Entry Level Examiners' Report

Entry Level Science
Entry 1/2/3
Summer 2025

Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.[1]

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

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[1] *Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.*

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner | WJEC

Contents

Executive Summary

There was an increase in the number of candidates for the Entry Level Certificate in Science again during this series, including a slight increase in the number of candidates under the age of 15 years old entering the qualification.

In all units, where candidates were present for the assessment, there was a high attempt rate for questions. In units 2 and 3, the main cause of loss of marks was the absence of whole parts of the unit. Centres are reminded that there is a 2-year window to carry out these assessments and appropriate catch-up sessions should be provided for absent candidates.

Quality of written communication continued to be a problem for some candidates. Some responses were very unclear or contradictory, with candidates unable to express their ideas. Maths skills were generally well done, with candidates able to extract and process data from tables or graphs. Graph plotting was done well in units 1 and 2, where axes and scales tend to be given to the candidates. It was also pleasing to see that centres had taken advice from previous reports for unit 3, with many more candidates including an origin on their y-axes.

Recall of knowledge was a problem for candidates at entry 1 and entry 2 levels – this has been an issue for a number of years. However, candidates managed better with recall if a choice of answers was given.

In unit 3, the risk assessments again proved challenging for some candidates. Control measures should be appropriate to the risk/hazard and should not be general in nature e.g. wearing safety goggles where there was no danger of harm to the eyes

SCIENCE

Entry Level

Summer 2025

UNIT 1

Overview of the Unit

Unit 1 is an examined unit designed to assess all assessment objectives. It covers all aspects of the specification, with marks evenly distributed across the four key topic areas given in the specification subject content.

As observed in previous reports, it was highly encouraging to note that most candidates attempted every question on the paper, with only a few leaving entire questions unanswered. The questions were accessible, allowing many candidates to score highly across the paper.

The following topics/questions were well-answered:

*   Questions involving handling data from graphs and charts, including working out differences. (Q5, Q9, Q10)
*   Factors that affect rate of reaction (Q6)
*   Recall Questions (Q9 (a) and (c))
*   Identifying similarities between organisms and food webs (Q.6)
*   Plotting points on graph (Q.5 (b))

Candidates found the following topics/questions more difficult:

*   Meanings of key terms (Q1, Q2, Q6, Q8)
*   Types of energy (Q4)
*   Interpreting particle model diagrams (Q6)
*   Interpreting electrical circuits (Q3)

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1.   This was well attempted, with candidates able to identify simple equipment. However many candidates could not define the term 'insoluble' or identify that the insoluble calcium carbonate was left in filter paper.

Q.2   Candidates could retrieve data from the table, but they did not understand which planets were terrestrial/rocky. It was common to see the candidates just adding up the total moons for all the planets.

Q.3   This was a well answered question with a good degree of differentiation. Candidates found applying current values to components in parallel more difficult to those in series.

Q.4   In this question it was common for candidates to mix up kinetic and gravitational energy.

Q.5 Most candidates could identify the benefits of solar panels and extract numbers from the graph. Some struggled for giving a reason for the choice of a 10º angle for the solar panel.

Q.6 Many candidates could not identify that carbon dioxide was both a molecule and a compound. Candidates found part (b), linking the diagram to the table difficult with only a few scoring all four marks.

Q.7 This question was generally well answered with many candidates achieving all three marks.

Q.8 Part (a) required recall, so candidates often scored badly in this section Part (b) was similar to past questions, where candidates have been asked about similarities and differences between organisms. This question has scored well in previous examinations; this was again the case in 2025. In part (c), the questions on the food chain were also well attempted with some candidates being able to the explain the change in numbers if part of the food chain was removed.

Q.9 Candidates generally answered part (a) well. In part (b) they were frequently able to calculate the missing number in the table and identify portions in the pie chart. Candidates also recalled the risk factors for diseases.

Q.10 Most candidates scored at least two out of the three marks available on this question.

SCIENCE

Entry Level

Summer 2025

UNIT 2

Overview of the Unit

Unit 2 is an internally assessed component, which is moderated by WJEC. The assessment comprises four end of topic tests, each have a maximum mark of 30, which are updated annually. Each test is aligned with one of the four topics in the specification.

As observed in previous sessions, it was highly commendable that the majority of candidates attempted all sections of the tests, with only a small number leaving entire questions unanswered.

Most submissions were uploaded in a timely manner and exhibited an improved level of organisation. Most centres ensured that all authentication sheets were fully completed, with candidate signatures and dates. However, a very small number of centres initially failed to provide the required authentication sheets.

It is important to note that authentication, as mandated by JCQ, is a compulsory requirement, and work cannot be accepted without the signatures of both the candidate and the assessor.

The marking was, on the whole, carried out with accuracy, and no adjustments were necessary for any centre. However it was observed that there was less evidence of internal moderation of the scripts before uploading this year.

Examples of best practice:
- Implementation of internal moderation procedures and peer verification of both the marking process and the calculation of totals.
- Precise transposition of marks from individual questions onto the front-sheets of the papers and totals onto IAMIS.
- Consistent and clear marking methodology, with one tick corresponding to each mark awarded.

Examples of areas requiring improvement:
- Marking practices such as circling awarded marks and striking through incorrect responses. Instances of incorrect addition of marks for individual questions occurred, leading to clerical errors.

Comments on individual questions/sections

All questions were accessible to all candidates with the majority attempting all questions.

Topic 1 Modern Living and Energy

Q.1   Most candidates could identify electrical symbols. Some candidates could not identify the circuit which was brightest with the fewest lamps and most cells.

Q.2 This question was generally well answered with most candidates scoring well on calculations.

Q.3 Some candidates could not identify controlled variables in the experiment and some failed to identify wood as an insulator.

Q.4 The majority of candidates knew that wind and solar where renewable sources. A common error was to put electric as a name of a fossil fuel or to rewrite gas from the stem of the question.

Topic 2 Obtaining Resources

Q.1 Most candidates scored at least two out of three for this question.

Q.2 Some candidates could not identify the large-scale structure of the Earth.

Q.3 This was generally well answered with candidates being able to name the parts of a distillation system, but they found explaining the process of filtration more difficult.

Q.4 Most candidates could successfully plot the graph but they didn't always add the line of best fit.

Q.5 Many candidates could identify ways of extracting raw materials.

Topic 3 Our Planet

Q.1 Most candidates could extract information from the table to decide if the statements were true or false.

Q.2 Most candidates could label an animal cell.

Q.3 The food web question was very well answered by the majority of candidates, including completing the pyramid of numbers.

Q.4 Candidates could use tally charts and relate them to a pie chart.

Q.5 Candidates could identify features of the bird and some understood the term vertebrate.

Topic 4 Health, Fitness and Sport

Q.1 The majority of candidates could extract quantities from the graph, and a pleasing number could work out the increase in the percentage.

Q.2 The bar chart was well plotted, and data correctly extracted.

Q.3 This question based on the nervous system was well attempted even although it is considered to be a difficult topic, with many being able to gain marks on all three parts of the question.

Q.4 Many candidates could correctly explain the functions of the parts of the blood.

SCIENCE

Entry Level

Summer 2025

UNIT 3

Overview of the Unit

The practical assessment makes up 15% of the overall qualification.
Three tasks are provided every year by WJEC, and candidates are required to complete two of these tasks.

- The practical assessment covers AO1, AO2 and A03, Candidates are required to demonstrate, apply, analyse and evaluate scientific ideas and methods.
- Each practical assessment is comprised of 2 sections – A and B. Each section carries 10 marks and can be completed in class in a 60-minute lesson.
- Section A requires candidates to assess the safety of a practical technique and to carry out an experiment, recording results.
- Section B requires candidates to analyse data, draw conclusions and evaluate experimental methods, suggesting improvements.
- Candidates generally perform well in this unit, with many demonstrating sufficient skills to obtain top marks in both tests.

Tasks
Comments on tasks/questions relating to candidate performance/meeting assessment criteria

Investigating dissolving

Candidates were asked to state a hazard in this experiment. Many candidates were able to correctly state that there were no hazards in this experiment. However, some candidates did try to identify the 40°C water as a hazard which could cause burns which the moderators were unable to accept as a suitable hazard.

Many candidates were able to link the independent variable and dependent variable in the prediction. Moderators also found that candidates successfully identified a controlled variable for this experiment.

Moderators found that in many cases results were recorded to whole seconds as asked. Graphs were well plotted, far fewer candidates lost scale marks for not putting a number at the origin of the y-axis than in previous years.

Many candidates were able to extract data successfully from the bar chart on the piece of sugar that took the least time to dissolve. However, moderators found that where the results did not match expectations candidates were unable to state why these results were achieved. In this case, an explanation of why they are not the expected result should be provided.

Moderators were pleased to see many candidates identifying a source of inaccuracy. However, many candidates this year used the phrase 'double check' as a suggestion on how to increase confidence in their conclusion. This phrase is insufficient and instead candidates should suggest repeating the experiment and calculating a mean or use the idea of reproducibility by comparing their group's data with other groups in the class.

Investigating current and voltage

Candidates were asked to write a prediction. The linking of the independent variable and dependent variables of voltage and current in the prediction was done well by many candidates.

Moderators did find that candidates found the identification of controlled variables in the experiment difficult and many identified the independent and dependent variables as the instrument they were reading the data from rather than the variable itself.
E.g. rather than stating current as the dependent variable candidates stated they would record the ammeter.

Candidates often successfully collected, recorded and plotted the data in this experiment, however lines of best fit were of variable quality.

Many candidates were able to identify their prediction as correct or incorrect but were unable to restate their prediction or provide a relationship from the graph to explain this decision. Moderators found that many candidates were unable to suggest a mean calculation as a method to compare the 3 sets of results at each voltage.

Investigating variation in snails.

Candidates were asked to identify independent, dependent and controlled variables for this model sampling experiment. Many candidates found this straightforward. Candidates were also able to identify real life hazards risks and safety precautions for fieldwork. However, some did struggle with linking these ideas.

If identifying a hazard, candidates should then complete a risk and precaution for the hazard identified. E.g. slipping on mud and falling, breaking your arm can not be prevented by wearing gloves, despite gloves being a reasonable precaution for other hazards in the field.

Tally charts were completed well, and most candidates were able to complete the totals correctly. In addition, bar charts were completed successfully for the most part with bars well labelled and used to identify the most common types of snails in each area.

However, very few candidates were able to use the information given at the start of the task to explain the results. Most candidates suggested repeating the experiment as a method of increasing confidence, however in this example a suggestion of a larger sample size, including other woodland/grassland areas or the idea of reproducibility would be a better suggestion.

Task marking
Comments on approaches to internal marking

Moderators greatly appreciated annotation on scripts to show where credit was given, using a tick. Where credit is withheld this should be indicated with a cross. It would be greatly appreciated if this were to apply to all marks given on the graph to show where credit is or is not given. Ticks on each axis and next to each correct plot would make moderation easier. At times, the plotting marks on the graph were either too generous or often the tolerance was not applied. Candidates are allowed a tolerance of +/- 1 small square on each plot. Moderation has also identified that in a prediction; centres often do not allow 1 mark for the identification of one variable with direction. E.g. in the dissolving investigation even if candidates were unable to correctly express the increase in the number of sugar pieces/surface area they could still achieve a mark for the idea that time to dissolve will decrease.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.
Tel: 029 2240 4252
Email: science@wjec.co.uk
Qualification webpage: Entry Level Certificate in Science

See other useful contacts here: Useful Contacts | WJEC

CPD Training / Professional Learning

Access our popular, free online CPD/PL courses to receive exam feedback and put questions to our subject team, and attend one of our face-to-face events, focused on enhancing teaching and learning, providing practical classroom ideas and developing understanding of marking and assessment.

Please find details for all our courses here: https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/

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