given in the text of the question. The candidate avoided many of the most common mistakes made by learners when writing in Irish. Although some sentences are awkwardly phrased, they do not impede communication. See for example ‘Táim ag scríobh an litir seo maidir leis an bhfógra...’ and ‘tá an-chuid taithí agam i gcúrsaí oiliúna...’.

### EXAMPLE 2

Baile an Ghleanna  
Co. Chill Dara

A Mháirín,

Chonaic mé do fhógra sa nuachtán agus tá mé ag cur isteach ar an bpost seo.

Chaith mé bliain ag obair í naónra anseo in Éirinn agus tá cúrsa oiliúna déanta agam freisin. Bhí an t-ádh orm mar chúntóir i mbunscoil i mBaile Nua.

Rugadh agus togadh mé i Rath Cairn, is é sin ceantar Gaeltachta i gcontae na Mí. Fuair mé mo chuid oideachais trí Gaeilge ansin.

Tá mé in ann carr a thiomáint agus fuair mé mo cheadúnas tiomána sa bhliain dhá mhíle is a fiche. Tá sé glan go fóill.

Is feidir liom cócaireacht mar rinne mé cúrsa cocaireacht an Blian seo chaite. Ba mhaith liom an Spáinnis a fhoghlaim agus tá suim an-mhór agam sa teanga sin. I do fhógra durt tu go mbeidh an deis ann freastal ar ranganna nó ar chursaí eigin. Is é an Spáinnis is fearr liom a dhéanamh dá mbeadh an deis agam.

Tá mé ag súil le do fhreagra.

Slán go foill

Seán Ó Conchúir

### Commentary on Sample 2

According to the expected standard for this particular examination, the sample above is of average level. The notes given could be developed a little better in this piece. Sometimes it is not very clear what the candidate means, for example *'Bhí an t-ádh orm mar chúntóir i mbunscoil i mBaile Nua'*. The layout is satisfactory enough, although *'a chara'* was omitted at the start of the letter. *'Slán go fóill'* [Bye for now] is possibly a bit informal and *'Is mise le meas'* [Yours sincerely] or *'Le gach dea-mhéin'* [With every good wish] should be used in this type of letter. Although the majority of the basic grammatical structures are correct, this candidate appears to have some problems with spelling. *'Naónra'* was written, although *'naíonra'* was given in the question. Several basic words are spelled incorrectly, for example *'durt tu'* *'chursaí eigin'* and *'Slán go foill'*. The word *'Spáinnis'* is spelled correctly in one place and incorrectly in another. There are no major punctuation problems, apart from the capital letter in the word *'bliain'* in the middle of a sentence. Another error in the piece, and one common in all candidates' work, is confusion about the use of the *séimhiú* or lenition, for example *'... an bhliain seo chaite'*. Candidates often think that a *séimhiú* should be used in this case because the noun is feminine. There are one or two phrases that demonstrate uncertainty about the use of tenses, for example *'Is é an Spáinnis is fearr liom a dhéanamh...'* (*Is í an Spáinnis ab fhearr liom a dhéanamh...'*)

### EXAMPLE 3

Dia Dhuit a Mhairin

Taim ag scríobh chugat mar gheall ar do fógra a bhí sa nuachtan inné agus ba mhaith liom iarratais a chur isteach ar.

Rugadh agus togadh me í dtuaisceart Chíarraí. Táim an duine is sine sa chlann de ceithre paistí. Tá a lán taithí agam lé daoine óga mar ta triúr daoine níos óga na mé í mo chlann agus bhí orm aire a thabhairt doibh ó ám go hám. Deanaim a lán obair le na paistí óga sna Cumann Lúthchleas Gael agus thaitin sé go mór liom.

Nuair a bhí mo cúrsa críochnaithe agam sa ollscoil chaith me bliain ag obair í naonra in aice liom. Bhí beagnach fiche paistí ann gach lá agus bhí orm gach sort rud a rinne doibh. Chaith mé a lán ama ag imirt le na paistí agus ag coicareacht doibh. Coicareacht maith ata mé agus tá suim agaim í bia deas difrúil agus ta a'fhios agam chom tabheacht a bhfuil sé go níthonn daoine óga an bia ceart agus gan iad a bheith ag ithe garbaiste – agus rudaí milseoige

Is as an Gaeltacht me agus tá an Gaeilge mo phríomhtheanga. Chuaigh me go dti bunscoil gaelach agus ansin go dti meanscoil gaelach.

Fuair mé mo ceadúnas glantiómana í mbliain 2020 agus níl aon fadhb agam bheith ag tiomaint í Nua-Eabhrac mar bhí me ag tiomant ann anuraidh.

Ba bhreá liom cúrsa Spáinnis a dheanamh pairtaimseartha – bhí me ag stadeir an Spáinnis san ollscoil agus ba mháith liom é a togáil suas arís

Ba bhrea liom dul chun aire a thabhairt do a beirt phaistí agus seo mo uimhir telefon mabhionn aon ceist agat 086 88886666

Is mise le meas  
Seán Ó Murchú

### **Commentary on Sample 3**

This piece does not demonstrate the expected writing standard for an examination at upper intermediate level, which is the level of *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2*. With regard to the layout, no address is given and the address '*Dia Dhuit a Mhairin*' is inappropriate in a formal letter such as this. The notes given in the questions are very well developed in the body of the letter, but the candidate has written one hundred words over the stipulated limit, which is not satisfactory. The candidate shows that he/she has some knowledge of the basic language structures. See for example the use of the copula – '*Is as ... mé*'; the use of tenses – '*Rugadh agus tógadh mé ...*' and the use of prepositional pronouns – '*Bhí orm aire a thabhairt dóibh ...*'. On the other hand, there is a lack of consistency with regard to these same basic structures, for example '*Táim an duine is sine ...*'; '*Cócaireacht maith ata mé*', '*Déanaim a lán obair ... agus thaitin sé go mór liom*'. There is carelessness and inconsistency with regard to accuracy, spelling and punctuation in the piece, for example '*ceithre paistí*' (*ceathrar páistí*), '*níos óga*' (*níos óige*), '*déanaim a lan obair*' (*déanaim a lán oibre*), '*rudaí milseoige*' (*rudaí milse*), '*mo cúrsa*' (*mo chúrsa*), etc. .

Here is **Question 2** in the examination of Writing and Use of Irish.

Scríobh **alt** do chomórtas iriseoireachta i nuachtán Gaeilge ar cheann de na hábhair thíos. Scríobh timpeall **160-180 focal**.

***An chathair is fearr liom***

**nó**

***An cinneadh is fearr a rinne mé riamh***

Write an **article** for a journalism competition in an Irish language newspaper about one of the topics below. Write about **160-180 words**.

***My favourite city***

**or**

***The best decision I ever made***

Here are three examples of answers given to this question, and a short commentary on each.

## EXAMPLE 1

### An cinneadh is fearr a rinne mé riamh

Bhí suim agam i gconáí sa réalteolaíocht. Ach cheap mé go raibh mé i m'aonar. Ní raibh aithne agam ar duine ar bith a raibh suim aige sa réalteolaíocht. Cheannaigh mé leabhair agus irisí. Ach ní feidir leat comhrá a bheith agat le leabhar no le hiris. Lá amháin chonaic mé fógra ar an teilifís 'Tá Cumann Réalteolaíochta na hEireann ag lorg baill nua'. Ní raibh aon eolas agam faoin chumann sin. Ach dúirt mé liom fein go mbainfainn triail as. Agus sin é an cinneadh is fearr a rinne mé riamh.

C'én sórt daoine a bheadh ann? Daoine cneasta agus fáilteach an chuid is mo daoibh. Thug siad seans dom rudaí nua a dhéanamh agus a fheiceáil: Slí na Bó Finne a fheacáil ó cheantar dorcha; úsaid a bhaint as teiliseoigh móra, fiú amhain an ceann i mBiorra; bualadh le daoine mór le rá cosúil le Patrick Moore agus spásairí (as Meiriceá agus as an Rúis).

Ina theannta sin thug sé seans dom cuairt a thabhairt ar tíortha eagsúla chun urú gréine a fheiceáil, go mór mór go dtí an Aifric. Ta suim mhór agam sa taisteal freisin, agus sna hainmhithe. Nuiar a bhí mé óg bhí dúil orm dul chun na hAifrice chun na hainmhithe fiáine a fheiceáil. Ach níl ach bringleod a bhí ann, cheap mé.

Ach d'eirigh liom é a dhéanamh, os rud é go raibh mé i mo bhall de Chumann Réalteolaíochta na hEireann.

### **Commentary on Example 1**

Here is a piece of writing that demonstrates the expected standard in writing for *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2*. The subject discussed relates to the theme of the article and a wide range of vocabulary is used. With regard to layout, there is a good beginning to the piece and the points are well developed in the following two paragraphs. The ending is a little bit sudden, but it is possible the candidate did not want to exceed the word limit. It appears that the candidate knows the basic language structures as outlined in the syllabus. There are a few random errors here and there, for example errors and inconsistency in spelling: 'i gconáí' (*i gcónaí*), 'c'én' (*cén*), 'eagsúla' (*éagsúla*). There are also grammatical errors, for example 'ní raibh aithne agam ar duine ar bith' (...*ar dhuine ar bith*) and 'ach níl ach bringleod a bhí ann' (*ach ní raibh ann ach brionglóid*). The candidate uses nice turns of phrase such as 'ina theannta sin' which gives this piece of writing a natural feel.

## EXAMPLE 2

### An chathair is fearr liom

Chuaigh mé chuig Nua Éabhrac ar na mallaibh. Sin an aistear is faide atá déanta agus go dtí seo. Chaith mé seachtain in ait darbh ainm Yonkers. Is gá duit taisteal a dheanamh ma ata tú ag iarriadh gach rud a fheiceall. Bíonn reimshe traein agus busanna ann ó dubh go dhubh. Thug muid cuairt ar na radhanna uilig. Bhí mé ar bharr an Empire State Building ar Oíche Vailintín agus bhain sé geit asam. Tá Nua Éabhra saibhir le stair agus chuir an t-oileán Ellis bron orm. Rinne muid siuiloid thart ar pháirc larna. Bhí brat sneachta ina luí ar an talamh agus bhí an gaoth ag séideadh. Bhí an loch reoite. Mí na Nollag a bhí ann agus bhí sé deich ceim faoin reophointe. Fiú i ndoineann an gheimhridh is fiú an turas seo a dhéanamh is cuma faoi airgead. Chonaic muid an Dealbh Saoirse. Chuir sé díoma orm. Shíl mé go raibh sé an-ard ach chun an fhirinne a rá ní raibh. Bhí na tithe tabhairne ar fheabhas. Bhí rogtha agus tógtha bia agus deoch ar fáil. Cheannaigh mé bronntanais ach bhí orm cain a íoc ag an taerfort ar mo bhealach abhaile

### **Commentary on Example 2**

Here is a piece of writing that demonstrates an average standard with regard to what is expected in *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2*. The subject matter is relevant to the theme of the article, and a reasonable range of vocabulary is used. However, certain phrases are inappropriately translated from English, for example, ‘saibhir le stair’, ‘páirc larna’ and ‘Dealbh Saoirse’. At times, a nice turn of phrase loses its effect due to inaccuracy, for example, ‘rogtha agus tógtha bia agus deoch’. The piece could be laid out better, and the ending could be improved. A good understanding of the past tense, use of prepositions, etc. is demonstrated. The candidate has certain problems that could be rectified if more time was spent re-reading the piece and correcting spelling mistakes, for example ‘ait’ (áit), ‘ma ata tu’ (má tá tú), ‘Nua Éabhra’ (Nua-Eabhrac), etc.

## EXAMPLE 3

### An chathair is fearr liom

Chuaigh mé agus mo chlann ar saoire go beagnach gach cathar san Eorap ach is ea cathar na Gaillimhe an cheann is fhearr liom. Níl sé ach trí uair suas an bóthar, ní dhá duit aon eililt a fhail no bheith ag fanacht ar feadh na uaireanta san aerfort.

Tá radharcanna agus foirgineamh san Galliamh nios deasa na in aon tír eile. Ma bhíonn lá deas agat ta na radharcanna idir an Chlár agus na Gaillimhe ar fheabhas. Ta go leor lochanna agus amhain deasa ann.

Tá na ostáin sna cathair an deas agus ta seónna iontach inti freisin. D'fhanaimid sna Great Southern anois is arís agus tá linn snámha ann agus bialann ana deasa freisin. Tá seoanna dó na páistí óga freisin í rith an tsamhraigh. Ta go leor bialanna deasa sna cathair ach is éa an 'Swallows Nest' an cheann a dtaithíonn is mó liomsa. Tá rogha maith ar an chlár agus níl sé rochostasach, tá an bia thar barr agus an tseirbhís go tapaigh. Tá a lán ceiliureadh ann i rith an tsamhraidh agus tagann na turasorí ó gach taobh den domhan chun iad a feiceáil.

Tá go leor tithe tabhairne ann freisin agus bíonn seisiún ceol ann de gnáth. D-thaithníonn sé sin go mór liom mar bíonn damhsa agus amhránaíocht ann gach oíche Ach is í Rasaí na Gallimhe an celuradh is tabhtacht ata ar siúl ann. Thagann na céadta ann chun na rásaí gach bhliain.

### **Commentary on Example 3**

This piece does not demonstrate the expected standard in writing for *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 2*. Although the answer keeps to the subject of the question, the answer itself is repetitious and does not use a wide enough vocabulary for this level. It is clear that this candidate has ongoing problems with the use of verbs and tenses, for example 'D'fhanaimid sna Great Southern anois is arís' (*Fanaimid sa Great Southern anois is arís*), 'Tá a lán ceiliureadh ann i rith an tsamhraidh' (*Bíonn a lán ceiliúrtha ann...*), 'D'thaithníonn sé sin go mór liom' (*Taitníonn sé sin...*). Many of the mistakes are very basic and would not be expected at this level, for example 'san Gaillimh' (*i nGaillimh/sa Ghaillimh*), 'na ostain' (*na hóstáin*), 'gach bhliain' (*gach bliain*), 'bialann ana deasa' (*bialanna an-deas*).