

GCSE French: Subject Content

Questions across all four language skills are set in common contexts, addressing a range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes. They are organised into five themes, each broken down into topics and sub-topics.

The five themes are:

- Identity and culture
- Local area, holiday and travel
- School
- Future aspirations, study and work
- International and global dimension.

The sub-topics are:

Theme: Identity and culture

- Who am I?: relationships; when I was younger; what my friends and family are like; what makes a good friend; interests; socialising with friends and family; role models
- Daily life: customs and everyday life; food and drink; shopping; social media and technology (use of, advantages and disadvantages)
- Cultural life: celebrations and festivals; reading; music; sport; film and television

Theme: Local area, holiday and travel

- Holidays: preferences; experiences; destinations
- Travel and tourist transactions: travel and accommodation; asking for help and dealing with problems; directions; eating out; shopping
- Town, region and country: weather; places to see; things to do

Theme: School

- What school is like: school types; school day; subjects; rules and pressures; celebrating success
- School activities: school trips; events and exchanges

Theme: Future aspirations, study and work

- Using languages beyond the classroom: forming relationships; travel; employment
- Ambitions: further study; volunteering; training
- Work: jobs; careers and professions

Theme: International and global dimension

- Bringing the world together: sports events; music events; campaigns and good causes
- Environmental issues: being 'green'; access to natural resources

GCSE French: How it's assessed

The GCSE (9-1) in French consists of four externally examined papers based on the following skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students will complete their speaking assessment in May and all other assessments in May/June at the end of Year 11. Each paper is available at Foundation tier or Higher tier. Students will be entered for a single tier across all papers. The use of dictionaries will not be permitted during the examinations.

What's assessed?

Paper 1: Listening and understanding

How it's assessed

- Foundation tier: 35 minutes
- Higher tier: 45 minutes
- 25% of the total qualification

Assessment overview

Students are assessed on their understanding of standard spoken French by one or more speakers in a range of public and social settings. Students will respond to multiple-response and short-answer open response questions based on a recording featuring male and female French speakers.

Foundation tier

- Section A is set in English. The instructions to students are in English.
- Section B is set in French. The instructions to students are in French.

Higher tier

- Section A is set in French. The instructions to students are in French.
- Section B is set in English. The instructions to students are in English.

What's assessed?

Paper 2: Speaking

How it's assessed

- Internally conducted and externally assessed
- Foundation tier: 7–9 minutes plus 12 minutes' preparation time
- Higher tier: 10–12 minutes plus 12 minutes' preparation time
- 25% of the total qualification

Assessment overview

Students are assessed on their ability to communicate and interact effectively through speaking in French for different purposes and in different settings.

There are three tasks which must be conducted in the following order:

- Task 1 – a role play based on one topic that is allocated by the examination board.
- Task 2 – questions based on a picture stimulus based on one topic that is allocated by the examination board.
- Task 3 – conversation based on two themes. The first theme is based on the topic chosen by the student in advance of the assessment. The second theme is allocated by the examination board.

The assessments are conducted by the class teachers in one session.

What's assessed?

Paper 3: Reading and understanding

How it's assessed

- Foundation tier: 45 minutes
- Higher tier: 1 hour;
- 25% of the total qualification

Assessment overview

Students are assessed on their understanding of written French across a range of different types of texts, including advertisements, emails, letters, articles and literary texts. Students are required to respond to multiple-response and short-answer questions based on these texts.

Students must answer all questions in each of the three sections:

- Section A is set in English. The instructions to students in English.
- Section B is set in French. The instructions to students in French.
- Section C includes a translation passage from French into English with instructions in English.

What's assessed?

Paper 4: Writing

How it's assessed

- Foundation tier: 1 hour 10 minutes
- Higher tier: 1 hour 20 minutes
- 25% of the total qualification

Assessment overview

Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in French for different purposes and audiences. Students are required to produce responses of varying lengths and types to express ideas and opinions in French. The instructions to students are in French. Word counts are specified for each question. Students must answer all questions.

- Foundation tier – three open response questions and one translation into French.
- Higher tier – two open response questions and one translation into French.