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Statutory guidance

# GCSE subject-level guidance for French, German and Spanish

Published 14 June 2022

**Applies to England**

# Introduction

This document is part of a suite of documents which outlines our guidance for awarding organisations offering GCSE Qualifications in French, German and Spanish. This guidance will come into effect at 11am on 14 June 2022.

This document sets out guidance which applies to all GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in French, German and Spanish. It supports the GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for French, German and Spanish.

This document constitutes guidance for the purposes of section 153 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the '2009 Act'), Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1 and Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)3.

An awarding organisation has a legal obligation under the 2009 Act to have regard to this guidance, where relevant, in relation to each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish that it makes available or proposes to make available. Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1 and Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)3 impose the same obligation in respect of the guidance below which is issued under those Conditions.

The guidance set out in this document applies to all GCSE qualifications in French, German and Spanish awarded after 1 June 2026, except where a Learner is retaking a GCSE qualification in the relevant language and the assessments for the Learner's previous attempt at the qualification took place before 30 June 2025.

An awarding organisation should use the guidance in this document to help it understand how to comply with the GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for French, German and Spanish.

## Guidance set out in this document

This document provides guidance in relation to subject content, and on assessment objectives, for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in French, German and Spanish.

## Guidance in relation to subject content for, and assessment of, GCSE Qualifications in French, German and Spanish

The subject content for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in French, German and Spanish is set out in the Department for Education's [GCSE Subject Content for French, German and Spanish](#) (the 'Content Document').

Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1.1(c) requires awarding organisations to interpret the Content Document in line with any requirements, and having regard to any guidance, published by Ofqual.

In addition, Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)3.1 allows Ofqual to specify requirements and guidance in relation to assessments for GCSE Qualifications in French, German and Spanish.

We set out our guidance for the purposes of Conditions GCSE(French, German and

Spanish)1.1(c) and 3.1 below.

## **Assessment of speaking**

The Content Document states that each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish must require Learners to:

- “ speak using clear and comprehensible language to:
- “ i. read aloud a short written text and undertake a short unprepared conversation relating to the text;
- “ ii. undertake role play(s), including asking and answering questions, simulating a context such as a social conversation, where instructions about what to say are unambiguous;
- “ iii. talk about one or more visual stimulus/stimuli, such as (connected) photographs or pictures, and extend this conversation into a short unprepared interaction.”

Following the reading aloud task, the unprepared conversation should be straightforward. Learners may demonstrate understanding of the passage or the theme and/or the Learner’s own experience relating to the passage or the theme. Prompts or questions supporting the conversation should be unseen.

Role-plays should provide sufficient opportunity for Learners to draw on the range of vocabulary they know and not depend on the translation of individual specified items. All information required should be presented to the Learner.

The unprepared interaction may be connected to the visual stimulus/stimuli through its broad theme/topic but may also relate to the Learner’s own experience and interest. Prompts or questions supporting the interaction should be unseen.

## **Assessment of writing**

The Content Document states that each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish must require Learners to:

- “ write text in the language in a lexically and grammatically accurate way in response to simple and familiar stimuli.”

Stimuli for written tasks may include a visual stimulus, a short, simple written stimulus, and/or bullet points (either in English or the assessed language).

## **Infer meaning**

The Content Document states that each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish must require Learners to:

- “ infer, by using knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar specified for each tier, plausible meanings of single words from outside the Vocabulary List when they are embedded in the context of written sentences.”

The words Learners are required to infer may be embedded in a reading text or assessed as a separate reading task, however, the supporting context must be clear to the Learner.

## Undertake dictation of short spoken extracts

The Content Document states that each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish must require Learners to:

“ Undertake dictation of short spoken extracts (including some vocabulary from outside the vocabulary list) with credit for accurate spelling.”

To support understanding of the context, any extract to be used in the assessment of dictation may be adapted from a spoken extract that Learners have already heard.

## Guidance on assessment objectives for GCSE Qualifications in French, German and Spanish

Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1.2 allows us to specify requirements and guidance relating to assessment objectives for GCSE Qualifications in French, German and Spanish.

We published our requirements in relation to assessment objectives in GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for French, German and Spanish, and reproduce assessment objectives AO1 to AO3 and their respective weightings in the table below.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
AO1	Understand and respond to spoken language in speaking and in writing	35 %
AO2	Understand and respond to written language in speaking and in writing	45 %
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification	20 %

We set out below our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1.2. This guidance explains how we expect awarding organisations to interpret these assessment objectives in terms of:

- the discrete ‘strands’ within each assessment objective that questions and tasks could target and/or seek to credit – our expectation is that each and every question/task should target or seek to credit at least one of these strands, and may target or seek to credit multiple elements across one or more assessment objectives;
- the coverage expectations, such as in relation to the different strands within each assessment objective and how those strands should be sampled over time; and
- the key areas of emphasis in each assessment objective and the particular meaning for the subject of any key terms and phrases used; defined terms are shown in bold text, followed by their definitions.

In line with the obligations set out in Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1.2, we expect awarding organisations to be able to demonstrate how they have had regard to this guidance. For example, an awarding organisation could map how it has regard to the guidance as it:

- develops its sample assessment materials;

- delivers the qualification;
- develops and applies its approach to sampling the elements into which the assessment objectives are divided; and
- monitors the qualification to make sure it addresses all elements appropriately.

For AO1 and AO2, assessed responses will be in both English and the assessed language as appropriate to the task.

For AO3, all assessed responses will be in the assessed language.

## AO1 Understand and respond to spoken language in speaking and in writing: 35%

Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
1. Understand and respond to spoken language in speech	This strand is a single element	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This strand covers responses in the assessed language to spoken prompts and questions in the assessed language.</li> <li>• The emphasis here should be on Learners' communication skills in their use of spoken language.</li> <li>• It is not possible to assess Learners' ability to 'understand' and 'respond to' spoken language separately. Rather, students should demonstrate their understanding through their responses.</li> </ul>
2. Understand and respond to spoken language in writing	This strand is a single element	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This strand covers responses in English to demonstrate understanding of spoken language, as well as writing in the assessed language in response to spoken stimuli.</li> <li>• Responses may also include single letters, numbers and/or percentages in figures, names, and/or single words.</li> <li>• It is not possible to assess Learners' ability to 'understand' and 'respond to' spoken language separately. Rather, Learners should demonstrate their understanding through their responses.</li> </ul>

## AO2 Understand and respond to written language in speaking and in writing: 45%

Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
1. Understand and respond to written language in	This strand is a single element	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This strand covers responses in the assessed language to written prompts in the assessed language and/or in English, or to visual prompts.</li> <li>• It is not possible to assess Learners' ability to 'understand' and 'respond to'</li> </ul>

speaking			written language separately. Rather, Learners should demonstrate their understanding through their responses.
2. Understand and respond to written language in writing	This strand is a single element	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This strand covers responses in English to demonstrate understanding of written language, as well as writing in the assessed language in response to written prompts in the assessed language and/or in English or visual stimuli</li> <li>• Responses may also include single letters, numbers and/or percentages in figures, names, and/or single words.</li> <li>• It is not possible to assess Learners' ability to 'understand' and 'respond to' written language separately. Rather, Learners should demonstrate their understanding through their responses.</li> </ul>

## AO3 Demonstrate knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification: 20%

Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
Not applicable	This AO is a single element	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment).	<p>This assessment objective covers responses in the assessed language in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and accurate application of grammar in spoken and written language.</li> <li>• Knowledge and accurate application of vocabulary, including demonstration of knowledge of sound-symbol correspondence in spoken and written language.</li> <li>• The quality of pronunciation in speaking tasks.</li> </ul>

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