

Lárionad na Gaeilge: Taighde, Teagasc agus Tástáil

Maynooth University



Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2 (A2)

Chief Examiner's Report
2019



Background

Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2 (A2) 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 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 syllabus for *Bonnleibhéal 1*. Many candidates who undertake this examination have already passed the examination at *Bonnleibhéal 1 (A1)*. The specifications which form the basis for *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2 (A2)* are broadly based on the descriptors for level A2 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001). It is estimated that candidates who have achieved *Bonnleibhéal 1 (A1)* will be able to undertake this examination after an additional 160-200 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 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

Tuairisc ar Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2 (A2)

2012	133
2013	28
2014	38
2015	60
2016	58*
2017	146*
2018	103*
2019	53*

* 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, content and layout of the examination. This valuable feedback helps Lárionad na Gaeilge to continually improve the examination system for the European Certificate in Irish.

Candidate profile

Background information about the candidates is collected through the application forms. Depending on candidature number, this data is periodically analysed to help us create a profile of the candidates that undertake the examinations at each of the different levels.

Please note that the information in this section relates only to candidates who undertook full accreditation in 2018. The information in all other sections of this report relates to 2019 candidates.

Age, gender and nationality of candidates

Over 74% of all candidates in 2018 were female. Of those who did full accreditation, 45% were between 26-45 years of age, 43% were in the 46-64 age group and 5% were above 65 years of age. The vast majority of candidates were Irish and there were a small number of candidates from France, the United States of America and Great Britain. Most 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 2018.

<i>Employment profile of candidates</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Student	5%
Working	74%
Retired	14%

Unemployed	2%
Working in the home	5%

Candidates' reasons for sitting the examination

Candidates were asked why they sat *Scrúdú Bhonnleibhéal 2*. Some candidates gave more than one reason. The findings for 2018 are shown below and relate only to those who sought full accreditation.

<i>Candidates' reasons for sitting the exam</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
To help me progress in my employment	26%
To help with my children's education	17%
For love of the language	71%
For other reasons	17%

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 2018 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	10%
Primary school	5%
Second level school	81%
Third level	5%

Examination centres

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
- Washington DC

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 2019

The table below shows a breakdown of the grades awarded to candidates who sat *Scrúduithe Bhoisneibhéal 2* in 2019.

(a) Full accreditation

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of candidates</i>
Pass with distinction	34%
Pass with merit	29%
Pass	23%
Fail	14%

(b) Partial accreditation (Oral exam)

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of candidates</i>
Pass	61%
Fail	39%

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>
1	6	Three short announcements	Short answer (one word, number or phrase)	12 marks	Listening for specific information.
2	6	Three short informal conversations	Short answer (one word, number or phrase)	12 marks	Listening to find simple factual information.
3	9	A longer conversation	Short answer (one word, number or phrase) / Multiple choice answer (four options)	9 marks	Listening to find simple factual information.
4	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 2019.

2019	
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	77%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	23%

Listening comprehension examination – advice and suggestions for candidates and teachers

The marks in this component were lower than in previous years. Candidates and teachers should note the following points:

- Candidates should use the five minutes before the recording 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 here 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>
1	6	Dialogue between friends / relatives	Multiple choice matching (choose 6 from a total of 9 items)	12 marks	Reading to identify the correct response.
2	6	Short statements or questions and answers	Multiple choice answers (three options)	12 marks	Reading to identify the correct answer
3	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
4	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.
5	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 2019.

2019	
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	74%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	26%

Reading comprehension examination – advice and suggestions for candidates and teachers

Candidates did reasonably well in this section of the examination and marks were similar to previous years. 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>
1	1	Short paragraph	Guided writing task, based on a series of pictures	12 marks	Grammatical accuracy and language structures
2	1	Email or informal note	Guided writing task based on a theme and prompts	12 marks	Grammatical accuracy and language structures
3	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 2019.

<i>2019</i>	
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher	74%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%	26%

Writing examination – advice and suggestions for candidates and teachers

Performance in this section was similar to that of recent 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. Teachers are advised to consult the suggestions regarding the promotion of language awareness in the syllabus.
- Simple sentences are all that is required in the writing examination in *Scrúduithe Bhonnleibhéal 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 errors 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 *síní 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 errors made by candidates in the writing examination. Teachers and candidates are advised to pay special attention to these points, and to other common errors 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 - *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>
1	4-5 minutes	The candidate is asked questions about his/her daily life (place of residence, family, work, hobbies, holidays, travel, etc.)	Giving information
2	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 2019.

(a) Full accreditation

		2019
Number of candidates who obtained 50% or higher		86%
Number of candidates who obtained less than 50%		14%

(b) Partial accreditation (Speaking)

		2019
Grade		Percentage of candidates
Pass		61%
Fail		39%

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 2019 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 errors 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 practice 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*. It is common, for example, for some candidates to use 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 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 advised 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.