



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Leaving Certificate 2026

Marking Scheme

Politics and Society

Higher Level

Note to teachers and students on the use of published marking schemes

Marking schemes published by the State Examinations Commission are not intended to be standalone documents. They are an essential resource for examiners who receive training in the correct interpretation and application of the scheme. This training involves, among other things, marking samples of student work and discussing the marks awarded, so as to clarify the correct application of the scheme. The work of examiners is subsequently monitored by Advising Examiners to ensure consistent and accurate application of the marking scheme. This process is overseen by the Chief Examiner, usually assisted by a Chief Advising Examiner. The Chief Examiner is the final authority regarding whether or not the marking scheme has been correctly applied to any piece of candidate work.

Marking schemes are working documents. While a draft marking scheme is prepared in advance of the examination, the scheme is not finalised until examiners have applied it to candidates' work and the feedback from all examiners has been collated and considered in light of the full range of responses of candidates, the overall level of difficulty of the examination and the need to maintain consistency in standards from year to year. This published document contains the finalised scheme, as it was applied to all candidates' work.

In the case of marking schemes that include model solutions or answers, it should be noted that these are not intended to be exhaustive. Variations and alternatives may also be acceptable. Examiners must consider all answers on their merits, and will have consulted with their Advising Examiners when in doubt.

Future Marking Schemes

Assumptions about future marking schemes on the basis of past schemes should be avoided. While the underlying assessment principles remain the same, the details of the marking of a particular type of question may change in the context of the contribution of that question to the overall examination in a given year. The Chief Examiner in any given year has the responsibility to determine how best to ensure the fair and accurate assessment of candidates' work and to ensure consistency in the standard of the assessment from year to year. Accordingly, aspects of the structure, detail and application of the marking scheme for a particular examination are subject to change from one year to the next without notice.

In considering this marking scheme, the following should be noted:

- The detail required in any answer is determined by the context and the manner in which the question is asked and by the number of marks assigned to the response in the examination paper.
- Words, expressions or phrases must be correctly used in context and not contradicted, and where there is evidence of incorrect use or contradiction, the marks may not be awarded.
- As a general rule, if in doubt about the validity of any response, examiners must consult their advising examiner before awarding marks.
- The suggestions, examples etc. in the scheme are not exhaustive and alternative valid responses etc. are acceptable.

The procedure for marking consists of:

- Careful reading and analysis of all the responses
- Allocation of marks to the components according to the agreed scheme.

ANNOTATIONS USED FOR ONLINE MARKING



INDICATES THE POINT AT WHICH MARKS WERE AWARDED



INFORMATION NOT VALID / INDICATES THAT THE SECTION HAS BEEN SEEN AND READ BY THE EXAMINER



PAGE SEEN BY THE EXAMINER

SECTION A

Question 1

There are 15 questions of which candidates must answer 10

50 marks - 10 x 5 marks

- (a) Tokenism occurs when children are given the appearance of being involved, but their views have no real impact on decisions.

Comment on the value of tokenism in children's participation in initiatives that affect them.

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Prepares students for future engagement
- Low level participation is better than none
- Children should be participating at higher levels
- Gives a false impression of empowerment

Very good commentary	4 - 5M
Good commentary	2 - 3M
Fair commentary	0 - 1M

- (b) Transport for Ireland has introduced a JAM card, which stands for "Just a Minute". It allows passengers with a learning difficulty, autism, or a communication barrier to discreetly indicate that they may need a little extra time or understanding in public or social situations.

Comment on this initiative in relation to equity and/or equality.

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Simple way to help passengers out
- It levels the playing field for those with different needs
- Promotes understanding
- Gives confidence to users

Very good commentary	4 - 5M
Good commentary	2 - 3M
Fair commentary	0 - 1M

(c) Explain the role of the European Commission.

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Executive body
- Proposing legislation
- Enforcing EU law
- Managing the EU budgets

Very good explanation 4 - 5M

Good explanation 2 - 3M

Fair explanation 0 - 1M

(d) Plestia Alaqad is a Palestinian journalist who gained international attention for her eye witness reporting during the war in Gaza. She has become a powerful symbol of journalistic courage. Why is it important that we have first-hand accounts from war zones? 5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- An honest account
- Direct knowledge of what is happening

Very good explanation 4 - 5M

Good explanation 2 - 3M

Fair explanation 0 - 1M

(e) Describe **two** methods by which a potential candidate can secure a place on the ballot paper for presidential elections in Ireland.

5 marks

3 + 2M

Responses may make reference to:

- Nominations from 4 county councils
- Nominations from 20 members of the Oireachtas
- Sitting/former presidents can nominate themselves so long as they have not carried out 2 terms of office

Very good description 3M

Good description 2M

Fair description 1M

(f) “This is inhuman, degrading, and unworthy of Ireland in 2025.”

Mark Kelly, the Chief Inspector of Prisons in Ireland.

Irish prisons are currently operating at 120% of capacity and around 500 prisoners are sleeping on floors. Mr Kelly has also said that overcrowding and poor healthcare had contributed to a 50% increase in prison deaths in 2024. (Irish Times, November 2025)

Comment on these statistics in relation to the human rights of prisoners in Ireland.

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- UDHR
- Other relevant descriptive commentary

Very good commentary 4 - 5M

Good commentary 2 - 3M

Fair commentary 0 - 1M

(g) “Describe **two** aspects of the role of The Electoral Commission/An Coimisiún Toghcháin.

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Overseeing electoral operations
- Boundary reviews
- Registering political parties
- Researching electoral policy and procedures
- Regulating online advertising
- Education of the electorate

Very good description 3M

Good description 2M Good description 2M

Fair description 1M Fair description 1M

(h) State the **five** filters in Noam Chomsky’s theory of ‘Manufactured Consent’.

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Ownership
- Advertising
- The Media Elite
- Flak
- The Common Enemy
- Other relevant descriptive answers

(i) What message does this graphic convey about inequality and income distribution in society?

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- The rich are getting richer
- There are a lot more people living in poverty than there are rich people
- There is a huge disparity between the richest and poorest people in the world

Very good description 4 - 5M

Good description 2 - 3M

Fair description 0 - 1M

(j) Give **two** examples of how the PR-STV electoral system in Ireland supports the rights of minorities.

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Minority groups can win representation
- Multi TD constituencies make it easier for different communities to elect a representative
- Candidates can seek 2nd preference votes, which can lead to more inclusive campaigning
- Reduces the dominance of majority groups
- Less financially risky to stand for election than in a first past the post system

Very good description 3M

Good description 2M

Fair description 1M

(k) Explain what it means for human rights to be 'inalienable'. Give an example of an inalienable right.

5 marks

3 + 2M

Responses may make reference to:

- Rights cannot be taken away, given away or transferred

Very good explanation 3M

Good explanation 2 M

Fair explanation 0 - 1M

Example: 2M

- Right to life
- Right to freedom
- Right to dignity

- (l) Comment on the relevance in contemporary Ireland of the quotation from James Connolly:
'Let no Irishman throw a stone at the foreigner; he may hit his own clan.'
5 marks

Commentary may make reference to:

- Ireland's history of emigration
- Attacks on immigrants may hurt people who share your identity and history
- The lines between 'us' and 'them' are not always visible/clear
- We have a common humanity and must respect it

Very good commentary	4 - 5M
Good commentary	2 - 3M
Fair commentary	0 - 1M

- (m) According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) June 2025, consumer prices rose by 1.8% over 12 months to June 2025.
What challenges does this data pose for society in Ireland today?
5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Rising cost of essential items
- Wealth inequality
- Stress about finances impacts lower paid workers
- Leads to a feeling that life is becoming less affordable
- Fears for the future as cost of living rises quicker than wages

Very good description	4 - 5M
Good description	2 - 3M
Fair description	0 - 1M

(n) How effective are COP agreements in achieving sustainable development?

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Integrating climate and development goals
- Encouraging long term planning in relation to SDGs
- Support for developing countries
- Non-binding targets
- Commitments not strong enough (speed/funding/action)
- Implementation deficits
- A relevant example

Very good comment	4 - 5M
Good comment	2 - 3M
Fair comment	0 - 1M

(o) Briefly outline the role of the World Bank.

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Reducing poverty
- Providing loans and grants to poorer countries
- Funding education/health/infrastructure
- Supporting climate resilience
- Economic research
- Responding to pandemics/climate disasters/conflict

Very good description	4 - 5M
Good description	2 - 3M
Fair description	0 - 1M

SECTION B

Question 2 – 150 marks

(a) What is the main objective of the ‘Correct the Map’ campaign in Document A? 10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- A shift away from the outdated Mercator projection
- Adoption of the Equal Earth projection

Very good description	8 - 10M
Good description	4 - 7M
Fair description	0 - 3M

(b) Comment on the authorship of Document B.

10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Collaborative authorship
- Advocacy led - Not purely independent -commissioned by an organisation
- Academic grounding (University of Bath)

Very good commentary	8 - 10M
Good commentary	4 - 7M
Fair commentary	0 - 3M

(c) From Document A, explain what is meant by 'maps are instruments of power'. 20 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Controlling the narrative
- Reinforcing portrayals of Africa as weak/peripheral
- Influences more than just the map itself, it sets policy

Very good commentary	16 - 20M	independent, insightful comment
Good commentary	11 - 15M	relevant comment but lacking insight
Fair commentary	6 - 10M	limited, lacking clarity
Weak commentary	0 - 5M	contradictory or confused.

(d) Outline the stereotypes of Africa as mentioned in Document B. 20 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Nature/environmental stereotypes
- Societal stereotypes
- Cultural stereotypes

Very good	16 - 20M	clear, accurate, concise information
Good	11 - 15M	relevant information but lacking cohesion
Fair	6 - 10M	limited, lacking clarity
Weak	0 - 5M	contradictory or confused.

(e) Critique the methodology used to gather data as described in Document B. 20 mark

Responses may make reference to:

- Data is quantitative
- Almost 1000 participants
- Attention checks improve accuracy of data
- Excluding participants with African and European backgrounds is questionable
- Almost complete exclusion of Black participants
- Good for mapping trends but not for explaining them in depth
- Qualitative data would give a fuller understanding of the issue

Very good answer	16 - 20M	clear, accurate, insightful evaluation
Good answer	11 - 15M	relevant but lacking insight
Fair answer	6 - 10M	limited, lacking clarity
Weak answer	0 - 5M	contradictory or confused evaluation

(f) Based on the evidence in both documents, what are the economic implications of portraying Africa more fairly? 20 marks

- Increase economic opportunities
- Association with instability may reduce investment
- Accurate presentation of Africa could increase tourism, trade, investment
- Confidence could be increased in African economies

Very good answer	16 - 20M	independent, insightful discussion using both documents
Good answer	11 - 15M	relevant discussion but lacking insight using both documents
Fair answer	6 - 10M	limited, lacking clarity, limited use of both documents
Weak answer	0 - 5M	contradictory or confused, limited use of both documents.

(g) Drawing on the data presented in both documents and the quotation below, what conclusions can you draw about the perception of Africa as being peripheral and marginal on the global stage? 50 marks

Conclusions (30 marks)

Very Good	24 - 30M	focused, insightful
Good	17 - 23M	coherent, relevant
Fair	9 - 16M	limited, flawed
Weak	0 - 8M	confused, inaccurate.

Use of documents (20 marks)

Very Good	16 - 20M	comprehensive use of documents
Good	11 - 15M	basic use of documents
Fair	6 - 10M	limited use of documents
Weak	0 - 5M	use of documents is vague or inaccurate.

Section C

Marking the discursive essay:

1. Read the entire essay without allocating any marks.
2. Mark the essay using the marking criteria and total the marks.
3. Review total mark awarded using the grade band descriptors.
4. To finalise the total mark review again using the criteria.

Marking Criteria

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak
Introduction (I)	Directly addresses, clarifies and contextualises the issue.	Directly addresses and contextualises the issue.	Issue is reasonably addressed with limited contextualisation.	Issue is vaguely addressed with no contextualisation.	Issue is vaguely or completely misunderstood.
10 marks	9 - 10	7 - 8	5 - 6	3 - 4	0 - 2
Knowledge (K)	Clear and critical understanding. Extensive knowledge of the issue.	A very good logical essay based on a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the issue. No significant omissions or errors.	A reasonable essay based on a basic knowledge but limited understanding of the issue. Contains minor omissions and errors.	A confused essay based on a vague understanding of the issue. Contains major omissions and errors.	A weak essay showing little or no knowledge of the issue. Information may be incorrect or contradictory.
20 marks	18 - 20	14 - 17	10 - 13	5 - 9	0 - 4
Evidence (E)	Identifies and interrogates convincingly a broad range of relevant, authoritative and credible sources of evidence.	Identifies and interrogates a sufficient range of relevant, authoritative and credible evidence.	Identifies and interrogates a limited range of evidence with an over reliance on unsubstantiated data.	Evidence presented is simplistic or confused. Evidence is only vaguely relevant to the topic.	Little or no evidence presented / evidence is not relevant to the issue.
20 marks	18 - 20	14 - 17	10 - 13	5 - 9	0 - 4
Analysis & Synthesis (A)	An excellent argument based on a critical and perceptive analysis of the evidence.	A very good argument based on a critical and perceptive analysis of the evidence.	A good argument based on a basic analysis of the evidence.	Argument is flawed with limited evidence of analysis / superficial analysis with significant inaccuracies.	Argument is poorly constructed, confused or illogical. Analysis is poor.
15 marks	13 - 15	10 - 12	7 - 9	4 - 6	0 - 3
Evaluation (V)	Comprehensively integrates comparative / alternative perspectives. Draws insightful, independent conclusions & confidently justifies own position.	Very good integration of comparative / alternative perspectives into the argument. Draws very good independent conclusions & clearly justifies own position.	Good integration of comparative / alternate viewpoints in to the argument. Draws independent conclusions & justifies own position	Limited comparative / alternative perspectives and viewpoints. Limited independent conclusions & justification of own position	No comparative perspectives or viewpoints. No independent conclusions or justification of own position
15 marks	13 - 15	10 - 12	7 - 9	4 - 6	0 - 3
Cohesion (C)	Organisation and management of views and opinions is excellent. Excellent focus and clarity throughout. Excellent construction.	Organisation and management of views and opinion is very good. Very good focus and clarity throughout. Very good construction.	Organisation and management of ideas is basic. Reasonable construction	Organisation and management of ideas is limited and confused Poor construction.	Essay lacks structure, organisation, coherence, focus, context and clarity.
20 marks	18 - 20	14 - 17	10 - 13	5 - 9	0 - 4

ESSAY GRADE BANDS

H1 90 - 100 Marks	H2 80 - 89 Marks	H3 70 - 79 Marks	H4 60 - 69 Marks	H5 50 - 59 Marks	H6 40 - 49 Marks	H7 30 - 39 Marks	H8 0 - 29 Marks
Response is coherent; well-structured and supported by relevant, accurate and varied evidence using comparative evidence. A thorough grasp of the requirements of the task is obvious as is understanding and independent thinking. Engagement with the topic is in-depth and judgements and conclusions offered are comprehensively justified. This answer exhibits detailed knowledge based on critical thinking, deep insight, sharp focus, accomplished argument and is supported by a range of evidence and sources.	Response focuses clearly and coherently on the question posed. Arguments are very well structured and unified supported by relevant, accurate and varied evidence. Points are very well organised and there is a very good coherent argument present using comparative viewpoints. There is very good critical engagement with the topic. Independent judgements and conclusions offered have very reasonable justification.	Response focuses clearly on the question set. The demands of the question are well understood. Points tend to be well supported by accurate and relevant evidence. Points are well organised and there is a coherent argument present. There is evidence of critical engagement with the topic and judgements and conclusions offered have reasonable justification.	Response shows a basic understanding of the question. Response reasonably addresses the question set. Knowledge of the issue is basic. Points made will be relevant and will be supported by some valid references and illustration. There may be a sense however, that some points are left to stand alone and are not fully integrated into a unified argument. There will be some judgements and independent conclusions offered with limited justification.	Response shows that the question is reasonably well understood. Knowledge of the issue is limited and answers make tentative points and use limited evidence that is valid and appropriate. Points made are limited and evidence is not developed into a forceful, unified argument. There is limited critical engagement with the topic resulting in answers which lack an integrated independent conclusion.	Response shows that the question is only partially understood. Response lacks clear focus and will tend to wander from the point or from point to point. Summary and repetition often take the place of discussion. Knowledge of the issue is very limited with very little evidence to support the points being made. There is very limited or no critical engagement with the topic. Judgements and conclusions offered are vague or personal with very limited justification. Re-reading may be necessary to discover meaning.	Response shows that the question has been partially understood and the response is poorly focused. A few valid points may be stated but not purposely linked to make an argument and there is no evidence to support any of the points made. There is no evidence of critical engagement with the topic. The candidate has not formed a judgement, drawn independent conclusions or offered justification for their own opinion or position.	Response shows that the question will be very poorly understood or completely misunderstood. A very poor answer which, at best, offers only fragmented pieces of information with little or no relevant points. No relevant arguments offered or evidence to support any claims made. Response is very poor and lacks focus and the reader is confused. Some points might be totally inaccurate or irrelevant to the question.

Note: Be careful not to penalise skilful brevity, nor to reward unwarranted length.

CITIZENSHIP PROJECT REPORT

Rationale and research

- Explain the rationale for the action you have chosen to carry out.
- Give a clear account of the aims of the citizenship project, the means chosen to achieve those aims and the action plan. In the case of a group project, identify both the group's aims for the project and the aims that you had as an individual in order to fulfil your role.
- Provide a summary of research undertaken including the key research findings (data) which informed the action. Comment on the sources of information used to inform the action such as web-based materials, literature, interviews, and other sources.
- Make sure you include full references in the *References and Bibliography* section at the end of the report.

Execution of citizenship project

- Provide a summary of the actions undertaken in carrying out the project. In the case of a group project, distinguish clearly between group actions and your individual actions by using "we" or "I" as appropriate.
- Critically analyse the various elements of the action plan, including as appropriate any challenges encountered and how these challenges were dealt with.
- Describe the outcomes of the project.

Reflections on knowledge gained and skills developed

- Critically reflect on the personal insights and knowledge you have gained about this issue since undertaking the project.
- Identify and describe the skills you developed through your work on this project with particular reference to working with others and being personally effective.
- Briefly explain the role that reflection, feedback from others, and learning from the course played in helping you to carry out the project.

CITIZENSHIP PROJECT – SECTION A

Rationale and Research

35 marks

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair
Explanation for the rationale	6 - 7M	4 - 5M	2 - 3M	0 - 1M
Aims of the project with an action plan setting out the means chosen to achieve those aims	10 - 12M	7 - 9M	4 - 6M	0 - 3M
Summary of the findings and sources	10 - 12M	7 - 9M	4 - 6M	0 - 3M

References and Bibliography - Check the back of the booklet

(0/2/4)

(4 marks)

CITIZENSHIP PROJECT - SECTION B

Execution of citizenship project

45 marks

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair
Summary of the actions undertaken (We / I)	12 - 15M	8 - 11M	4 - 7M	0 - 3M
Critical analysis of the action plan	12 - 15M	8 - 11M	4 - 7M	0 - 3M
Outcomes	12 - 15M	8 - 11M	4 - 7M	0 - 3M

CITIZENSHIP PROJECT - SECTION C

Reflections on knowledge gained and skills developed

20 marks

	Very Good	Good	Fair
Knowledge and insights about the issue	5 - 6M	3 - 4M	0 - 2M
Skills	5 - 6M	3 - 4M	0 - 2M
Reflection	4M	3M	0 - 2M
Feedback and learning	4M	3M	0 - 2M

