



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Leaving Certificate 2026

Marking Scheme

Politics and Society

Ordinary 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 / INFORMATION LACKING DETAIL

SECTION A – 100 MARKS

Question 1

There are 20 questions of which candidates must answer 10

10 x 10 marks

(a) Why is it important for young people to learn about human rights?

10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- To protect themselves
- To protect others
- To allow all to live with dignity
- To promote empathy and inclusion

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

**(b) Name a group that may be under-represented in the decision-making processes in schools.
Explain your answer.**

10 marks

Name: 2M

Explanation: 8M

Responses may make reference to:

- Tokenism
- Authoritarianism
- A lack of collaboration

Very good explanation	6 - 8M
Good explanation	4 - 5M
Fair explanation	0 - 3M

(c) Explain the role of the President in Ireland.

10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Representation
- Constitutional duties i.e. signing a bill into law, appointing the government etc
- Symbolic role
- Guardian of the Constitution

Very good explanation 8 - 10M

Good explanation 4 - 7M

Fair explanation 0 - 3M

(d)

(i) Overall, what percentage of persons aged 18 and over experienced discrimination?

4 marks

22%

(ii) Which of the grounds for work-related discrimination is the most significant?

3 marks

An appropriate answer

Very good conclusion 3M

Good conclusion 2M

Fair conclusion 1M

(iii) Looking at the percentage of people who experience discrimination, do you think it is a problem in Ireland?

3 marks

An appropriate answer

Very good explanation 3M

Good explanation 2M

Fair explanation 1M

(e) Describe two ways we see patriarchy in the world today.

10 marks

2@5M

Responses may make reference to:

- Home
- Work
- Politics
- Social media

Very good explanation 4 - 5M

Good explanation 2 - 3M

Fair explanation 0 - 1M

(f) Briefly explain Thomas Hylland Eriksen's theory of 'Overheating'.

10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Social/economic/cultural change happening too fast
- Systems are becoming unstable due to globalisation
- Loss of control of institutions

Very good explanation 8 - 10M

Good explanation 4 - 7M

Fair explanation 0 - 3M

(g) Explain what it means for Human Rights to be 'universal'.

10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Rights which everyone has regardless of nationality, religion etc
- Examples: food, education, liberty, work, health

Very good explanation 8 - 10M

Good explanation 4 - 7M

Fair explanation 0 - 3M

(h) What is the process for selecting the Northern Ireland Executive and/or ministers?

10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- The D'Hondt system
- First and deputy first ministers are from the largest and second largest party and share equal authority
- Justice minister elected through a cross community vote

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

(i) Comment on the changing nature of contemporary media.

10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Platforms/publications
- Shorter forms
- Algorithms
- Participation rather than consumption
- Personalisation
- AI

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

(j) Is it important to have laws against discrimination?

10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Power imbalances
- Preventing systemic harm
- Promoting social stability
- Preventing access to housing, jobs etc.

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

(k) Give an example of someone who has engaged in charity work. Explain their contribution.

10 marks

Name 2M

Explanation 8M

Responses may make reference to:

- A well-known person
- A local charity worker
- Someone from their personal knowledge

Very good explanation	6 - 8M
Good explanation	3 - 5M
Fair explanation	0 - 2M

(l) Give two pieces of information about the role of a TD (Teachta Dála) in Ireland.

10 marks

2@5M

Responses may make reference to:

- Attending the Dáil
- Making laws
- Representing constituents
- Electing the Taoiseach

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

(m) Outline your understanding of a 'Cosmopolitan Culture'.

10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Moving between cultures/languages/traditions
- Rejecting rigid identities
- Questioning stereotypes
- A critique of Orientalism

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

- (n) **“We all benefit socially and economically from people with former convictions being able to reintegrate into society.” Senator Lynn Ruane.**

Give two ways we all benefit socially and/or economically from welcoming former criminals back into society.

**10 marks
2@5M**

Responses may make reference to:

- Lower reoffending rates therefore safer communities
- Contributing economically rather than costing more money
- Stability for families, may help reduce poverty
- Improves credibility of the law
- Upholds shared values of a society

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

- (o) **In Poor, Katriona O’Sullivan shares her experience growing up in poverty. Describe two ways poverty can impact on a person’s opportunities in life.**

**10 marks
2@5M**

Responses may make reference to:

- Educational opportunities limited
- Health and wellbeing suffer
- Job opportunities
- Limits choice e.g. food
- Housing instability
- Social inclusion limited

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

- (p) **Cloughjordan in Co. Tipperary, is Ireland's first Eco Village with the lowest eco footprint in Ireland. Name and describe another example of a person, group or organisation making a positive impact on society and the environment.** **10 marks**

Name 2M

Explanation 8M

Responses may make reference to:

- The EU/government/government agencies
- NGOs
- Businesses/farmers
- Transport providers/users
- Households/individuals

Very good answer 6 - 8M

Good answer 3 - 5M

Fair answer 0 - 2M

- (q) **Describe what a rights holder is and give an example of one.**

10 marks

Description: 8M

Responses may make reference to:

- Someone entitled to rights, even if they are violated
- Can demand accountability from duty bearers
- Everyone -all people are rights holders under law, regardless of age, wealth, nationality etc

Very good answer 6 - 8M

Good answer 3 - 5M

Fair answer 0 - 2M

Example: 2M

- Child under UNCRC
- Citizen under the constitution
- Workers under employment law
- Etc

(r) Why is it important for schools to have anti-bullying programmes, such as Bí Cineálta?

10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Protecting student wellbeing
- Improving learning and academic outcomes
- Promoting respect and inclusion
- Encouraging early intervention
- Empowering students to speak up

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

(s) Give two causes of underdevelopment in less developed countries.

**10 mark
2@5M**

Responses may make reference to:

- Colonialism/ historical exploitation
- Global trade systems
- Debt/financial dependency
- Corruption/governance issues
- Lack of education/skills

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

(t) Comment on the results of the Presidential Election as presented in this chart. 10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Catherine Connolly has a majority/is the winner
- 'Invalid ballot papers' is unusually high
- Any relevant observation

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

SECTION B – 150 MARKS

Question 2

50 marks

- (a) According to Document A, what does the Left to Their Own Devices Report provide insight on? 10 marks

It provides a valuable insight into how children spend their time online, levels of access, and children's experiences, both positive and negative.

Very good explanation referring to both documents	8 - 10M
Good explanation	4 - 7M
Fair explanation	0 - 3M

- (b) According to Document A, what percentage of 12-14 year olds have their own social media and messaging accounts? 10 marks

100%

- (c) Referring to Document B, what grade was awarded for online safety in 2024 and in 2025? 10 marks
2@5M

2024: A

2025: B-

- (d) According to Document B, what is the core purpose of the annual Children's Rights Alliance Report Card? 10 marks

The Children's Rights Alliance Annual Report Card tracks how the Government is delivering on its commitments to children in the Programme for Government.

- (e) Why is the information in Document B important for young people? 10 marks

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

Question 3

50 marks

(a) Comment on the presentation of data in Document A.

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Effective visuals and use of colour
- Simple box with figures
- Easy to read/easily understood

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

(b) Give one limitation of the data presented in Document A.

5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Doesn't show detailed data distribution
- Data can be misrepresented through scale manipulation
- Underlying patterns can't be seen
- The focus on summary statistics hides individual data points

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

(c) Choose one key piece of data in Document A and describe how it links to the information given in Document B.

10 marks

Very good description of one piece of data	8 - 10M
Good description of one piece of data	4 - 7M
Fair description of one piece of data	0 - 3M

(d) How might the information given in both documents be useful for the Irish government?

15 marks

Very good commentary	11 - 15M
Good commentary	6 - 10M
Fair commentary	0 - 5M

(e) Is Document B a reliable source of data? Explain your answer. 15 marks

Very good explanation	11 - 15M
Good explanation	6- 10M
Fair explanation	0 - 5M

Question 4 50 marks

(a) Comment on one statistic about children's access to the internet in the Key Findings in Document A. 10 marks

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

(b) How important is it to update our laws and policies as the digital world and technology changes? 10 marks

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

(c) Describe a citizenship project you could undertake, based on organising an event to raise awareness about one of the issues highlighted in either document. 15 marks

Very good description	11 - 15M
Good description	6 - 10M
Fair description	0 - 5M

(d) Using the information in both documents, what would you conclude about children's safety online? 15 marks

Very good answer	11 - 15M
Good answer	6 - 10M
Fair answer	0 - 5M

Section C – 150 marks

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.

DISCURSIVE ESSAY

	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak
Introduction (I)	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	4 - 6	0 - 3
Knowledge (K)	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.
10 marks	9 - 10	7 - 8	4 - 6	0 - 3
Evidence (E)	Identifies and interrogates a broad range of relevant, authoritative and credible evidence.	Identifies and interrogates a good range of evidence with an over reliance on unsubstantiated data.	Evidence presented is limited, simplistic or confused, only vaguely relevant to the topic.	Little or no evidence presented, evidence is not relevant to the issue.
10 marks	9 - 10	7 - 8	4 - 6	0 - 3
Analysis & Synthesis (A)	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 and evaluation. Superficial analysis with significant inaccuracies.	Argument is poorly constructed confused or illogical. Analysis is poor.
5 marks	5	4	3	0 - 2
Evaluation (V)	Very good integration of comparative / alternative perspectives and viewpoints. Draws very good independent conclusions & clearly justifies own position.	Good integration of comparative / alternative viewpoints in to the argument. Draws independent conclusions & clearly justifies own position.	Limited comparative / alternative perspectives and viewpoints. Limited independent conclusions & justification of own position.	No comparative perspectives and viewpoints. No independent conclusions or justification of own position.
5 marks	5	4	3	0 - 2
Cohesion (C)	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.
10 marks	9 - 10	7 - 8	4 - 6	0 - 3

ESSAY GRADE BANDS

O1 45 - 50 Marks	O2 44 - 40 Marks	O3 35 - 39 Marks	O4 30 - 34 Marks	O5 25 - 29 Marks	O6 20 - 24 Marks	O7 15 - 19 Marks	O8 0 - 14 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. Judgements and conclusions offered are comprehensively justified. This answer exhibits detailed knowledge, evidence of critical engagement, deep insight, sharp focus, accomplished argument and is supported by a range of evidence and sources.	Response focuses clearly 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 coherent argument present using comparative viewpoints. There is very good engagement with the topic. Independent judgements and conclusions offered have very reasonable justification.	Response focuses clearly on the question posed. 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 engagement with the topic and judgements and conclusions offered have reasonable justification.	Response shows some understanding of the demands of the question. Points made are relevant and are 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 are some judgements and independent conclusions offered with limited justification.	Response shows that the question has been understood. Knowledge of the issue is limited and answers make tentative points and use limited evidence that is valid and appropriate. However, these points are limited and evidence is not developed into a forceful, unified argument. There is limited engagement with the topic resulting in answers which lack an integrated independent conclusion.	Response shows that the question is understood – at least partially. Response lacks clear focus and tends to wander from the point or from point to point. Summary and repetition often takes 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 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 questions will have been partially understood and the response is poorly focused. Response shows 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 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.

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

