

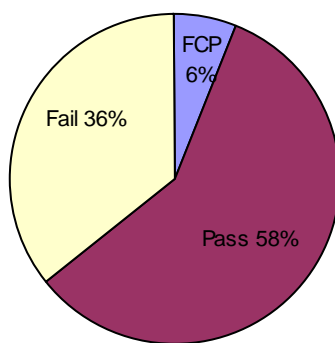
8984 International ESOL - Communicator

Chief Examiner report for 2009/2010

General observations

The results at this level have generally been rather disappointing. The overall Pass rate has increased slightly but possibly at the cost of the decrease in the First Class Pass rate. The Fail rate has increased by approximately a quarter of what it was last year. Candidates are doing well in some areas and so need encouraging to extend their performance further to improve the First Class Pass rate.

IESOL Communicator - B2



Areas of good performance

The Listening paper and the Reading paper are continually reported to be the strongest and so candidates are being well prepared and are demonstrating the required level of skill here. There appears to have been some improvement in this area over last year which is encouraging. There are mixed reports on the Writing paper – some markers report candidates using a good range of language here and expressing themselves in quite a sophisticated manner with a good level of accuracy.

Areas for development

Candidates need constantly reminding of the word count restrictions for Listening 3 and Reading 4 as marks are being lost unnecessarily. The flip side of the comment above regarding the Writing paper is that other candidates could develop an argument further and express personal views where required. The issue of register is not always handled appropriately.

Recommendations

Candidates should be given greater exposure to a wider variety of text types, both for understanding in reading and for responding to in writing. Text types for the latter should include charts and tables. The introduction at this level, according to the CEFR, of more abstract topics beyond the immediate and familiar, is an important consideration and being able to handle these competently will distinguish a B2 from a B1 and a First Class Pass from a Pass. Aspects of written

production which could be improved are paragraphing, coherence, the use of topic sentence and conclusion statements.

Tips

- For Listening 1, candidates need to be clear that the answer is the one that would be the continuation of the conversation. One fun idea to practise and reinforce this would be to start a one-liner conversation and stop for students to suggest what could come next. Also stopping any tape or video recording midway for students to predict what follows is a useful activity.
- Find charts, graphs and tables from statistics websites. Discuss these with students to see how they can interpret the data. Analysis and reasoning is needed, not just description.
- Write on the topic – cover all the bullet points and don't veer off the point.

Additional comments

The CEFR describes a B2 as being able in writing to 'produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options'. For listening, there is a need to demonstrate the ability to 'understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics'. Centres need to prepare candidates for the extra requirements at this level to lift them above B1 as, when candidates *are* well prepared and entered at the appropriate level, they do well and demonstrate their capabilities.