

Getting Started Guide



A Level French

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in French (9FR0)

Getting Started: GCE French 2016

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1. Introduction

The A level qualification is designed to be appealing and engaging to students, while preparing them for future study and work. An inspiring and culturally relevant course has been developed, based on feedback from teachers, students, subject associations, academics and advisors.

The qualification has a clear structure, which will enable students to develop advanced-level, transferable language alongside a deeper cultural appreciation of French and Francophone culture. There is an emphasis on promoting understanding of grammar in order to allow spontaneous, creative use of language to suit different purposes. The themes are engaging and relevant, combining familiar and new content. Popular texts and films have been chosen, as well as some less well-known titles, both classical and contemporary.

This Getting Started guide provides an overview of the A level specification, to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment, and to help you understand what these mean for you and your students.

We are providing a package of support to help you plan and implement the specification.

- **Planning:** mapping documents to show how your old course matches the new A level; an editable course planner; a student guide; and schemes of work which you can adapt to suit your department
- **Understanding the standard:** specimen papers; example student work with examiner commentaries
- **Tracking learner progress:** specimen papers to support formative assessments and mock exams
- **Personal support:** [MFL Subject Advisor](#)
- **Teaching and learning:** a range of guides containing practical approaches to areas, such as analysing films and literature, conducting research and essay-writing; film and literature PowerPoints to support you with teaching; and ideas for the independent research project.

These support documents are available on the [GCE 2016 French pages](#) on the Edexcel website.

2. What's changed?

2.1 How has A level changed?

Changes to A level qualification

From September 2016, A level French will be a fully linear qualification. This means that all examinations must be sat (and non-examination assessment submitted) at the end of the course. More information about the implications of the move to linear assessment is given on page 13.

Changes to Assessment Objectives

The A level languages Assessment Objectives have been revised. There are two main changes to the Assessment Objectives:

- A new AO4 has been introduced. This requires knowledge, understanding and critical and analytical response – to cultural and social issues relating to target-language communities.
- AO3 has a greater proportion of the marks than in the previous specification and has a subtly changed emphasis – there is greater emphasis now on active application of grammar in generating new, independent language.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| AO1 20% | Understand and respond: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction• in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources |
| AO2 30% | Understand and respond: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources• in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources |
| AO3 30% | Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structures |
| AO4 A level 20% | Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically and analytically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken |

2.2 Changes to Edexcel GCE French

Specification overview

| | | | | |
|---------|---|---|--|-----|
| Paper 1 | Listening, reading and translation | Themes 1, 2, 3 and 4 | 2 hours | 40% |
| Paper 2 | Written response to works and translation | Literary works/film | 2 hours 40 minutes | 30% |
| Paper 3 | Speaking (internally conducted and externally assessed) | Independent research, plus Themes 1, 2, 3 and 4 | 21–23 minutes, including 5 minutes' preparation time | 30% |

Changes to specification content

Specification content is now based around social, political and cultural themes, relating to the French language, culture and communities. This will enable students to gain a deeper understanding of the culture related to their language of study and ensure smooth progression to further study. The themes and assessment model are also designed to promote the development of transferable skills.

These changes are in line with reports published by the A-Level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB), informed by academics, and the Department for Education (DfE), which consulted a range of stakeholders. These reports were both strongly in favour of languages A levels which foster 'depth of knowledge, effective understanding and intercultural competence,' (DfE). The reports also identified a need for qualifications which develop transferable skills, especially research skills and 'the capacity for critical thinking on the basis of knowledge of the language, culture and society of the country or countries where the language is spoken' (ALCAB).

Students taking the A level will study four themes:

Theme 1: Les changements dans la société française

Theme 2: La culture politique et artistique dans les pays francophones

Theme 3: L'immigration et la société multiculturelle française

Theme 4: L'Occupation et la Résistance

There are a number of sub-themes, which can be found below. The content of these themes is assessed in Paper 1 (listening, reading and translation) and Paper 3 (speaking).

Students at A level are also required to study either two texts, or one text and one film, which will be assessed in Paper 2 (writing).

Moreover, at A level students will also be required to undertake an Independent Research Project, which will be assessed in the second part of the speaking exam. Further detail on this can be found in Section 5.4.

Comparison of the new specification to the Edexcel A1 and A2 2008

| New specification | | Previous specification |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Theme 1 | <p>Les changements dans la société française</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Les changements dans les structures familiales • L'éducation • Le monde du travail | <p>The world around us: [...] environmental issues and the French-speaking world</p> <p>Education and employment</p> <p>Youth culture and concerns: relationships</p> |
| Theme 2 | <p>La culture politique et artistique dans les pays francophones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La musique • Les médias • Les festivals et les traditions | <p>Youth culture and concerns</p> <p>Customs, traditions, beliefs and religions</p> |
| Theme 3 | <p>L'immigration et la société multiculturelle française</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L'impact positif de l'immigration sur la société française • Répondre aux défis de l'immigration et l'intégration en France • L'extrême droite | <p>National [...] events: past, present and future</p> <p>(Geographical area)</p> <p>(Aspects of modern society)</p> |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Theme 4 | L'Occupation et la Résistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La France occupée • Le régime de Vichy • La Résistance | National [...] events: past, present and future (Historical period) |
| Literary works | Prescribed list of works <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterisation • Structure • Stylistic features • Concepts and issues | Free choice of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different characters • key themes/issues • social and cultural setting • styles/techniques employed |
| Films | Prescribed list of films <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterisation • Structure • Contexts • Techniques | Free choice of film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different characters • key themes/issues • social and cultural setting • styles/techniques employed |
| Independent research | Must be linked to the social and cultural context of the francophone world | Completely free choice – no requirement for research to relate to target-language culture or community |
| | | Lifestyle: health and fitness Travel, tourism, International events |

3. Planning

3.1 Planning and delivering linear A level courses

Naturally, the key difference of linear qualifications is that students need to retain all that they have learned for examination at the end of the course. In terms of language learning, this is a logical and positive development because students must retain and build on everything they learn in order to master a language effectively.

In terms of planning, teachers will need to consider the following:

- A level assessment is at the end of year 2.
- retakes are only possible for the entire qualification, not for individual modules.

Course planning needs to cover:

- four themes
- either two texts, or a text and film
- sufficient practice in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation
- a broad range of grammar and opportunities to use this to generate language independently
- independent research
- development of critical and analytical thinking.

3.2 Suggested resources

The Edexcel A level course is supported by a range of free and paid-for resources:

Coursebooks:

Edexcel A level French Rod Hares, Kirsty Thathapudi, Karine Harrington, Wendy O'Mahony, Amy Gregg, Hodder Education, 2016

Other paid-for resources:

ZigZag Education – a range of material supporting all four skills in French

Our free **online support** for teachers includes:

- vocabulary for literature and film
- guides on literature and film analysis, carrying out research and essay writing
- PowerPoints to support the teaching and learning of film and literature.

Other useful resources include:

Grammar

Servane Jacob and Janine Schofield, *Edexcel A Level French Grammar Practice Book*, Pearson 2008

Mireille Ribiere and Thaila Marriott, *Help Yourself to Advanced French Grammar: A Grammar Reference and Workbook Post-GCSE/Advanced Level*, second edition, Pearson 1998

3.3 Planning

Vocabulary

Paul Humberstone, *Mot à Mot: New Advanced French Vocabulary*, Hodder Education, sixth edition, 2018

Literature

There are student guides to most of the books on the A level specification. The 'Fiche de lecture' series is very thorough and, although intended for French students, these can be a really useful starting point for UK students. Most editions also include good introductions and some analysis of the text.

Some examples of guides are given below, though this is by no means an exhaustive list:

Kathy Jusseret, *Le Tartuffe de Molière* (Fiche de lecture): Résumé complet et analyse détaillée de l'œuvre

Peggy Chaplin, *Maupassant: Boule de Suif* (Glasgow Introductory Guides to French Literature), 2010

Alexandre Oudent, *L'Étranger d'Albert Camus* (Fiche de lecture): Analyse complète de l'œuvre

Films

An internet search for your chosen film should generate plenty of resources. The Institut Français, among others, has a range of useful materials, while the 'Fiche de lecture' series also has a number of study guides in French. For example:

Ginette Vincendeau, *La Haine* (Cine-file French Film Guides), 2017

Newspapers, television and radio

<http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/france.htm>

<http://streema.com/tv/country/France>

<https://www.20minutes.fr>

<https://www.lemonde.fr>

Other

<http://www.institut-francais.org.uk/>

<http://www.institut-francais.org.uk/cine-lumiere/>

https://julianwhiting.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/au_revoir_les_enfants.pdf

You will also find several English sites with resources to support the films at filmeducation.org.

3.4 Delivery models

Possible models for course planning include:

Model 1

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Year 1 A level | Theme 1 | Literary work/ film | Grammar revision | Transferable listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, thinking | Independent research |
| | Theme 2 | | Grammar development | | |
| | Revision | | | | |
| Year 2 A level | Theme 3 | Literary work/ film | Grammar revision | | |
| | Theme 4 | | Grammar development | | |
| | Revision | | | | |

Model 2

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Year 1 A level | Theme 1 | Grammar Revision/development | Skills Transferable listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, thinking |
| | Theme 2 | | |
| | Literary work/film | | |
| | Revision | | |
| Year 2 A level | Theme 3 | | |
| | Theme 4 | | |
| | Independent research | | |
| | Literary work/film | | |
| | Revision | | |

Model 1 offers a more integrated learning experience, developing all skills together, whereas Model 2 presents a clearer order. Model 1 is potentially more complex to manage, but Model 2 could result in teachers and students running out of time on the second literary work/film and independent research.

More detailed Schemes of work and other useful planning documents are available as free resources on the [Edexcel website](#)

4. Content guidance

The themes and sub-themes identified below are vehicles for the development of linguistic and cognitive skills, as well as cross-cultural awareness. Assessment is predominantly related to the ability to use the target language. Assessment will take place within the themes and sub-themes. Students will need to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and critical and analytical response relating to the target language community and culture.

4.1 Themes and sub-themes

| | | | |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| Theme 1 | Les changements dans la société française | Les changements dans les structures familiales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Les changements dans les attitudes envers le mariage, les couples et la famille |
| | | L'éducation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le système éducatif et les questions estudiantines |
| | | Le monde du travail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La vie active en France et les attitudes envers le travail • Le droit à la grève • L'égalité des sexes |
| Theme 2 | La culture politique et artistique dans les pays francophones | La musique | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Les changements et les développements • L'impact de la musique sur la culture populaire |
| | | Les médias | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La liberté d'expression • La presse écrite et en ligne • L'impact sur la société et la politique |
| | | Les festivals et les traditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Les festivals, fêtes, coutumes et traditions |
| Theme 3 | L'immigration et la société multiculturelle française | L'impact positif de l'immigration sur la société française | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Les contributions des immigrés à l'économie et à la culture |
| | | Répondre aux défis de l'immigration et l'intégration en France | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Les activités des communautés • La marginalisation et l'aliénation du point de vue des immigrés |
| | | L'extrême droite | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La montée du Front National • Les leaders du Front National • L'opinion publique |
| Theme 4 | L'Occupation et la Résistance | La France occupée | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La collaboration • L'antisémitisme |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| | | Le régime de Vichy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maréchal Pétain et la Révolution nationale |
| | | La Résistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jean Moulin, Charles de Gaulle et les femmes de la Résistance • La résistance des Français |
| Literary works | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Boule de Suif et autres Contes de Guerre (Boule de Suif, Un Duel, Deux Amis, La Mère Sauvage)</i>, Guy de Maupassant, 1880 (short stories) • <i>La Place</i>, Annie Ernaux, 1983 (novel) • <i>Le Blé en Herbe</i>, Colette, 1923 (novel) • <i>Le Château de ma Mère</i>, Marcel Pagnol, 1957 (novel) • <i>No et Moi</i>, Delphine de Vigan, 2007 (novel) • <i>Une si Longue Lettre</i>, Mariama Bâ, 1981 (novel) • <i>Un Sac de Billes</i>, Joseph Joffo, 1973 (novel) • <i>Le Gone du Chaâba</i>, Azouz Begag, 2005 (novel) • <i>Les Mains Sales</i>, Jean-Paul Sartre, 1948 (play) • <i>Les Petits Enfants du Siècle</i>, Christiane Rochefort, 1961 (novel) • <i>Le Tartuffe</i>, Molière, 1669 (play) • <i>L'Étranger</i>, Albert Camus, 1942 (novel) • <i>Thérèse Desqueyroux</i>, François Mauriac, 1927 (novel) | | |
| Films | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Au Revoir les Enfants</i>, dir. Louis Malle (1987) • <i>Chocolat</i>, dir. Claire Denis (1988) • <i>Cléo de 5 à 7</i>, dir. Agnès Varda (1962) • <i>Intouchables</i>, dirs. Oliver Nakache, Eric Toledano (2011) • <i>La Vie en Rose</i>, dir. Olivier Dahan (2007) • <i>Les Choristes</i>, dir. Christophe Barratier (2004) • <i>Les 400 Coups</i>, dir. François Truffaut (1959) • <i>Deux Jours, Une Nuit</i>, dirs. Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne (2014) • <i>Entre les Murs</i>, dir. Laurent Cantet (2008) • <i>La Haine</i>, dir. Mathieu Kassovitz (1995) • <i>Le Dernier Métro</i>, dir. François Truffaut (1980) • <i>Un Long Dimanche de Fiançailles</i>, dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet (2004) | | |

Themes 1, 3 and 4 relate to France only. Theme 2 relates to the wider French-speaking world. This means that in the listening, reading and translation papers, the content may be related to a country other than France, though only standard French will be used. In the speaking test, students will not be asked to demonstrate specific knowledge about one particular country, but they must be able to justify their viewpoints in relation to a French-speaking country they have studied.

Teachers should refer to the guides and other resources available on the Edexcel website for support on how to approach the themes.

Ideas on how to approach the themes and suggested activities can be found in the document [Teaching and learning activities](#). Note that these are suggestions only and are not prescriptive.

5. Assessment guidance

5.1 Implications of linear assessment

- Assessment is at the end of year 2.
- Retakes are only possible for the entire qualification, not for individual modules.

5.2 Breakdown of Assessment Objectives

The breakdown of Assessment Objectives by paper will be as follows:

| Paper | AO1 | AO2 | AO3 | AO4 | Total |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| 1 Listening, reading and translation | 15 | 25 | | – | 40% |
| 2 Written response to works and translation | – | – | 20 | 10 | 30% |
| 3 Speaking | 5 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 30% |
| Total | 20 | 30 | 30 | 20 | 100% |

5.3 Assessment overview

Historical texts

Our interpretation of historical is that the text was written at least 10 years ago. We do not interpret a historical text as one which was written in the last 10 years about events which took place more than 10 years ago. The text will relate to this specification's themes.

Literary text

An extract from a literary text will be used and will relate to one of the themes of this specification as much as possible. Literary texts are defined as texts written in French, for the French-speaking audience, for purposes of fiction or non-fiction. This includes texts written by authors who may have French as their second language. It naturally excludes materials such as readers written for English learners of French in UK classrooms.

The reading comprehension will require students to:

- understand the main points, gist and detail from spoken and written material
- infer meaning from complex spoken and written material, including factual and abstract content; in this context, abstract means ideas beyond the norm: e.g. moral, ethical, political values and opinions
- assimilate and use information from spoken and written sources, including material from online media.

For questions in which students respond in the target language, they may use words from the stimulus passage or extract, but they must not transcribe or copy down whole passages. For example:

Text: Je mange surtout des fruits et des légumes pour rester en bonne santé.

Question: Selon le texte, en quoi consiste un régime sain?

Rewardable answer: Manger surtout des fruits et des légumes.

Non-rewardable answer: Je mange surtout des fruits et des légumes pour rester en bonne santé.

Students who copy the whole sentence, as exemplified above as the non-rewardable answer, would not be awarded any marks without manipulating the verb in the sentence, *manger*. This is because it does not render an accurate answer to the question. However, as the exemplified rewardable answer shows, students may still use words from the listening passage or reading extract.

Paper 1: Listening, reading and translation

Written examination: 2 hours

40% of the qualification

80 marks

Section A is a Listening assessment based on a recording, featuring a range of French speakers, covering Themes 1, 2, 3 and 4. Students will respond to comprehension questions in the target language, based on a variety of contexts and sources.

Question formats require multiple-choice and open responses.

Responses in the target language are required, but students will not be marked on their quality of language. They will also be required to produce a short summary in French. Questions do not require students to respond in full sentences. They can respond using single words or phrases.

This section is worth 30 marks.

Students will have control of the listening player and we recommend they spend no more than 50 minutes on this section.

Section B is a reading assessment based on a variety of text-types and genres, including historical and literary texts.

Historical texts

Our interpretation of historical is that the text was written at least 10 years ago. We do not interpret a historical text as one which was written in the last 10 years about events which took place more than 10 years ago. The text will relate to this specification's themes.

Literary text

An extract from a literary text will be used and will relate to one of the themes of this specification as much as possible. Literary texts are defined as texts written in French, for the French-speaking audience, for purposes of fiction or non-fiction. This includes texts written by authors who may have French as their second language. It naturally excludes materials such as readers written for English learners of French in UK classrooms.

Question formats require both multiple-choice and open response. Questions are set in French and responses in French are required, though students will not be marked on their quality of language.

The reading comprehension will require students to:

- understand the main points, gist and detail from spoken and written material
 - infer meaning from complex spoken and written material, including factual and abstract content; in this context, abstract means ideas beyond the norm: e.g. moral, ethical, political values and opinions
 - assimilate and use information from spoken and written sources, including material from online media.

Section B is worth 30 marks.

We recommend students spend no more than 50 minutes on this section.

Section C is a translation into English. This will be an unseen passage and is worth 20 marks.

We recommend students spend no more than 20 minutes on this section

Note: students are not permitted access to a dictionary during the examination

Paper 2: Written response to works and translation

Written examination: 2 hours and 40 minutes

30% of the qualification

120 marks

Section A is a translation into French and is worth 20 marks. The content of the passage is related to any of the four themes. We recommend students spend no more than 30 minutes on this section.

Sections B and C comprise a written response to works.

Students are required to respond to two questions on two different works. For each question the maximum mark is 50, totalling 100 for this section.

The works may comprise one book and one film, or two books. The works are listed in *Appendix 2 of the specification: Prescribed literary texts and films*. The literary texts listed include a range of novels, plays and a series of short stories. All of the films are feature-length.

There are two questions for each work and students choose one for each of their chosen works.

Note: students are not permitted access to a dictionary during the examination.

Frequently-asked questions on the writing paper

How much knowledge are students required to have beyond the novel?

We would expect that students acquire some background information in the teaching and learning of the works, including, but not limited to, the following:

- author
- historical and/or political context
- any particular movement to which the work may belong.

There are also works for which this background is essential to the understanding of the plot. For example:

Le Dernier Métro

Évaluez **la façon** dont le réalisateur évoque la période de la deuxième guerre mondiale dans **ce film**.

In this example, it is clear that having some understanding of the Second World War would help students in their understanding of the plot of the film. However, the question still relates to what they see in the film. It is essential that students use evidence from the works in order to answer the questions, and do not write a generic response that is based on their knowledge of the Second World War.

Can students study more than two works? Do they declare all the works on the RP3 form?

If there is time, students can certainly study as many of the set works as they wish, and this would then, of course, afford them a greater choice in the assessment. However, it is important that students have in-depth knowledge of the works studied, including the ability to use quotations. On the RP3 form they should list all the works from the set list that they have studied, and on which, therefore, they can possibly answer in the written examination, especially as the oral assessment will take place before the written assessment. Students should therefore be encouraged to conduct their independent research away from the set lists of works in order to ensure they can meet the criteria of both assessments.

How many quotations do students need to use?

There is no requirement for a specific number of quotations, although quotations are needed to provide a critical analysis with convincing interpretations. This is made clear in the mark scheme *Critical and analytical response (AO4)*:

Critical analysis of issues/themes/cultural or social contexts is frequently demonstrated, with some convincing interpretations and points of view, **predominantly justified with appropriately selected evidence from the work.**

Paper 3: Speaking

The speaking assessment is conducted internally or by a visiting examiner and is externally assessed. It is worth 72 marks and comprises 30% of the qualification.

Total assessment time: between 21 and 23 minutes, which includes 5 minutes' formal preparation time

Task 1 requires students to choose one theme from a choice of two (these can be any of the four themes). They will then discuss one of the two statements on their chosen stimulus. Task 1 is worth 30 marks.

Task 2 is the Independent Research Presentation and requires students to give a short summary of their chosen topic, followed by a discussion with the examiner on their research. Task 2 is worth 42 marks.

Full details of the expectations of the speaking assessment can be found in the next section.

NB: All mark schemes can be found in the specifications.

5.4 Further details on the speaking assessment

Paper 3 is the speaking assessment, which is technically considered a non-examination assessment. Either the teacher or a visiting examiner will conduct the assessment and send the recordings to Edexcel formarking.

The total assessment time will be between 21 and 23 minutes, including five minutes' preparation time.

Task 1

Before the assessment

Teachers may open the materials up to three working days before the exam. This time does not include weekends so if, for example, an exam is scheduled for a Monday then materials can be opened on the previous Wednesday. This is to ensure the smooth running of the examination and to allow teachers to prepare. The teacher/examiner must not share information about the material with students in advance of the assessment. Edexcel will provide the centre with a grid detailing which student has which card (an example can be found on page 122 of the Sample Assessment Materials). The teacher can use this grid to plan for the assessment, but must not share details with students.

On the day

Task 1 (discussion on a Theme): Students have approximately 6 to 7 minutes' discussion time for this task.

- Content for this task will be based on any of the **12 sub-themes** from one of the four overall themes listed on *pages 8–9* of the specification. For example, *Le monde du travail*, *La musique*, *La Résistance*, etc.
- The invigilator offers the student a choice of two cards just before the preparation time begins. The invigilator will ask the student, for example, whether he or she wants the card on *World of work* or the card on *Music*. N.B. the student must **not** see the card until the choice has been made.
- On each card are two statements. The student chooses one of these to prepare.
- The student is then given five minutes to prepare.
- After the five minutes' preparation time, the assessment begins:
 - The examiner will start by asking which statement the student has chosen.
 - The examiner will then ask the two compulsory questions relating to the statement.
 - The examiner will then ask follow-up questions relating to the subject matter on the card.

For example, student 1 is given the choice of *Work* or *The Extreme Right in France*. The student chooses *Work*. There are two statements on the card with prompts:

A) La semaine de 35 heures a bénéficié à la société française.

Vous devez considérer:

- l'opinion des travailleurs français sur les 35 heures
- les avantages pour la famille.

B) Les travailleurs français se battent pour leurs droits du travail.

Vous devez considérer:

- l'attitude des travailleurs français vis-à-vis de leurs droits du travail
- les droits du travail les plus importants pour les travailleurs français.

Student 1 decides to speak about the 35-hour week, as in statement A.

The examiner will confirm the choice with the student in the assessment and then ask the two questions on the card:

A La semaine de 35 heures a bénéficié à la société française.

1 Quelle est l'opinion des travailleurs français sur la semaine de 35 heures?

2 Quels avantages la semaine de 35 heures a-t-elle en ce qui concerne la vie de famille en France?

The examiner will then follow up with additional questions relating to the subject matter on the stimulus card. For example: *Quels sont les désavantages d'une semaine de 35 heures? Est-ce que vous pensez que les propriétaires des entreprises familiales apprécient la semaine de 35 heures?*

Part 2

- The examiner must then broaden the discussion to cover aspects of the overall theme. In the example above, this would mean the examiner could ask questions on education, family structures or other aspects of work.

The questions must enable the student to meet the assessment criteria, i.e. to elicit examples and information to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the cultural and social context, and to analyse aspects of the theme by developing and justifying arguments and forming conclusions. The examiner may use some of the generic questions as provided in the Sample Assessment Materials. For example: *Quelles conclusions peut-on tirer de ...?*

Frequently-asked questions

In part 1 do students need to adopt a 'for/against' position on the statement?

No, this is not necessary, as the statement might not necessarily allow them to do this. However, they must be able to justify their opinions. For example, the statement on the card above asks students what advantages the 35 hour week has for family life. Students might answer that it allows working parents to spend more time with their children or plan childcare better. They do not then have to say whether they agree or disagree with this.

How much factual knowledge do students need to have?

Teachers should consult the *Knowledge and understanding mark grid* in the specification or the Sample Assessment Materials, as this provides detail on how students are rewarded. There is no requirement for students to be able to list facts. However, they do need to provide examples and justify these examples.

To the question above (*Quels sont les désavantages d'une semaine de travail de 35 heures?*), a student could respond:

À mon avis la semaine de 35 heures n'a pas beaucoup de désavantages, mais depuis quelques mois, il y a un désir de revenir sur cette loi et d'en changer les termes. Le président, François Hollande, a notamment donné son support et son appui à la loi El Khomri (dite la loi travail), qui cherche à donner plus de souplesse et de flexibilité aux entreprises, et ainsi améliorer la compétitivité de l'économie française.

Note also that Task 1 is marked as a whole, so it might be possible for students to provide fuller detail in the follow-up questions.

In the speaking assessment, can the examiner change the formal question to the informal form, or is that considered to be rephrasing?

Questions should be asked as they are written on the card.

If a student says "Do you mean ...?" after the examiner asks the question, can you answer "Yes" or "No"?

We would encourage the examiner to repeat the question as phrased on the card. However, if the student is struggling, then we would expect there to be some additional support, though this may affect the mark the student is ultimately awarded.

Can you ask the invigilator which cards students have chosen, or do you have to wait until the students tell you?

It is fine for the invigilator to tell you which card students have chosen.

Task 2: independent research project (IRP)

Students have approximately 10 to 11 minutes for this task.

Prior to the exam

Choosing the project

The independent research project (IRP) allows students to conduct in-depth research into an aspect of Francophone culture or life in which they are particularly interested. Students should be encouraged to think carefully about what they want to research, as the subject must allow them not only to showcase what they have learned about the subject, but also to analyse the subject in some depth.

The IRP may be based on any of the four themes of study or on a subject of interest of the student's choosing, but must relate to the Francophone cultural and social context. Should students choose a subject relating to one of the specification themes, it is possible that the same theme could come up in Task 1. Students should therefore go beyond the specification sub-themes and should ensure they have conducted wider reading on their chosen subject.

The IRP must **not** be based on one of the literary works or films studied for Paper 2. Students will receive a mark of zero for Task 2 if their IRP focuses on a work studied for Paper 2. However, an IRP could focus on a wider exploration of the author or film-maker of those works studied. For example, if studying a novel by a particular author for Paper 2, the IRP must not focus on that novel, as this would be a duplication of content. However, the independent research could focus on the life of the author, or the aspects of society which motivated the author in the broader sense.

Ideas for the IRP can be found on the [Edexcel website](#).

Once students have chosen the subject which they wish to research, they will need to decide upon a question or statement which they will then investigate individually. This might also help students to narrow down their choice of subject.

When to start the independent research project (IRP)

The IRP can be started at any point within the two-year course. However, the IRP form must be submitted to Edexcel at least three weeks before the start of the assessment. This form requires students to note down key findings, as well as sources. This is to allow visiting examiners the time to prepare their questions.

Sources

As part of the assessment, students must refer to at least two **written** Francophone sources and the student's declaration form provides space for up to four. These could, of course, be from newspaper articles, perhaps found on the internet. We advise students to keep a record of all the sources they have used, and teachers to give some support in how to use sources. There are many websites to which students can be directed, and it is also advisable that teachers help students locate resources.

The assessment

Part 1: Students give a presentation of a maximum of two minutes. This presentation must include:

- a summary of at least two of the written Francophone sources they have used as part of their research
- the authors' main points/ideas
- a personal response.

Part 2: Following on from the presentation, the examiner then moves on to a discussion of the student's research, including a wider exploration of the content of the student's presentation and of the research as a whole. The examiner should use the *RP3 form*, completed by the student, to identify questions in advance, in order to ensure that the discussion remains focused on the research.

In **both** tasks, students are expected to ask questions which elicit opinions as part of the natural discourse and to confirm that their own points of view have been understood. A list of suggested questions has been provided in the specification and should be shared with students.

Examiners should not give lengthy answers, but acknowledge the question and move on. If the student does not ask a question, this can be prompted by the examiner.

Frequently-asked questions

Can students make comparisons with the home country?

There may, of course, be instances where it is necessary or interesting to bring in examples or comparisons with the home country. For example, this could be used to strengthen an argument. However, the assessment criteria for *Knowledge and understanding of society and culture* (AO4) clearly rewards students who focus on Francophone cultural and social contexts, so we would recommend that comparison with the home country is limited.

Can students refer to their literary works/films as evidence to support their argument?

Quotations from the literary works or close reference to the films may be applicable for use as evidence to support an argument. However, students must refer to two other written Francophone sources in order to access marks from the grid *Responding to written language in speech* (AO2)

Can all my students cover the same topic?

It is envisaged, especially in large centres, that some students might have similar interests and might therefore wish to cover the same topic. This is acceptable and encourages teamwork. However, the statement or question for each student's project **must** be different, as well as the angle from which they are approaching it. For example:

Two students might be interested in May 1968 and wish to research this area. Two different angles could be:

- the legacy of May 1968 in French society today
- the extent to which the worker's protest was a success.

What can teachers help their students with?

Below is a list of what teachers must and must not do. Further clarification can also be sought from the assessment team and the [FAQs](#) on Conducting the speaking exam.

What sources should my students use?

Teachers should help their students in identifying suitable sources, and also help them analyse sources. Students should be encouraged to use a variety of sources, including (but not limited to):

- newspaper articles
- videos from the period in time (such as news reports or speeches)
- academic articles
- critical reviews for books and films.

Independent research – ‘Can and can’t do’s for teachers

Supporting students

Teachers **can**:

- give guidance on developing research skills (including methodology and analytical tools)
- give guidance on selecting a subject and question or statement for the student’s IRP
- explain what independence means (see definition in *Guidance on the independent research project* in the specification)
- comment on the suitability of the area of research (availability of resources, time constraints)
- give guidance and advice on completing *Form RP3*
- advise on and direct students to the Assessment Objectives
- provide a selection of resources for student access.

Teachers **must**:

- confirm that the question or statement has the potential to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria, and offer general guidance on any necessary amendments
- ensure that the question or statement does **not** correspond with one of the literary works or films which the student has studied for Paper 2: teachers will be able to identify this from the information given on *Form RP3*; students will receive a mark of zero for Task 2 if their IRP focuses on a work studied for Paper 2
- review each student’s *Form RP3*; teachers should ensure that the research can suitably fulfil the specification requirements and should give general guidance on the methodology and analytical tools which the student could use
- promote good practice, such as referencing and using a bibliography system
- sign the student’s *Form RP3* before the examination to declare that the IRP is wholly the student’s work
- monitor the different research projects being undertaken in a centre to ensure that independence is being maintained; if more than one student chooses to research the same topic, the teacher must ensure that each student has a different question or statement and, therefore, an independent focus.

Teachers **must not**:

- give students a choice of questions or statements from which they then choose, including a group question or statement for whole-class research
- give detailed feedback or guidance to individual students about how to improve their work to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria; the guidance provided should only enable students to take the initiative in making amendments, rather than detailing what amendments should be made; this could include:
 - suggesting additional sources to consult
 - broadening or narrowing their topic of research
- rehearse or provisionally assess the student's presentation
- provide access to, or rehearse, questions which will be used in the assessment of the student's independent research.

Examining technique checklist

The following guidelines will be helpful for teacher-examiners in preparing to administer the speaking assessments.

- The examiner's opening should put the student at ease.
- The examiner should remain friendly and encouraging throughout.
- The examiner should keep input to a minimum.
- There should be a predominance of open questions and encouragement.
- The examiner should refrain from proffering anecdotes, opinions, advice or information.
- The conversation/discussion should flow naturally.
- The examiner should take the student beyond learned or prepared material.
- The examiner should interrupt any pre-rehearsed sections.
- The examiner's interventions should be sufficiently demanding.
- The examiner should take the student to his/her linguistic ceiling.
- The closing should be upbeat, but not effusive.
- The examiner should keep to time for all elements of the assessments.