

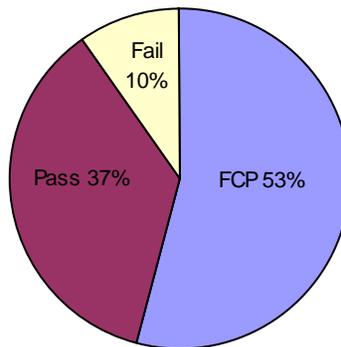
8984 International ESOL - Preliminary

Chief Examiner report for 2009/2010

General observations

Comparing the results to last year, the Fail rate has decreased from 12% to 10%. There is a slight increase in both Passes and First Class Passes. This is more encouraging and represents an optimistic trend. Candidates are generally doing well in the Listening and markers report general improvements in the Writing section which had previously been a poor section.

IESOL Preliminary - A1



Areas of good performance

Candidates are generally performing well, particularly in the Listening part with some candidates getting full marks. As last year, they tend to respond better to the picture prompts in Listening 1 than to the pure oral prompts in Listening 2 and 3. Reading is often well done too, again with some candidates scoring full marks. Writing Part 1 is normally well-executed and there have been noticeable improvements in Writing 2. Many candidates do well with the free writing of Part 4.

Areas for development

In the Writing paper, candidates still sometimes miss the instructions and thus produce some material which is irrelevant. They are losing marks in the Task Fulfilment criterion by not doing exactly what is required. Some weaknesses in grammar and spelling are still being noted with some poor sentence construction. Listening 2 and 3 and Reading 2 and 4 are often noted as areas in need of attention.

Recommendations

Candidates need practice in basic examination techniques. For the Writing paper, they need to be trained to recognise the instruction words for a task and any key words related to the content. More work can be done on grammar, spelling and fluency. Another basic element of exam technique is timing – candidates need to be more aware of how to use the time to best advantage in order not to leave themselves short by the time they reach the end of the paper.

More work could be done in preparation for the Reading section, especially in terms of vocabulary. For Writing Part 4, candidates need to be aware that writing over the given word limit will actually work to their disadvantage rather than in their favour.

Tips

- Introduce students to a variety of forms – many can be found on the internet. Conventions related to first name compared to full name or surname etc should be covered. Also candidates seem often unaware of the meaning of 'BLOCK CAPITALS' and 'DOB'.
- Greater familiarity with layout conventions for Reading 2, such as addresses etc, would be hugely beneficial.
- Instructional words of common signs for Reading 4 could be introduced in a game scenario such as 'Simon says' or matching word signs to pictures. Again, many common signs can be found on the internet and there are flashcards that can be used for this purpose too.
- Practise vocabulary related to the topics given in the syllabus.

Additional comments

It is encouraging to find general improvement across the skills at this level. As linguistic competence often seems to be improving, it is even more of a shame that valuable marks are still being lost due to poor examination techniques, related to timing and not following instructions. Sample papers are available to download from the City & Guilds website and candidates' attention needs to be drawn as to how to execute basic instructions such as circling one correct answer and not more than one.