GCSE Subject Criteria for Modern Foreign Languages

Contents

The criteria

Introduction

GCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in a given subject.

They provide the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and learning outcomes

1. GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages should encourage learners to derive enjoyment and benefit from language learning, and be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study. Learners should recognise that their linguistic knowledge, understanding and skills will help them to take their place in a multilingual global society and also provide them with a suitable basis for further study and practical use of the language. GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages should prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.

2. GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages must enable learners to:

   - develop understanding of the language in a variety of contexts;

   - develop knowledge of the language and language learning skills;

   - develop the ability to communicate effectively in the language;

   - develop awareness and understanding of countries and communities where the language is spoken.

Subject content

3. The content of GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages must reflect the learning outcomes.

4. GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages must allow learners to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding specified below, as appropriate to the specification title.

5. GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages must require learners to:

   - listen and respond to different types of spoken language;

- communicate in speech for a variety of purposes;

- read and respond to different types of written language;

- communicate in writing for a variety of purposes;

- use and understand a range of vocabulary and structures;

- understand and apply the grammar of the language, as detailed in the specification.

6.   GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages must set out contexts and purposes that:

- are of relevance and interest to learners;

- correspond to learners' level of maturity;

- reflect, and are appropriate to, the culture of countries and communities where the language is spoken;

- relate, where appropriate, to other areas of the curriculum.

7.   For speaking and writing, a specification must allow for centres and/or learners to have some choice of contexts and purposes, including the possibility of proposing a context or purpose of their own.

8.   GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages must specify grammar and linguistic structures (see the Appendix for French, German and Spanish) and a minimum core vocabulary, consistent with any additional guidance agreed between the regulators and awarding organisations. In addition, key words and phrases used in rubrics in the language must be listed, where applicable.

Assessment objectives

9. All specifications in Modern Foreign Languages must require learners to demonstrate their ability to:

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Understand spoken language.	20–30%
AO2	Communicate in speech.	20–30%
AO3	Understand written language.	20–30%
AO4	Communicate in writing.	20–30%

10. GCSE short course specifications must require learners to demonstrate their ability in relation to only two of the assessment objectives, either AO1 and AO2, or AO3 and AO4.

Scheme of assessment

11. GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages must require learners to express themselves in the specified language when speaking and writing.

12. For both AO2 and AO4, at least 10 per cent of the total marks for the subject must be allocated to knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and structures of the language prescribed in the specification.

13. Question papers in Modern Foreign Languages must be targeted at either foundation or higher tier.

14. The use of dictionaries will not be permitted in any external assessment.

15. GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages must allocate a weighting of 40 per cent to external assessment and a weighting of 60 per cent to controlled assessment in the overall scheme of assessment.

16. Assessment of AO2 and AO4 must be by controlled assessment consistent with the guidance developed by the regulators.

Grade descriptions

17. Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

    The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade	Description
A	Candidates show understanding of a variety of spoken language that contains some complex language and relates to a range of contexts. They can identify main points, details and points of view and draw simple conclusions. They initiate and develop conversations and discussions, present information and narrate events. They express and explain ideas and points of view, and produce extended sequences of speech using a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. They speak confidently, with reasonably accurate pronunciation and intonation. The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they use more complex structures. They show understanding of a variety of written texts relating to a range of contexts. They understand some unfamiliar language and extract meaning from more complex language and extended texts. They can identify main points, extract details, recognise points of view, attitudes and emotions and draw simple conclusions. They write for different purposes and contexts about real or imaginary subjects. They express and explain ideas and points of view. They use a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. Their spelling and grammar are generally accurate. The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they write more complex sentences.

C	Candidates show understanding of different types of spoken language that contain a variety of structures. The spoken material relates to a range of contexts, including some that may be unfamiliar, and may relate to past and future events. They can identify main points, details and opinions.
	They take part in conversations and simple discussions and present information. They express points of view and show an ability to deal with some unpredictable elements. Their spoken language contains a variety of structures and may relate to past and future events. Their pronunciation and intonation are more accurate than inaccurate. They convey a clear message but there may be some errors.
	They show understanding of different types of written texts that contain a variety of structures. The written material relates to a range of contexts, including some that may be unfamiliar and may relate to past and future events. They can identify main points, extract details and recognise opinions.
	They write for different contexts that may be real or imaginary. They communicate information and express points of view. They use a variety of structures and may include different tenses or time frames. The style is basic. They convey a clear message but there may be some errors.

F	Candidates show some understanding of simple language spoken clearly that relates to familiar contexts. They can identify main points and extract some details.
	They take part in simple conversations, present simple information and can express their opinion. They use a limited range of language. Their pronunciation is understandable. There are grammatical inaccuracies but the main points are usually conveyed.
	They show some understanding of short, simple written texts that relate to familiar contexts. They show limited understanding of unfamiliar language. They can identify main points and some details.
	They write short texts that relate to familiar contexts. They can express simple opinions. They use simple sentences. The main points are usually conveyed but there are mistakes in spelling and grammar.

Appendix: Grammar requirements

French

GCSE learners will be expected to have acquired knowledge and understanding of French grammar during their course. In the examination they will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding, drawing from the following lists. The examples in brackets are indicative, not exclusive. For structures marked (R), only receptive knowledge is required.

French (foundation tier)

Nouns:

- gender;

- singular and plural forms.

Articles:

- definite, indefinite and partitive, including use of *de* after negatives.

Adjectives:

- agreement;

- position;

- comparative and superlative: regular and *meilleur*;

- demonstrative (*ce*, *cet*, *cette*, *ces*);

- indefinite (*chaque*, *quelque*);

- possessive;

- interrogative (*quel*, *quelle*).

Adverbs:

- comparative and superlative;

- regular;

- interrogative (*comment*, *quand*);

- adverbs of time and place (*aujourd'hui*, *demain*, *ici*, *là-bas*);

- common adverbial phrases.

Quantifiers/Intensifiers:

- *très*, *assez*, *beaucoup*, *peu*, *trop*.

Pronouns:

- personal: all subjects, including *on*;

- reflexive;

- relative: *qui*;

- relative: *que* (R);

- object: direct (R) and indirect (R);

- position and order of object pronouns (R);

- disjunctive/emphatic;

- demonstrative (*ça*, *cela*);

- indefinite (*quelqu'un*);

- interrogative (*qui*, *que*);

- use of *y*, *en* (R).

Verbs:

- regular and irregular verbs, including reflexive verbs;

- all persons of the verb, singular and plural;

- negative forms;

- interrogative forms;

- modes of address: *tu*, *vous*;

- impersonal verbs (*il faut*);

- verbs followed by an infinitive, with or without a preposition;

- tenses;

- present;

- perfect;

- imperfect: *avoir*, *être* and *faire*;

- other common verbs in the imperfect tense (R);

- immediate future;

- future (R);

- conditional: *vouloir* and *aimer*;

- pluperfect (R);

- passive voice: present tense (R);

- imperative;

- present participle (R).

Prepositions

Conjunctions

Number, quantity, dates and time

- including use of *depuis* with present tense

French (higher tier)

All grammar and structures listed for foundation tier, as well as:

Adjectives:

- comparative and superlative, including *meilleur*, *pire*.

Adverbs:

- comparative and superlative, including *mieux*, *le mieux*.

Pronouns:

- use of *y*, *en*;

- relative: *que*;

- relative: *dont* (R);

- object: direct and indirect;

- position and order of object pronouns;

- demonstrative (*celui*) (R);

- possessive (*le mien*) (R).

Verbs:

- tenses;

- future;

- imperfect;

- conditional;

- pluperfect;

- passive voice: future, imperfect and perfect tenses (R);

- perfect infinitive;

- present participle, including use after *en*;

- subjunctive mood: present, in commonly used expressions (R).

Time:

- including use of depuis with imperfect tense.

German

GCSE learners will be expected to have acquired knowledge and understanding of German grammar during their course. In the examination they will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding, drawing from the following lists. The examples in brackets are indicative, not exclusive. For structures marked (R), only receptive knowledge is required.

German (foundation tier)

The case system

Nouns:

- gender;

- singular and plural forms, including genitive singular and dative plural;

- weak nouns: nominative and accusative singular (*Herr*, *Junge*, *Mensch*, Name) (R);

- adjectives used as nouns (*ein Deutscher*).

Articles:

- definite and indefinite;

- *kein*.

Adjectives:

- adjectival endings: predicative and attributive usage, singular and plural, used after definite and indefinite articles, demonstrative and possessive adjectives;

- adjectival endings after *etwas*, *nichts*, *viel*, *wenig*, *alles* (R);

- comparative and superlative, including common irregular forms (*besser*, *höher*, *näher*);

- demonstrative (*dieser*, *jeder*);

- possessive;

- interrogative (*welcher*).

Adverbs:

- comparative and superlative, including common irregular forms (*besser*, *lieber*, *mehr*);

- interrogative (*wann*, *warum*, *wo*, *wie*, *wie viel*);

- adverbs of time and place (*manchmal*, *oft*, *hier*, *dort*);

- common adverbial phrases (*ab und zu*, *dann und wann*, *letzte Woche*, *nächstes*; *Wochenende*, *so bald wie möglich*).

Quantifiers/intensifiers

- *sehr*, *zu, viel*, *ganz, ziemlich, ein wenig, ein bisschen*.

Pronouns:

- personal, including man;

- reflexive: accusative;

- reflexive: dative (R);

- relative: nominative;

- relative: other cases (R) and use of was (R);

- indefinite: *jemand*, *niemand*;

- interrogative: *wer*, *was*, *was für*;

- interrogative: *wen*, *wem* (R).

Verbs:

- regular and irregular verbs;

- reflexive;

- modes of address: *du*, *Sie*;

- mode of address: *ihr* (R);

- impersonal (most common only, *eg es gibt*, es geht, *es tut weh*);

- separable/inseparable;

- modal: present and imperfect tenses, imperfect subjunctive of *mögen*;

- infinitive constructions (*um … zu …*; verbs with *zu …*) (R);

- negative forms;

- interrogative forms;

- tenses;

- present;

- perfect: excluding modals;

- imperfect/simple past: *haben*, *sein* and modals;

- imperfect/simple past: other common verbs (R);

- future;

- pluperfect (R);

- imperative forms.

Prepositions:

- fixed case and dual case with accusative and/or dative;

- with genitive (R).

Clause structures:

- main clause word order;

- subordinate clauses, including relative clauses.

Conjunctions:

- coordinating (most common, *eg aber*, *oder*, *und*);

- subordinating (most common, *eg als*, *obwohl*, *weil*, *wenn*).

Number, quantity, dates and time

- including use of *seit* with present tense.

German (higher tier)

All grammar and structures listed for foundation tier, as well as:

Nouns**:**

- weak nouns.

Adjectives**:**

- adjectival endings after *etwas*, *nichts*, *viel*, *wenig*, *alles*.

Pronouns:

- reflexive: dative;

- relative: all cases, and use of *was*;

- interrogative: *wen*, *wem*.

Verbs:

- mode of address: *ihr*;

- impersonal;

- infinitive constructions (*ohne … zu …*; *um ... zu ...*; verbs with *zu …, eg beginnen*, *hoffen*, *versuchen*;

- modal: imperfect subjunctive of *können*, *sollen*;

- tenses: imperfect/simple past of common verbs;

- future;

- conditional: *würde* with infinitive;

- pluperfect;

- imperfect subjunctive in conditional clauses: *haben* and *sein*.

Prepositions**:**

- with genitive (most common, *eg außerhalb*, *statt*, *trotz*, *während*, *wegen*).

Conjunctions**:**

- coordinating and subordinating.

Time:

- use of *seit* with imperfect tense.

Spanish

GCSE learners will be expected to have acquired knowledge and understanding of Spanish grammar during their course. In the examination they will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding, drawing from the following lists. The examples in brackets are indicative, not exclusive. For structures marked (R), only receptive knowledge is required.

Spanish (foundation tier)

Nouns**:**

- gender;

- singular and plural forms.

Articles:

- definite and indefinite;

- *lo* plus adjective (R).

Adjectives:

- agreement;

- position;

- comparative and superlative: regular and *mayor*, *menor*, *mejor*, *peor*;

- demonstrative (*este*, *ese*, *aquel*);

- indefinite (*cada*, *otro*, *todo*, *mismo*, *alguno*);

- possessive, short form (*mi*);

- possessive, long form (*mío*) (R);

- interrogative (*cuánto*, *qué*).

Adverbs:

- formation;

- comparative and superlative: regular;

- interrogative (*cómo*, *cuándo*, *dónde*);

- adverbs of time and place (*aquí*, *allí*, *ahora*, *ya*);

- common adverbial phrases.

Quantifiers/intensifiers (*muy*, *bastante*, *demasiado*, *poco*, *mucho*)

Pronouns:

- subject;

- object (R);

- position and order of object pronouns (R);

- reflexive;

- relative: *que*;

- relative: *quien*, *lo que* (R);

- disjunctive (*conmigo*, *para mí*);

- demonstrative (*éste*, *ése*, *aquél*, *esto*, *eso*, *aquello*);

- indefinite (*algo*, *alguien*);

- interrogative (*cuál*, *qué*, *quién*).

Verbs:

- regular and irregular verbs, including reflexive verbs;

- all persons of the verb, singular and plural;

- modes of address: *tú* and *usted*;

- radical-changing verbs;

- negative forms;

- interrogative forms;

- reflexive constructions (*se puede*, *se necesita*, *se habla*);

- uses of *ser* and *estar*;

- tenses;

- present indicative;

- present continuous;

- preterite;

- imperfect: in weather expressions with *estar*, *hacer*;

- imperfect (R);

- immediate future;

- future (R);

- perfect: most common verbs only;

- conditional: *gustar* only in set phrases;

- pluperfect (R);

- gerund (R);

- imperative: common forms including negative;

- subjunctive, present: (R) in certain exclamatory phrases (*¡Viva! ¡Dígame!*);

- subjunctive, imperfect: *quisiera;*

- impersonal verbs: most common only.

Prepositions:

- common, including personal *a*;

- *por* and *para*.

Conjunctions: common, including *y*, *pero*, *o, porque*, *como*, *cuando*

Number, quantity, dates

Time**:**

- use of *desde hace* with present tense (R).

Spanish (higher tier)

All grammar and structures listed for foundation tier, as well as:

Articles**:**

- lo plus adjective.

Adjectives:

- comparative and superlative;

- possessive, short and long forms (*mi*, *mío*);

- relative (*cuyo*).

Adverbs**:**

- comparative and superlative.

Pronouns:

- object;

- position and order of object pronouns;

- relative: all other uses including *quien*, *lo que*, *el que*, *cual*;

- possessive (*el mío*, *la mía*).

Verbs: tenses:

- future;

- imperfect;

- imperfect continuous;

- perfect;

- pluperfect;

- conditional;

- passive voice (R);

- gerund;

- present subjunctive: imperative, affirmation and negation, future after conjunctions of time;

- (*cuando*), after verbs of wishing, command, request, emotion, to express purpose (*para que*);

- imperfect subjunctive (R).

Time:

- use of *desde hace* with present tense;

- use of *desde hace* with imperfect tense (R).

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