National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Gaelic (Learners)

Directed Writing

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

These marking instructions have been prepared by examination teams for use by Qualifications Scotland appointed markers when marking external course assessments.

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General marking principles for Higher Gaelic (Learners) Directed Writing

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

(a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.

(b) Candidates must address each of the six related bullet points in their writing. The first bullet point contains two pieces of information. The remaining five bullet points each contain one piece of information.

(c) Marking should be holistic. There may be strengths and weaknesses; focus as far as possible on the strengths, taking account of weaknesses only where they significantly detract from the overall impression. Award marks for the candidate's demonstration of ability in the three main characteristics in writing:

(i) content
(ii) accuracy
(iii) language resource

(d) Award the highest pegged mark for writing even if there are minor errors, when these do not detract from the overall impression.

(e) Candidates may display ability across more than one pegged mark descriptor. It is important to recognise the closeness of the pegged mark descriptors and consider carefully the most appropriate overall pegged mark based on the candidate's piece of writing.

(f) Markers should support candidates' use of their preferred use of gender-neutral nouns, pronouns and adjectives when referring to themselves and others in the assessment of writing. Using gender-neutral pronouns, nouns and adjectives, whether by adding punctuation, asterisks or using alternative spellings is now a common feature of inclusive language.

A candidate can opt to use masculine, feminine or gender-neutral adjective agreements throughout their writing or performance-talking assessment(s), where appropriate to the language. It is important to note that candidates must use their preferred pronouns and adjectives in a consistent manner and adhere to associated conventions of adjectival agreement where appropriate. Where gender-neutral nouns, pronouns and adjectives are used, it is important that candidates are marked on this based on its consistent use.

If you are uncertain or have queries about how to assess specific aspects of candidate response, you must seek guidance from your team leader or Principal Assessor.

The table below gives further guidance to markers in the event of any of the following scenarios:

The candidate only addresses one part of the introductory bullet point.	The maximum mark available is **16**.
The candidate does not address two of the bullet points.	The maximum mark available is **12**.
The candidate does not address three or more of the bullet points.	Award **0 marks.**
Some bullet points fit into one pegged mark category but others are in the next, lower category.	It is important to look carefully at which bullet points are better addressed. If there is a serious decline in the quality of the writing after the initial bullet point, award a lower mark. It is important to consider the balance of the bullet points. Sometimes a candidate writes twice as much about the opening bullet point as for the five remaining bullet points, or even about information not covered by any of the bullet points. In these cases, award the lower mark being considered.
The marker is having great difficulty in deciding whether the writing merits 12 or 8 marks.	It is essential to consider carefully the accuracy of the verbs overall. If more verbs are correct than incorrect, it is likely that the writing merits **12 marks** unless there are many other inaccuracies.
From the point of view of content, the candidate's response looks as if it belongs in a top category, but contains some serious grammatical errors as a result of using relatively advanced structures combined with a less than confident knowledge of more basic structures.	It is always important to assess what it is the candidate can do, and thus highlight the positive. In these cases, it is likely that the candidate will be awarded **12 marks.**

Marking instructions – Directed Writing

Mark	Content	Accuracy	Language resource: variety, range, structures
20	• The content is comprehensive. • The candidate addresses all bullet points fully and may also provide additional relevant information. • The language flows well.	• The language is accurate throughout. However, where the candidate attempts to go beyond the range of the task, a slightly higher number of inaccuracies need not detract from the overall impression. • The candidate uses a comprehensive range of verbs accurately, and tenses are consistent and accurate. • The candidate demonstrates confident handling of all aspects of grammar and accuracy in spelling, and, where appropriate, word order. The language may contain a number of minor errors, or even one serious error.	• The candidate uses detailed and complex language throughout. • There is a wide range of adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases. • They use a comprehensive range of verbs/verb forms, tenses and constructions.
16	• The content is clear. • The candidate addresses bullet points clearly, although one bullet point may not be addressed. • Generally the language flows well.	• The language is mostly accurate. Where the candidate attempts to use detailed and complex language, errors may detract from the overall impression. • The candidate uses a range of verbs accurately, and tenses are generally consistent and accurate. • There may be a few errors in spelling, adjective endings and, where relevant, word order and case endings. • Use of accents, where relevant, is not always secure.	• The candidate uses language which is mostly detailed and complex. • In one bullet point the language may be less detailed and complex than might otherwise be expected at this level. • The candidate uses a range of verbs/verb forms and other constructions. • Overall the writing is competent but there may be some repetition of structures.

Mark	Content	Accuracy	Language resource: variety, range, structures
12	• The content is adequate. • The candidate addresses bullet points adequately, however two of the bullet points may not be addressed.	• The language may be accurate in most of the bullet points. However, in the others, control of the language may deteriorate significantly. • Verbs are generally correct. • The candidate may use tenses inconsistently, with present tenses used at times instead of past tenses. • There may be errors in spelling, adjective endings and other parts of speech, as well as in word order, cases and the use of accents (where relevant). • Overall, there is more correct than incorrect.	• The candidate gives some examples of detailed and complex language. • The candidate attempts to use a range of vocabulary and structures, although the language may be repetitive. • The candidate attempts to use a range of verbs and tenses. • Sentences may be brief.
8	• The content may be limited. • The writing may be presented as a single paragraph.	• The language is inaccurate and after the first bullet point the control of the language may deteriorate significantly. • Verbs are generally incorrect and the candidate has difficulty in using different tenses. • There are errors, which may be serious, in spelling, adjectival endings and many other parts of speech, as well as in word order, cases and accents (where relevant). • Some points may not be immediately understood by a speaker of the language.	• The candidate demonstrates a limited use of detailed and complex language. • The language is repetitive, with a limited range of vocabulary and structures. • Sentences are brief. • There may be other language interference and/or an example of serious dictionary misuse.

Mark	Content	Accuracy	Language resource: variety, range, structures
4	• The content is limited. • The candidate has difficulty in addressing the bullet points.	• The language is inaccurate throughout and there is little control of language. • Most of the verbs are incorrect and the candidate has great difficulty in using tenses. • There are many serious errors in spelling, adjectival endings and many other parts of speech, as well as in word order, cases and accents (where relevant). • Several points may not be understood by a speaker of the language.	• The candidate uses little, if any, detailed and complex language. • There is a very limited range of verbs, vocabulary and structures. • Sentences are very brief. • There may be several examples of other language interference and/or serious dictionary misuse.
0	• The content is very limited. • The candidate is unable to address the bullet points. **OR** • **Three** or more of the bullet points are not addressed.	• The language is seriously inaccurate and there is no control of language. • Virtually nothing is correct. • Very little is intelligible to a speaker of the language.	• There is no evidence of detailed and complex language. • There may be several examples of other language interference and/or serious dictionary misuse. • The writing may contain very few sentences.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]