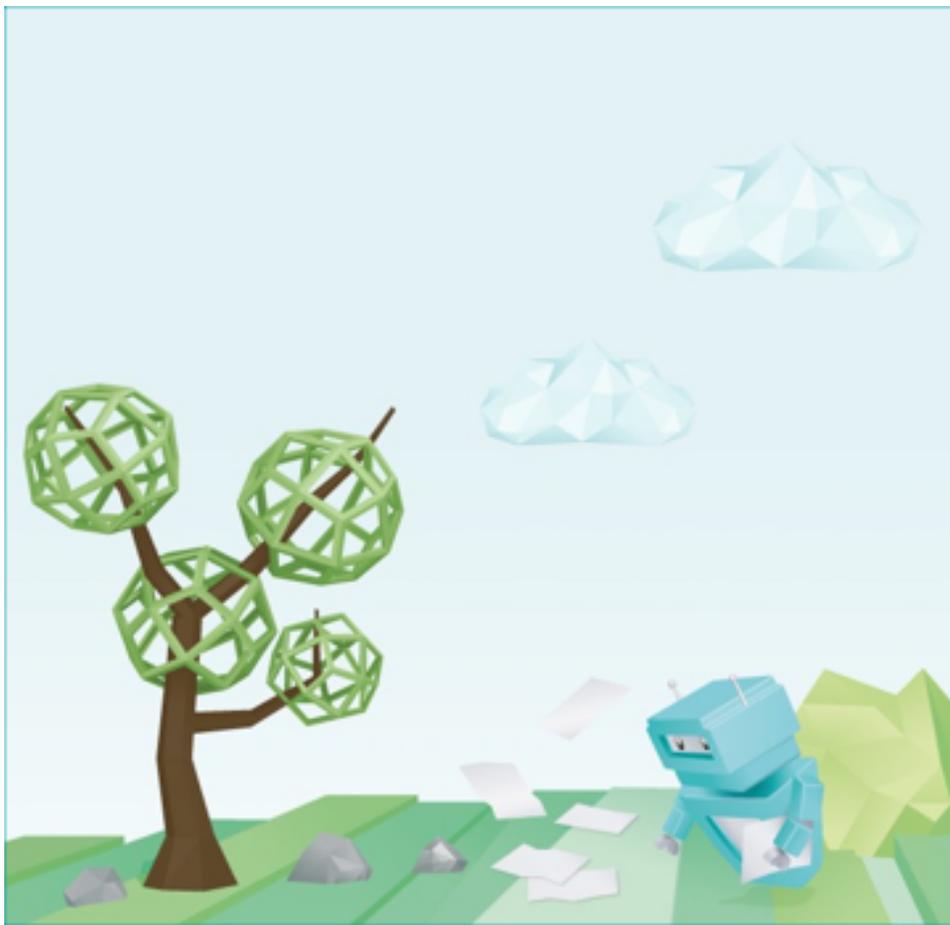


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Irish

How to get a Distinction in Junior Cycle Irish



by **Áine R.**

Áine R. was a top student in her Irish class. Here, she shares some advice that she believes will help you achieve a Distinction in Junior Cycle Irish.

The new Junior Cycle Irish course is specifically designed to test students of all levels – getting a distinction won't be easy! The exam is split into two parts, Roinn A, the listening section, and Roinn B, the reading, composition, and literature section. The course also includes two CBAs and an Assessment Task. To get a distinction, you must achieve at least 270 marks out of the 300 total. This guide is designed to take you step-by-step through the Junior Cycle exam, giving you tips and tricks relevant to each question along the way.

Contents

Classroom Based Assessments & The Assessment Task	3
Final Assessment	5
Some Final tips	10



Classroom Based Assessments & The Assessment Task

The Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) do not count towards the final grade that appears on your Junior Certificate; however, they are graded and the result will appear on what is known as the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. Based on the quality of each of your CBAs, you will be awarded a descriptor: Yet to meet expectations, In line with expectations, Above expectations, or Exceptional. There are two CBAs that must be completed:

1. **Classroom Based Assessment 1 (The Collection of Texts):** At the beginning of third year, you will begin to prepare your collection of texts. This is a small portfolio of some of your best work from second and third year. You will submit three pieces in total – **one must be an audio recording, another must be based on one of the literary texts you have studied (novel, poem, drama etc.),** and the last you can **choose yourself.**
2. **Classroom Based Assessment 2 (Oral Presentation):** Your CBA 2 will be an oral presentation. This is very similar to the English presentation you will have completed at the end of second year, so you will be familiar with the format. You will be asked to **give a short presentation in Irish on any topic that interests you.** This can be a drama, a speech, an interview, a roleplay or any other format you want, as long as you have your teacher's permission. The presentation should last around **three minutes**, then your teacher will then ask you some questions about your presentation. Once again, this CBA is nothing to worry



about – just make sure you know your content and speak as clearly as possible.

(Don't worry too much about CBAs – just make sure you **check your pieces for mistakes before submitting**, and **speak clearly in your audio recording!**)

The Assessment Task is where all the work you do for your CBAs finally pays off. It is a short test worth 30 marks (10% of your final grade) that you will do during class time after you have completed your two CBAs.

- ☒ The main purpose of the task is for you to **reflect on your CBAs** – both the things you excelled at, and the mistakes you made. You will be asked to answer questions relating to your experience with the CBAs – for example, you may be asked to talk about **what you would change if you were to do the CBAs again**.
- ☒ This task should be quite easy, as you are being assessed on your own work – just make sure you are confident in writing about your experience with the CBAs.



Final Assessment

Roinn A (Éisteacht)

- ☒ The listening portion of the exam is only **worth 30 marks**, but failing to prepare for it can mean the difference in a grade.
- ☒ It is **divided into 4 questions**, and you will hear each section **twice**.
- ☒ To prepare for the listening, you can test yourself using **past exam questions** and sample questions, **watch the news** or other TV shows on TG4, and **listen to Irish-language podcasts online**.

Roinn B (Léamh, Ceapadóireacht agus Litríocht)

This section is **worth 240 marks** – this is where the majority of your marks will be coming from. There are **7 questions** in this section:

- ☒ **Léamh (Ceist 5)**: The reading section consists of a **comprehension** (léamhtuiscint), and is **worth 60 marks**. The questions will be mostly based on the information in the paragraph, however the last question will ask for your opinion – so it is a good idea to prepare phrases such as:
 - *I mo thuairim...* In my opinion
 - *Dar liom/leis/léi...* According to me/her/him
 - *Thaitin ... liom mar ...* I like ... because ...
 - *Ceapaim go bhfuil ...* I think that
 - *Ba mhaith liom ...* I would like
 - *Mholfainn ...* I would advise



To prepare for the reading section you can:

- **Practise answering past papers and sample papers.** Highlight any words you don't recognise and look them up.
- **Read in Irish as much as possible.** It is very important for you to understand the **syntax** (the way a sentence is formed) of the language in order to understand the paragraph.

☒ **Litríocht (Ceist 6, 8, & 10):** The literature section consists of three questions – one on your **studied novel**, another on your **studied poem**, and finally, one on either your **short story or drama**, which adds up to **110 marks altogether**.

- The novel question is **worth 50 marks**, or around 17% of your total score. The questions will usually be based around the **central characters, the relationships between characters, the themes, the setting, or the climax of the novel**.
- The poetry question is **worth 30 marks** (10% of total score). The questions here differ slightly from the novel question, but it will still be necessary to learn the **themes, emotions and images** described in the poem.
- The short story/drama question is also **worth 30 marks** in total (10% of total score). The question on the short story will be based around the **themes, emotions, characters, and the relationships between characters in the short story**. For the drama question, you may be asked about the **climax of the drama, the characters in the drama or the relationship between two characters in the drama**. You should also



prepare small descriptions of the start, middle, and end of the drama, as they may ask you to give a summary of a certain part. This question is **not guaranteed**, unlike the poetry and novel questions, which means there are less sample questions to work with. However, you can always ask your teacher for example questions or make up your own.

- ☒ I find the best approach to take when writing a response to these questions is to follow the PQE (Point, Quote, Explanation) method - **make your point, back it up with some textual evidence or a quote, and explain how that quote proves your initial statement.** You should also **prepare some ideas for your own opinions of the texts** – what you enjoyed, what you liked and what you disliked – as you may be asked for your own input. This method is foolproof and will make sure you stay on task!
- ☒ Of course, make sure you understand all your texts, and can describe them in Irish – you might want to **read through all your texts four or five times** to make sure you fully understand everything.
- ☒ One of the most effective ways to study for any literature question is to **look at the past papers/sample questions and prepare answers**, as you will find you can use some variation of your prepared answers to answer the questions on the exam.
- ☒ **Grammar (Ceist 7):** The grammar question on the Junior Cycle paper is **worth 10 marks**, and asks you to correct 10 grammatical errors within a small paragraph. This question is actually very hard to get full marks on, as you must



have a very good grasp of Irish grammar in order to recognise the mistakes. A mistake could be **as simple as a missing capital letter or fada**, or they could be far **more complex**. Below are some of the concepts that are worth studying to do well in this section:

- **Verb tenses** like the **Aimsir Chaite**, **Aimsir Láithreach**, and **Aimsir Fháistineach**. If you want to be very thorough in your study you can also research the other verb tenses like **an Modh Coinníollach** (the conditional), **an Modh Ordaitheach** (the imperative), and **an Modh Foshuiteach** (the subjunctive).
- **An Aidiacht Shealbhach**: the possessive pronouns, e.g. *mo, do, a, ár, bhur*, etc.
- **Pluralisation**: pluralisation follows a certain set of rules depending on what declension the word is in. Don't worry if this sounds too complex, as you may already know the plural of a word without understanding the rule, e.g. *cáilín* to *cáilíní*.
- **An Tuiseal Ginideach**: the possessive case. This is usually found where **two nouns are beside each other**, in which case the second noun is changed. For example, *mála* and *scoil* become ***mála scoile***.
- **Aidiachtaí Chomparáideach**: comparative adjectives, for example *déanach, níos déanaí, is déanaí*.
- **Réamhfhocail**: prepositions, for example, *liom, leat, leis*, etc.

Although there is only one formal grammar question, it is still important to study grammar, as it will help you a lot in the **composition questions**.



☒ **Composition (Ceist 9 & 11):** The composing questions can differ year to year, and can include any piece of composition, such as, **blogs, speeches, emails, letters, advertisements, essays, magazine articles**, etc. The composition questions add up to **60 marks overall** (20% of total score). It is recommended that you **fill all the space you are given** for these questions, as if you leave too much space blank you may be penalised. To prepare for these questions you can:

- Write and memorise lots of **plans for the various formats** that may be asked.
- **Memorise lots of seanfhocail** (phrases) to help you in pieces such as essays, magazine articles etc.
- **Practice using past papers and sample papers** - aim to write in Irish as much as possible!



Some Final Tips

☒ While knowing all your information is very important if you want to get a distinction, it will be of no use to you if you can't understand the questions asked on the exam! The language in the questions may appear very complicated, and you might misinterpret what you are being asked. My advice would be to **go through the past papers and underline key terms in the questions**, such as:

- *An ndéarfá féin...* would you say
- *Déan cur síos...* describe
- *Tréith...* characteristic
- *Moladh...* advice
- *Buaicphointe...* highlight
- *Achoimhre...* summary

☒ The new Junior Cycle course covers a lot of information, and you will have to work very hard if you want to achieve a distinction. Follow this guide and you should have more than enough to get you through the exam with maximum marks. **Keep expanding your vocabulary, and read, write, and listen in Irish as much as possible.** Go raibh maith agaibh agus go n-éirí libh!





Go n-éirí libh!

