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Paper 3, Reading and Understanding

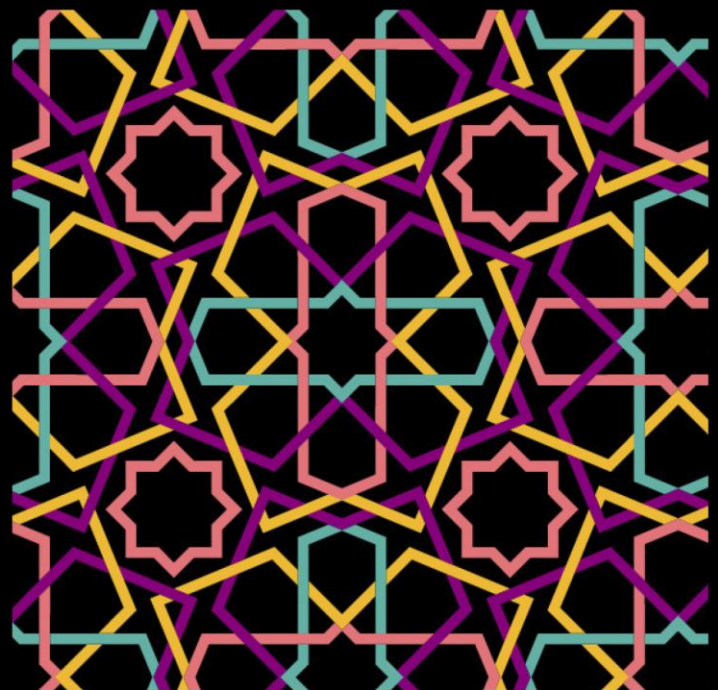
Teacher Guide



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Introduction

In our vision for these new GCSE (2024) French, German and Spanish qualifications we committed to ‘transparency’ and providing ‘clear, concise and straightforward’ assessments.

These paper guides are intended to complement the information provided in the Specifications for GCSE [French](#), [German](#) and [Spanish](#), by giving teachers access to the detailed instructions our paper writers receive when they are commissioned to create the live assessments.

We know how much considered and consistent paper design matters to you and your students, so we want you to see the thought and care we have taken with the construction of our papers and the features you will be able to rely upon every exam series.



Structure of paper

	Foundation	Higher
Structure and Marks	50 marks made of 2 sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A, Reading comprehension, 40 marks • Section B, Translation, 10 marks 	
Exam duration	45 minutes	1 hour
Grade targets	1 - 5	4 - 9
Number of questions	Section A: 9 questions including 1 question in three parts (Q8) Section B: 5 thematically linked sentences to translate	Section A: 8 questions including 1 question in three parts (Q3) and 4 questions in two parts (Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7) Section B: 1 paragraph to translate
Translation word count	35 words minimum	50 words minimum
Crossover questions	Q6, Q7, Q8	Q1, Q2, Q3
Question language	Question titles, rubrics and answers in English	
Vocab and grammar	FT only	FT and HT
Total words	Between 600 and 650 words, with a maximum of 100 words in any single text	Between 850 and 900 words, with a maximum of 160 words in any single text



Content of paper

In the Reading and understanding paper, students are assessed on their understanding of the target language in formal and informal contexts, and familiar and unfamiliar settings.

Students need to:

- understand main points and ideas
- understand opinions
- understand timeframes and tenses
- infer plausible meanings of single words embedded in the context of written sentences
- translate in writing short sentences or texts, from the target language to English.

The ratio of formal to informal contexts is 30% formal to 70% informal.

This paper draws on the specified vocabulary (Appendix 1 of specifications) and grammar (Appendix 2 of specifications) and the focus of the passages will be taken from the thematic contexts listed in the specification. A mixture of thematic contexts and subjects will be used in the paper to allow for a wide range of vocabulary.

Texts have been created to reflect the following authentic reading scenarios:

- blogs, internet forums, advertisements, tourist brochures, newspaper or magazine articles, emails, extracts from a diary or school project.

Reading texts

Students are presented with both short and longer written texts.

Words used in the reading texts are mostly taken from the vocabulary list, but not exclusively. The texts can also contain:

- vocabulary that meets the derivational morphology rules set out in Appendix 2 of the specifications;
- non-vocabulary list words required for the inference questions (see [Recall, process and inference](#) section);
- maximum of 2% glossing of any proper nouns or non-vocabulary list words;
- maximum of 2% of cognates.

We will ensure the contexts for the texts are brief and likely to be familiar to teenagers. For example, “Read this brochure for tourists” instead of “Read this government report about the tourism industry in Barcelona”.



Proper nouns and glossing

Appendix 3 of the specifications holds a list of names of people that will be used in our assessments. In the Reading paper we will aim to only use names taken from this list, in order to remove one barrier to understanding and cause of confusion. All students can become familiar with these names and come to the examination with the same knowledge, so all their focus can be on understanding the assessed content of the paper.

Any proper nouns not present on the vocabulary list or in Appendix 3 will be glossed (e.g. Guatemala = a country in Central America).

If for the purposes of the text cohesion, it is necessary to use words from outside the vocabulary list or names that are not in our specification, then we will gloss these words to ensure no disadvantage due to differing cultural knowledge.

However, **no more than 2% of words will be glossed** in any given text.

Cognates

For Reading only, the GCSE Subject content provided a definition of cognates as:

“words in which the substantial majority of letters are the same in English and the assessed language; they have the same meaning in both languages and any difference in spelling should not impede understanding for students entered for GCSE MFL (French, German, Spanish) qualifications.”

French, German and Spanish GCSE Subject Content, DfE

No more than 2% of words will be cognates (e.g. smartphone, text, rock (music) etc.) outside of the vocabulary list in any given text.

Use of images

The texts are set either at home or in a target language-speaking country. We have been very conscious of the disadvantage that some students have in modern foreign language examinations, owing to their lack of cultural capital. However, we also wanted to ensure that we could include some cultural contexts in our Reading papers.

We decided that where there is a cultural context that might not be familiar to all students, we would use an image to illustrate the cultural context and give all students an equal chance of accessing the content. The images will not contain clues to answers.

At least 1 but no more than 2 colour images on each paper.



Question design

In Section A of the reading paper a range of question types are used. In order to support students gaining familiarity with our papers, we have committed to using the same question types in the same location every time.

Same question types, in the same location, every time.

Crossover questions:

To support you with making tiering decisions, we have committed to questions 6, 7 and 8 of the Foundation tier Reading paper crossing over to the Higher tier Reading paper as questions 1, 2 and 3 (respectively).

Question type	Foundation	Higher
Multiple choice (MCQ), Example A	Q1	NA
Multiple choice (MCQ), Example B	Q3, Q7, Q8(b)	Q2, Q3(b), Q4(b), Q7(a)
Multiple response (MRQ)	Q2, Q5	Q5(a), Q6(a)
Word cloud	Q6, Q8(a)	Q1, Q3(a)
Open response, Examples A and B	Q4, Q9	Q5(b), Q6(b)
Open response, Example C	Q8(c)	Q3(c), Q4(a), Q7(b), Q8
Translation	Q10	Q9

The following are examples of each question type listed above, from the accredited GCSE French Paper 3 sample assessment materials:

Multiple choice question (MCQ)

Example A

Select one option only on each row of the table (Foundation Q1 only).

Who says what? Choose the correct answers.
Put a cross ☒ in the correct column for each question.

	Who ...	Alex	Enzo	Clara
(a)	... works in a shop?			
(b)	... does sport?			
(c)	... has a hot coffee?			
(d)	... goes to town?			
(e)	... helps their grandfather?			
(f)	... does their homework?			



Example B

Select one option only.

(a) Complete the sentences below.

Put a cross ☒ in the correct box for each question.

(i) The town is ...

<input type="checkbox"/>	A new.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B beautiful.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C busy.

Multiple response question (MRQ)

Select a specific number of options.

Put a cross ☒ in each one of the three correct boxes.

The hotel ...

<input type="checkbox"/>	A is very small.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B is near the station.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C has a restaurant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	D offers breakfast.
<input type="checkbox"/>	E organises children's activities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	F welcomes pets.



Word cloud question

Select appropriate word from cloud to fill the gaps.

We have organised the cloud so that the range of possible answers for a question are grouped along one row of the cloud.

Complete the gap in each sentence using a word from the box below.

There are more words than gaps.

comfortable	modern	practical
museum	Eiffel Tower	stadium
		theatre

(a) Hugo thinks his uniform is

(1)

(b) He didn't enjoy visiting the last year.

Open response question

Student writes answer in English. Complete sentences are not required.

We have provided additional structure for some open response questions (see Examples A and B below) and more traditional open response (see Example C below)

Example A

(a) Emma

One thing she likes to eat
One sport she takes part in



Example B

Complete the tables in English. You do not need to write in full sentences.

(a) Fatima

Her future education plans	<hr/>
Reason why	<hr/>

Example C

(c) Answer the following questions in English. You do not need to write in full sentences.

(i) What will her father make?

.....

(ii) Name one item Marie is hoping to get as a present.

.....



Translation format

Foundation tier

TV and film

10 Translate the following sentences into English.

(a) J'aime les comédies à la télévision.

.....

(b) Mon frère est acteur dans une série.

.....

(c) Je déteste les tragédies, je préfère les films d'action.

.....

(d) Hier, j'ai regardé les informations.

.....

(e) Si j'ai le temps, je vais au cinéma.

.....

All five sentences relate to one subject area.

'J'aime' and 'J'ai' each count as two words.

FT: Minimum total of 35 words, which we will keep as close to as possible

Higher tier

My plans

9 Translate the following paragraph into English.

Je fais une formation professionnelle au lycée cette année. Plus tard, je voudrais ouvrir mon propre restaurant. Mes parents et moi rêvons de vivre au Canada. Nous partons donc l'année prochaine à Montréal et j'ai déjà trouvé un poste ! Je travaillerai dans un fastfood qui a besoin de jeunes qui parlent français.

(10)

.....

.....

Whole paragraph relates to one subject area.

HT: Minimum total of 50 words, which we will keep as close to as possible.



Further details about question design

Relationship of text and question

The construction of an examination paper requires careful planning of the relationship of the texts and questions. Our assessments have the following features:

- Questions are **sequenced** so that the answers come in the order of appearance in the text e.g. the answer to the first question will be near the beginning of a text and the answer to the final question will be near the end of the text.
- Longer texts are broken into **manageable chunks** to help students access the texts and identify the answers to the questions.

Recall, process and inference questions

In the reading paper, questions are designed to test recall, process and inference skills.

Recall questions:

by recognising specific words, the students can get the answer without having to rely heavily on their understanding of the structure of the language.

Process questions:

the students need to recognise grammatical and lexical relationships, in context, to work out the correct answer for a question.

Inference questions:

Students infer the meaning of a single unknown item of vocabulary from their knowledge of the surrounding content.

- In recall questions, where the understanding of specific vocabulary items is required in order to find the correct answer, **often two correct answers are possible** to provide the greatest opportunity for students to achieve the mark. For example, if a question is “What do they like doing after school?” the text would likely read “I like watching comedies and playing tennis after school” instead of “I like watching comedies after school”. However, only one answer is required to achieve the mark.
- Inference questions contain at least two clues to the correct answer in the text. For example, when inferring the meaning of the word ‘discount’, the text might read “There is a **discount** for school groups. You only pay half price. The tickets for teachers are also cheaper.” If the student understands either ‘half price’ and/or ‘cheaper’, they will be able to infer the correct answer.



Distractors

Often teachers describe questions as being ‘tricksy’ or designed to trip students up. With our focus on compassionate assessment design, this is definitely not our aim, but we can see how the use of ‘distractors’ might be regarded in this way.

Distractors are necessary as they **allow differentiation between students who know and understand targeted vocabulary items and grammatical structures, allowing them to answer questions correctly, from those who have some knowledge of the target language but with a limited ability of (re)using it in a given context.**

We would like to reassure you, that during the creation of assessments attention is paid to ensure distractors:

- in recall questions are all taken from the vocabulary list
- are all plausible (e.g. students will not be able to give the correct answer through their knowledge of English, or common sense).
- could be closely related to concepts in the text (e.g. if the word ‘new’ appears in the text, the word ‘old’ could also plausibly be used as it is a related concept)
- are clearly/definitely incorrect, not just ‘not the most correct’.

In inference questions, the distractors (FT Q3b, Q7b / HT Q2b, Q4b) are all outside of the vocabulary list to ensure that students do not use knowledge of the vocabulary list to deduce the correct answer.

7 Read Maxime’s blog about her future career plans.

Je m’appelle Maxime et bientôt, je vais avoir quinze ans. À treize ans, j’ai commencé à m’intéresser aux questions de société.

On a déjà trouvé quelques solutions contre le sexisme et le racisme mais la sécurité est encore un problème. Dans mon quartier, il y a de la violence. Les jeunes qui n’ont pas de travail ont peu d’argent mais beaucoup de rêves !

Mon ambition est de lutter pour l’égalité. Je voudrais étudier les droits de l’enfant à l’université et un jour, devenir *avocate*.

Two details to help students infer the meaning of the unknown word.

On the inference question, none of the options are from the vocabulary list.

(b) Which of these is the best translation for the word *avocate*?

Put a cross ☒ in the correct box.

<input type="checkbox"/>	A	banker
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	professor
<input type="checkbox"/>	C	lawyer



Example of text and question layout

Beaches in Paris

7 Read this online article about artificial beaches in Paris.



Comme chaque année, la capitale invite les touristes à profiter de ses plages en bord de Seine*. Ouvertes du 9 juillet au 21 août, ceux qui aiment le soleil peuvent venir sans réserver.

Des activités gratuites pour les enfants y sont proposées tous les après-midis : jeux, chansons, châteaux de sable ...

Pour vous reposer, nous vous recommandons la bibliothèque de plage où vous pourrez lire un livre. Si vous voulez rester en forme, l'office de tourisme vous donnera le détail de toutes les activités sportives disponibles.

À noter : nous vous proposons un parc naturel avec des animaux en liberté et des voyages en bateau sur la Seine. Pour acheter vos billets, présentez-vous à l'office de tourisme !

*(La) Seine = a river in Paris

Images are often used for questions with cultural context but will not contain clues to the answers.

Glossing is used for proper nouns outside of the vocab list to ensure no disadvantage due to differing cultural knowledge.

Distractors are taken from the text or closely related to the text and exist in the vocabulary list for recall questions.

Questions follow the order of the text (e.g. the answer to (i) appears in the first paragraph. The answer to (ii) appears in the second.

Incorrect answers are clearly incorrect (e.g. it would be unfair for a distractor in (iii) to be 'beach' since the library is on the beach).

(a) Complete the sentences below.
Put a cross in the correct box for each question.

(i) The beaches are open ...

<input type="checkbox"/>	A	all year.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	in July and August.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C	only when the sun is out.

(1)

(ii) Children's activities ...

<input type="checkbox"/>	A	are free.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	must be booked.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C	are in the mornings.

(1)

(iii) To relax, tourists can go to the ...

<input type="checkbox"/>	A	park.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	library.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C	tourist office.

(1)



Ramping of demand – texts and questions

As stated previously in this guide, it is very important to us that a student experiences a reading paper which becomes gradually more difficult, rather than encountering a more difficult text earlier in the paper, losing confidence in themselves and giving up. This steady increase in difficulty is created through a **mixture of text length, timeframes and grammatical constructions** present in the text **and the question types**. In this way we hope students will continue to the end of the paper and gain all the marks they could realistically expect to.

The structure, layout, length and type of questions must follow the sample assessment materials (SAMs). The SAMs are designed to target specific grades and abilities and follow a general increase in demand and length.

Where not specified in the table below, questions may contain a mixture of timeframes, grammatical constructions and type of mark (recall and process).

Table showing ramping of demand in GCSE French SAMs:

Foundation:		Higher:
Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 50-55 words • Present timeframe • Simple language, short sentences, very frequently used vocabulary and grammar • Recall marks only • MCQ 	Crossover with FT Q6
Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 40-45 words • Present timeframe • Short sentences with frequently used vocab and grammar • Recall marks only • MRQ 	Crossover with FT Q7
Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 40-45 words • Present timeframe • Short sentences with frequently used vocab and grammar 	Crossover with FT Q8



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly recall marks; 1 inference mark with two clues • MCQ 	
Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 70-75 words (text split in two parts) • Mixture of timeframes in common constructions • Some variety of common vocab and grammar • At least 3 process marks, may contain recall • Open response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 70-75 words • Varied use of timeframes; may include imperfect tenses and/or conditionals • Some HT only vocab and grammar may be introduced • Mixture of recall and process marks; 1 inference mark with two clues • Open response and MCQ
Q5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 60-65 words • Mixture of timeframes in common constructions • Some variety of common vocab and grammar • At least 3 process marks, may contain recall • MRQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 110-115 words (text split into two parts) • Varied use of timeframes; may include imperfect tenses and/or conditionals • Some HT only vocab and grammar may be introduced • Mixture of recall and process marks • MRQ and open response
Q6	<p>Crossover with HT Q1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 75-80 words • Mixture of timeframes; may include imperfect and conditional tenses • Longer, multiple clause sentences with wider range of FT vocab and grammar • Must contain some recall marks • Word cloud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 160-165 words (text split into two parts) • Wide range of timeframes; may include imperative or subjunctive moods • Some HT only vocab and grammar is present • Mixture of recall and process marks. • MRQ and open response



Q7	<p>Crossover with HT Q2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 85-90 words • Mixture of timeframes; may include imperfect and conditional present tenses • Longer, multiple clause sentences with wider range of FT vocab and grammar • Must contain some recall marks; 1 inference mark with two clues • MCQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 120-125 words • Wide range of timeframes; may include imperative or subjunctive moods. • Must contain some HT-only vocab and grammar • Mixture of recall and process marks • MCQ and open response
Q8	<p>Crossover with HT Q3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 90-95 words (text split in two parts) • Mixture of timeframes; may include imperfect and conditional present tenses • Longer, multiple clause sentences with wider range of FT vocab and grammar • May contain recall marks • Word cloud, MCQ and open response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 150-155 words • Wide range of timeframes; may include imperative or subjunctive moods. • Must contain some HT-only vocab and grammar • All process marks • Open response
Q9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 90-95 words • Mixture of timeframes; may include imperfect and conditional tenses • Longer, multiple clause sentences with wider range of FT vocab and grammar • Majority process marks • Open response 	
Section B	<p>Q10 Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 35-40 words 	<p>Q9 Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count: 50-55 words



- 5 sentences linked by context ramped from grade targets 1-5.
- One past timeframe sentence will be used.
- The other 4 sentences will be present timeframe.
- One third person sentence.
- Will only contain FT vocab and grammar.

- 1 paragraph of 5 sentences linked by context ramped from grade targets 5-9.
- Present and past timeframes will be used.
- One future timeframe sentence may be used.
- At least one but no more than 2 third person sentences.
- Will contain some FT vocab/grammar but must contain some HT-only vocab/grammar in the last 2-3 sentences.



Summary of mark scheme design

Section A, Comprehension

This is a points-based mark scheme:

- correct answer clearly given in mark scheme
- candidate responses for open response questions are expected to be short
- designed so that points are awarded for the minimum response required to answer the question (e.g. words appearing in brackets may be omitted).
- variations in correct responses are accepted under a ‘compassionate marking’ approach.

Question number	Answer	Mark
8(a)(iii)	happy	(1)

Question number	Answer	Mark
8(b)(i)	B	(1)

Question number	Answer	Mark
8(b)(ii)	C	(1)

Question number	Answer	Mark
8(c)(i)	EITHER (he is a) vegetarian / doesn't eat meat OR (he) only eats bread	(1)

Section B, Translation

This is a levels-based mark scheme:

Foundation tier:

This is applied to all five translated sentences as a whole

Mark	A02: Response to stimulus
9–10	The meaning of the original language is appropriately transferred. Any errors do not detract from the overall clarity of the message.
6–8	The meaning of the original language is mostly transferred appropriately. Occasional errors affect the clarity of the message, e.g. incorrect words, omitted words, inexact syntax.
3–5	The meaning of parts of the original language is appropriately transferred. Some errors prevent the message being conveyed, e.g. some use of incorrect words, omitted phrases, incorrect tenses.
1–2	Only isolated words or phrases are appropriately transferred. There are frequent errors and omissions that prevent the message being conveyed, e.g. frequent use of incorrect words, omitted phrases, incorrect tenses.
0	No rewardable communication.



Higher tier:

Mark	AO2: Response to stimulus
9–10	The meaning of the original language is fully and appropriately transferred; any errors do not detract from the overall clarity of the message.
6–8	The meaning of the original language is mostly transferred appropriately. Occasional errors affect the clarity of the message, e.g. incorrect words, omitted words, inexact syntax.
3–5	The meaning of parts of the original language is appropriately transferred. Some errors prevent the message being conveyed, e.g. some use of incorrect words, omitted phrases, incorrect tenses.
1–2	Intermittent parts of the original language are appropriately transferred. Frequent errors prevent the message being conveyed, e.g. frequent use of incorrect words, omitted phrases, incorrect tenses.
0	No rewardable communication.

Translation exemplars

In the mark schemes for both the Foundation and Higher tiers:

- A model response is given, but correct responses do not necessarily have to use the same words or grammar to transfer the meaning appropriately (e.g. “I had a small meal because I didn’t feel hungry” and “I ate something light because I wasn’t hungry” both communicate the same message and would therefore both obtain marks.
- Exemplars are given with commentary in the SAMs to assist examiners in consistent application of mark scheme. For example:

Example Response 2

I am doing work training at college for a year. Later on, I would like to open my own restaurant. My parents and I dream of living in Canada. We leave Montreal next year and I have already found a job. I can't wait! I will work in a fast food restaurant for children in France.

Total marks: 5 marks

The meaning of most parts of the original language is appropriately transferred, but some errors prevent the message being conveyed (e.g., “for a year”, “We leave Montreal”). There is also some use of incorrect words (e.g., “for children in France”). For this reason, the best fit would be at the upper end of the 3-5 mark band.