

Lárionad na Gaeilge: Taighde, Teagasc agus Tástáil
Maynooth University

Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge

Guidelines/Specifications for
Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1 (B1)



Treoir do Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1 (B1)

Purpose

Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1 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.

General information

- The examination for full accreditation is held once every year, usually in April or May in Maynooth University and in other centres throughout Ireland, in Europe, in the USA and Canada. Contact Lárionad na Gaeilge 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 Lárionad na Gaeilge, Maynooth University, Co Kildare, Ireland (01) 7083737 or info@teg.ie
- Candidates and teachers are also advised to study the following documents:

Siollabas Mheánleibhéal 1

Scrúduithe Samplacha Mheánleibhéal 1

Tuairisc ar Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1

The level of Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1(B1)

The level of *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1* generally corresponds to Level B1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001). It is estimated that learners who have successfully completed *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2* will be able to undertake *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1* after approximately 350-400 extra hours of study. Below is a short description of the attainments of *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1* (B1) learners in the various skills.

Speaking and listening comprehension

At this level, learners will be able to participate, without prior preparation, in conversations on general topics that relate to their own lives (see syllabus). They should follow the gist of television programmes or telephone messages. They should be able to participate in simple exchanges of opinion on subject matters with which they are

familiar. However, they will be unable to express a complicated point of view. 'Predictability' is the most important factor at this level.

Reading comprehension

At this level, learners will be able to understand the general meaning of a written account on a subject matter with which they are familiar, for example, simple, non-specialist articles in newspapers and magazines, brochures and pamphlets on cultural events, hobbies and so forth. They will understand descriptions of events, emotions and so on, as expressed in simple letters, e-mail messages and similar documents.

Writing

At this level, learners will be able to write simple, short notes, for example e-mail messages and simple, personal letters providing factual information about events or descriptions of activities. In the context of work, they will be able to write a simple letter providing facts, dates and so forth. Learner-written output should be subject to a proof-reading process, as errors may be present in work which falls outside the usual range of tasks encountered by the employee.

Language specifications

Comprehensive details of the topics, functions, vocabulary, grammatical structures, communication strategies etc on which this examination is based are available in *Siollabas Mheánleibhéal 1* which you can download from this website.

Grading

The final mark a candidate receives in *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1* 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 1 (B1)</i>	
80 - 100%	Pass with distinction
65 - 79%	Pass with merit
50 - 64%	Pass
0 - 49%	Fail

Examination components

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

<i>Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1 (B1)</i>	
• Speaking	30%
• Listening	25%
• Reading	25%
• Writing	20%

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 30 minutes.
- The three main dialects will feature but none of the speakers will have a very strong regional accent.
- Candidates will have 5 minutes to read the questions before the recording is played.
- Each text will be played twice. There will be a break between each item being played and additional time between the questions.
- 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 as long as what is written is comprehensible.
- At this level, candidates will hear some redundant speech and some phrases not included in *Siollabas Mheánleibhéal 1* but which are not essential in answering the questions.
- Candidates are asked to take care with their handwriting.
- There are 4 questions in the listening 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 task</i>
1	6	3 announcements	Short answer/ multiple choice answer	12	Listening to identify key information (time, date, place, event etc.)
2	6	3 short conversations (between friends and relations or employer/ worker, shop assistant / customer etc.)	Short answer/ multiple choice answer	12	Listening for specific information and detailed meaning.
3	6	Interview from a radio programme	Short answer / multiple choice answer	12	Listening to identify details and opinions.

4	6	A longer informal conversation between friends/relations or co-workers	Multiple choice answer, (choice between true/false/not stated)	12	Listening for detailed meaning and to recognize the views and opinions of the speakers.
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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 90 minutes in total. The time that candidates should allocate to the different components or individual tasks is not specified.
- 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 task</i>
1	5	Short texts with personal profiles and opinions	Multiple choice matching (choose 5 items from 9)	10	Reading to find specific information.
2	7	An informal letter, newspaper/magazine article, extract from a website or passage from a book or brochure	Multiple choice answer (3 options) / short answer	14	Reading to find specific information, and to identify views and opinions.
3	8	Newspaper or magazine article	Multiple choice answer (3 options) / short answer	16	Reading to find specific information, and to identify views and opinions.

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 examination

- The reading and writing components last 90 minutes in total. The time that candidates should allocate to the different components or individual tasks is not specified.
- Candidates are asked to take care with their handwriting.
- There are 3 tasks in this component and candidates must attempt **all three**.

<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>
1	10	Email, short letter or note	Cloze test (open)	10	Providing appropriate lexical items. Grammatical accuracy and language structures.
2	1	Email or informal note	Guided writing task	15	Grammatical accuracy and language structures, in addition to textual coherence.
3	1	Informal letter	Guided writing task	25	Grammatical accuracy and language structures, in addition to textual coherence.

Additional information**Question 1**

- There will be 10 gaps in the text with **one word** to be inserted in each case.
- Candidates must provide the correct initial mutation, where needed. For example:

Bhuel bhí an t-agallamh agam ar an Luan agus ceapaim gur éirigh go maith liom cé go raibh roinnt de na ceisteanna deacair go leor.

- The words provided by candidates must have the correct spelling.
- At times, there may be more than one suitable word. A number of different words could be used in the example below, e.g. *maithe*, *deasa*, *nua*, *oíche* and so on.

Beidh deireadh seachtaine iontach againn – tá go leor clubanna _____ sa chathair anois.

Question 2

- Candidates must write **45-55 focal** in the space on the page.
- Marks will be deducted if candidates do not adhere to the prescribed word count.
- 3 content pointers will be given to direct candidates on what to write in the note/email/postcard. Candidates should ensure that they cover each of those pointers in their text.
- Care should be given to spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Question 3

- The candidates will read a section from a letter a friend has written them.
- The candidates must focus on certain questions or points in the letter and write a letter replying or giving whatever information or opinions were requested.
- Marks will be deducted if the candidates depart from the subject matter or if they don't adhere with the prescribed word count.
- Candidates must write approximately **120 words** in the space on the page.
- Assessment will be carried out according to accuracy, content, style, content-arrangement, spelling and grammar.

Marking

- The writing test carries 50 marks, which accounts for 20% of the total exam marks.
- Task one is assessed on the grammatical accuracy and correct spelling of the word written by the candidate. The assessment criteria for the second task are grammatical accuracy and range of vocabulary. For the third task the assessment criteria is: grammatical accuracy, range of vocabulary, content (have all the points been addressed) layout/organization (the correct layout for a letter is used) and appropriateness (suitable greetings etc. are used).
- Examiners work from a comprehensive marking system. Examiners receive comprehensive training and standardization of marks is maintained by monitoring of examiners' performance

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.
- Below is a description of the layout of *Scrúdú Mheánleibhéal 1*.

Part	Time	Type of task	Language functions
1	5 minutes	The candidate is asked questions about his/her daily life (place of residence, family, work, hobbies, future plans for holidays, study etc.)	Giving information and expressing opinions.
2	1 minute preparation 3-4 minutes	Role-play (1) Candidates are given a role-play card in the examination. There are key words on the card that relate to various scenarios (events/plans experiences etc.). Candidates are given one minute to read the information. Candidates must then answer questions posed by the examiner concerning the information on the card. (2) The examiner will have a role-play card with information that relates to a similar subject matter that was on the candidate's card. On this occasion the candidate will ask the examiner questions about the information depicted on his/her card. See sample materials.	Asking for information. Giving information. Expressing opinions.
3	1 minute preparation 3-4 minutes	Telling a simple story: The candidate is given a series of six pictures and has one minute to study them. The candidate then describes what is happening in the pictures. The examiner may ask the candidate some questions if he/she feels that information has been left out or if additional information is required regarding any of the pictures.	Describing what is happening in a series of pictures.

Additional information

Part 1

- Candidates are expected to express simple opinions relating to the topics, as well as describing things that have happened to them and plans that they have.
- Candidates are advised to avoid giving short answers but are instead encouraged to provide reasons and examples to develop and expand on their answers whenever possible.

- It is strongly recommended that candidates do not memorize chunks of material for this part of the oral exam.

Part 2

- Candidates will be given a role-play card in the oral exam and the examiner will then explain the task to the candidate. The candidate will be given **one minute** to read the information on the card.
- When answering the examiner's questions, candidates should base their answers on the information given on the card.
- When the first part of the task is completed, the candidate will be given the opportunity to ask the examiner questions regarding the information on the examiner's card. The information on the examiner's card will relate to the same topic as that on the candidate's card, but with different details. See the Sample Oral Exam Materials in this section of the website.

Part 3

- The examiner will give the candidate a picture, photograph, cartoon or a series of pictures, photographs or cartoons. The materials will relate to scenes and scenarios from normal, everyday life.
- Candidates will be given **one minute** to look at the pictures before being asked to provide a description of the material.
- Candidates should give a full description of what is depicted in the pictures (for example, what is happening and what the people are doing. Candidates at this level are not expected to refer to the wider context of the pictures or to comment on issues relating to the content. Candidates should not refer to things that are not depicted in the pictures themselves.
- The examiner may ask the candidate some questions if he/she feels that information has been left out or if additional information is required regarding any of the pictures.
- Candidates at this level are not expected to use specialised vocabulary. Marks will be awarded, however, to those that can adopt appropriate strategies such as paraphrase when they need to compensate for a missing word or when they fail to recall a specific word.
- Candidates are expected to demonstrate that they have the ability to organize and deliver prolonged and continuous speech.

Marking

- Candidates are assessed on a sustained performance during the whole examination and not on individual tasks. For candidates undertaking full accreditation the speaking component accounts for 30% of the total marks for this examination.
- In the Meánleibhéal 1 oral examination, examiners award marks according to five analytical criteria. These are: Vocabulary, Grammar, Pronunciation, Fluency and Communication. There are two aspects to communicative ability. (1) The candidates' ability to deal reasonably effectively with basic conversation despite their vocabulary being very limited, for example by asking someone to react what they said, by stating that they don't understand and so on. (2) Basic sociolinguistic competences are also tested. The candidates should be able to make basic social contact by using forms

used in greeting or taking leave, asking permission, expressing thanks, apologizing and so on.

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