

# Unlocking the language

With three simple steps and a stack of useful phrases, your Irish will improve in leaps and bounds

## ESSAY WRITING MADE EASY – SOME SIMPLE STEPS

### Higher and ordinary level

When practising the composition, you should always bear in mind that 80 per cent of marks are for the standard and richness of Irish and that only 20 per cent of marks are for the actual content of the composition itself. These facts should help to determine how you prepare for the essay and how you maximise your marks.

Three simple steps: I have often found when teaching essay writing that most students have plenty of good ideas for the content but cannot think of the vocabulary to put their ideas into practice. So I am going to teach you how to plan and write a really good essay in three simple steps.

### Step one

The first step involves learning a treasure chest of expressions and useful phrases that can be used in lots of different essays. You learn a number of these every week until you have learned approximately 40-50 of them.

I include here a number of nathanna cainte for you to learn off by heart. I suggest that you learn at least five nathanna cainte each week but I would expect most students would wish to learn them at a faster rate.

### Step Two

When you have learned most of the nathanna cainte you should practise using them. Each time you have an essay, letter, scéal, comhrá, or indeed any other Irish writing to do, you should write down all of the nathanna cainte that you can remember at the top of the page under the heading "obair gharbh".

Only then should you start to write your composition. This method has some major advantages for you.

- ◆ You know that you have some terrific rich vocabulary for your composition.
- ◆ The nathanna cainte will give you some super ideas for your composition and will give you great confidence.

### Step three

The final step involves writing out the nathanna cainte as obair gharbh (rough work) every time you have to write an examination. Remember that "practise makes perfect" so you should practise, practise and practise this method because it will really work for you.

I have taught this method of writing composition to many different classes, and indeed to many different standards, and it has worked for every single student that has tried it and stuck with it. Perseverance pays. Try it and you'll like it.

### Nathanna Úsáideacha (Le Rá Nó Le Scriobh) – Your Treasure Chest

This is number of nathanna úsáideacha (useful phrases) that can be used either for writing compositions or answering questions in the oral Irish exam.

Students should learn at least five nathanna every week for a few weeks until a treasure chest of words/phrases/expressions have been built up.

These nathanna cainte are designed to improve your vocabulary and add to your saibhreas (richness). Of course you could add extra nathanna cainte that we don't include here eg: Ar nós na gaoithe (very quickly).

### Strategy

- ◆ Learn at least five nathanna each week.
- ◆ Give yourself a weekly test and a monthly test to see how well you have learned and can remember the nathanna.
- ◆ Use whatever nathanna you have learned in your classwork and when doing your homework.
- ◆ You will find that your standard of Irish will improve rapidly.
- ◆ You will also find that your standard of Irish will improve beyond recognition.

### Your treasure chest – Na Nathanna

#### Seachtain 1

Táim ag ceapadh - I think  
Déarfainn - I'd say  
Sílim - I think  
Creidim - I believe  
Measaim - I think



Siáine Hutchinson, Cliona Ni Chiosain and Grainne Bleasdale, the stars of *Aifric* on TG4

#### Seachtain 2

Ar an gcéad dul síos - first of all  
Ar aon nós - anyway  
Pé scéal é - in any case?  
Dála an scéil - by the way  
Tríd is tríd - through and through

#### Seachtain 3

Bhuel - well  
Is fíor sin - that's true  
Níl bréag ar bith ansin - there's no lie in that  
Meastú - I wonder, do you think  
Is amhlaidh - it seems

#### Seachtain 4

Dar m'anam - upon my soul  
Go háirithe - especially  
Dáiríre - really  
Creid é nó ná creid - believe it or not  
Go deo na ndeor - for ever and ever

#### Seachtain 5

Is breá liom - I like  
Is aobhinn liom - I really like  
Tá mé craiceáilte faoi - I'm crazy about  
Is fuath liom - I hate  
Is gráin liom - I detest

#### Seachtain 6

Ní bheadh a fhios agat - you'd never know  
Tá a fhios ag an saol - everybody knows  
Níl barúil dá laghad agam - I haven't a clue  
Is trua liom/Is oth liom a rá - I'm sorry to say  
Níl a fhios agam ó thalamh an domhain - I have no idea whatsoever

#### Seachtain 7

Mar a dúirt mé cheana - as I said before  
Cuir i gcás - for example  
Go sábhála Dia muid - God save us  
Go bhfóire Dia orainn - God protect us  
Buíochas le Dia - thanks be to God

#### Seachtain 8

Sa lá atá inniu ann - nowadays  
Faoi láthair - at present  
I láthair na huaire - at present  
Na laethanta seo - nowadays  
Le déanaí - lately

#### Seachtain 9

Amach anseo - in the future  
Sa toidhcháil - in the future  
Ar ball/Ar ball beag - in a while/in a little while  
Gan rómhoill - without much delay  
San am atá ag teacht - in the future

#### Seachtain 10

Táim ar nós cuma liom faoi - I couldn't  
Is beag é mo mheas air - I don't think  
Is cuma sa diabhal liom - I couldn't care less  
Níl ach fórbheagáin eolais agam faoi - I know very little about it  
Diaidh ar ndiaidh - little by little

#### Seachtain 11

Chomh maith leis sin - as well as that  
Go mór mór - especially  
Ar nós - such as, for example  
Ag an am céanna - at the same time  
I dtús báire - first of all