

**Oisín MacEoin from St Benildus College, Stillorgan, and Dáimuid Ó Tuama from the Institute of Education came into studio to talk about the written, oral and aural Irish examinations.**

The Oral makes up 25% and, together with the Aural, make up 40% of the entire mark. The exam is 600 marks total.

As the Oral is coming up practise daily at this stage.

It is a huge portion of the marks so it is really worth being prepared.

### **What should students be doing now, for the Oral?**

You will have picked your 5 pieces to read by now so read them daily and with constant practise you should be able to get close to the full 30 marks.

### **What kind of questions will be asked?**

For the conversation the questions are always based around the ordinary simple things of life. The examiner will base these on your own day-to-day experiences - where you live, your family, your hobbies - sport, music, films - the weather, what you did in the last year, your summer holiday. what job you would like, what's happening in the news.

It usually starts with your personal details then widening out to more general areas.

### **How can students maximise their chances in the oral?**

Lead the examiner to the topic you want to talk about - don't wait for a question on the particular subject you want to talk about. You can easily direct the conversation. She noted that one of the biggest mistakes students make is to throw away their questions .by giving one word answers so don't be satisfied with short answers.

### **What are the marks given for?**

80- conversation 20- accuracy.It is not a general knowledge quiz - the examiner does not want to catch you out. The aim of this part of the test is to give you an opportunity to show how much Irish you have - it is about interaction.

With 80 marks going for conversation and 20 for accuracy, its about getting the flow going.

Keep asking yourself basic questions. Get your friends to do it with you for five minutes every now and then.

### **Can you prepare for the Oral and Aural together?**

Yes - remember the Aural is equal in marks to the essay so is a good question to pump up the marks .

Watch TG4 or listen to Raidio na Gaeltachta - get your ear tuned to listening to native speakers . Just five minutes listening a day will help you gain confidence.

### **What's the best way to approach the Aural exam paper?**

As soon as you receive the Aural paper look down through the questions -know what answer you are looking out for.

### **Lets move on to the written paper....Paper One Higher level - what questions must be answered?**

... Question 1...

It is divided into four sections

1. Aiste - you will have prepared a lot of the topics that come up in this section for your oral - quite often it is taken from what was topical the previous year
2. Sceal
3. Alt Nuachtain
4. Diospoireacht

### **Which is the most popular section and how can students prepare for that?**

Aiste - look out for an open title that can lend itself to a topic you have prepared. For example a question taken from a past paper - "write about a danger in society" - would accommodate a prepared essay.

However, many students don't like talking about problems in society and for them the Diospoireacht may suit better.

### **What's the best way to prepare for the comprehension?**

Work on building up a vocabulary - you will have decided which section you want to do so gather the appropriate words and phrases you will need for your chosen style.

Reading articles in Irish Papers - will help broaden your vocabulary - it is also invaluable for preparation for the comprehension.

### **How should you approach the question on the day of the exam?**

When you get your exam paper, read the questions on the comprehension, then move away, read the essay titles and then go back and read comprehension again.

It is crucial you understand the questions.

The key is to read all the questions in the past papers.

The same type of questions come up each year and remember that the first part of question will be somewhere at first part of text and so on.

You must answer in your own words so do not take your answer directly from the piece although you can use quotes.

By doing the comprehension first it will get you in train for the essay - getting the flow going and you will often get an idea, a word, a phrase you can use in your essay.

Practice, practice practice.

The texts are quite often taken from Irish publications so try and get hold of some of these - papers such as Foinse or La.

Your teacher may have these or other magazines - but source your own - you will be surprised how easily you can make sense of an article without knowing all the words. and that will give you a lot of confidence for the exam.

### **Paper Two, Higher Level - Answer every question- 1,2 ,3 AND 4**

Begin this paper with the last question - stair na gaeilge - a lot of students don't get to this question or are exhausted by the time they do - yet it is the easiest question to get marks on .

It's factual - you either know the answer or you don't .but you have a choice . .and even if you have a lapse of memory the answer might come to you before the end of exam.

### **What about the prose... how is that divided?**

There are two 25 mark questions and one compulsory question on one story which means you cannot leave any out.

The difference in ordinary and higher level are the types of questions.

OL questions are very specific and questions on the HL paper are more about themes or relationships. How does the piece affect you? Many of the questions are weighted towards the characters - so know them.

### **Let's look at the Ordinary level paper - how can students prepare for this?**

Together, the poetry and the prose are only worth 18% of the entire exam so do not devote excessive study time to this area while cutting down on your preparation for rest of exam.

Many students fall down in this part of the exam because they haven't acquired the vocabulary necessary so learn expressions to be able to talk about story or poem in terms of theme, type and style, imagery, words to describe emotions/feelings, how the poem or story affected you, how effective the poet was in creating a particular atmosphere. You should know all aspects of your characters and their role in the text.