



Pearson
Edexcel

Paper 4, Writing

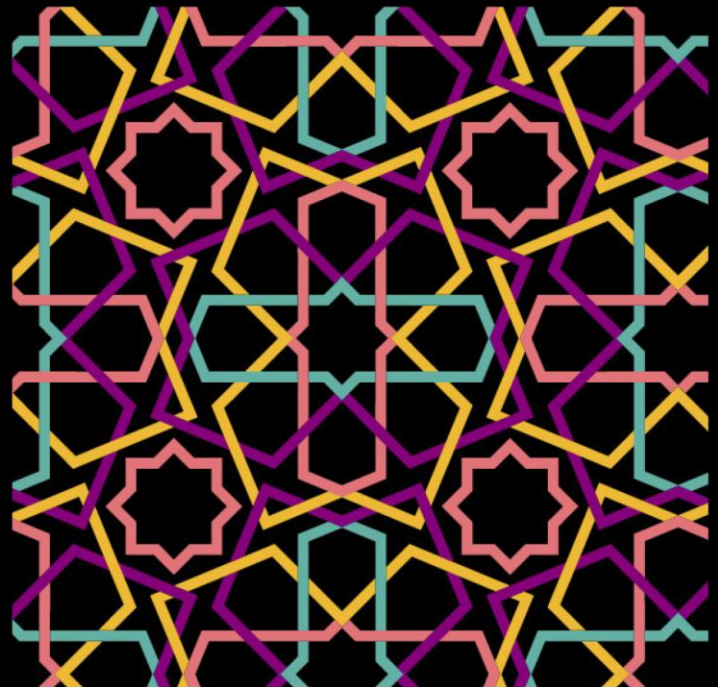
Teacher Guide



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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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 marks • 3 writing tasks • 1 translation task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 marks • 2 writing tasks • 1 translation task
Exam duration	1 hour 15 minutes	1 hour 20 minutes
Grade targets	1 - 5	4 - 9
Translation word count	35-40 words	50-55 words
Crossover questions	Q3	Q1
Question language	Question titles, rubrics and answers in English	
Vocab and grammar	FT only	FT and HT

Translation word count:
we will aim to keep to the lower end of these ranges.



Content of paper

In the Writing paper, students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively and with accuracy through writing in the target language for a variety of purposes, in both formal and informal contexts, and for a range of audiences.

Students are expected to:

- write text in the language in a lexically and grammatically accurate way in response to simple and familiar stimuli;
- produce clear and coherent texts of extended length to express ideas and opinions appropriately for different purposes and in different situations.
- make accurate use of a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures (from the prescribed lists), including some more complex forms, to describe, narrate and explain with reference to past, present and future events
- move confidently between reading instructions in English and writing in target language
- translate in writing short sentences or short texts, from English into the target language and to apply grammatical knowledge of language in context.

Formal and informal contexts

Students are required to respond to one formal (e.g. write an article) and one informal (e.g. write to a friend) context on each paper, but are not required to write in the formal register at any point.

No requirement to use the formal register in responses to formal contexts.

Question design

We have aimed to provide a consistent layout and wording in questions with no unnecessary page clutter. Some key features are:

- All writing tasks are set in English.
- Each question is linked to one of the thematic contexts listed in the specification.
- Q1 on Foundation tier is always a colour picture-task for which 4 **short** sentences are expected.
- Choice of writing tasks: Each open-response question has two options (a) or (b), based on different subjects so students can choose which subject they are most confident writing about.



- Clear scaffolding bullet points (3 on shorter FT task, 4 on longer FT and HT tasks).
- Clear expectation of tenses in bullet points
- Bullet point tenses / requirements are always in same order in the question, but there is no requirement for students to follow the order of bullets in their responses

Vocabulary

All tasks in the writing papers are written in English, but care has been taken to ensure that they target vocabulary on the list.

All questions in this paper can be answered and candidates can access the full range of marks using only words from the vocabulary list and inflected forms covered by the grammar requirements. Candidates are, however, free to learn and use words from outside of the vocabulary list that are relevant to their own lives and interests and will receive **equal credit** for these if used correctly.

Accessible and inclusive

We have designed our tasks to be within the range of most students' own experiences. We will only ask students to write about their lives and experiences rather than using their imagination.

Inclusive tasks set within the experience range of the teenagers you teach.

In our research you told us that the contexts of writing tasks are not always within the experience range of the teenagers you teach, and required them to stretch their imagination to an unreasonable extent. For example, 'Write a letter to the mayor of a French city' would not be within the expected scope of a teenager, whereas 'Write an article for your school magazine about tourist attractions in your area' would be.

At the forefront of the paper design is the awareness that asking some students to write about specific experiences or topics such as 'family', 'holidays' or 'accommodation' is not inclusive. Where reference is made to 'family' we will also provide 'or friends' as an option. If we ever make reference to holidays, it will always be in a conditional format of 'what/where **would you** like to go', which is a reasonable use of their imagination, rather than expecting that all students have experienced a holiday abroad that they could draw on for their response. We will also strive to give all students an equal amount of choice in the optional writing tasks rather than expecting those who have not experienced 'travelling by plane' for example, to choose the other option by default.

It would be impossible for us to take into account all the many different circumstances and experiences of young people today, but we are working very hard to make our writing paper as accessible and inclusive as possible.



Examples of question layout

Foundation tier, Question 1



(Source: Pearson Asset Library AL1517457)

Clear **colour** image, providing more opportunity for description.

1 Describe the photo. Write four short sentences in French.

..... (2)

..... (2)

..... (2)

..... (2)

Simple instruction and clear layout for answer space.



Foundation tier, Question 2

Choose either Question 2(a) or Question 2(b) .

If you answer Question 2(a) put a cross in the box .

2 (a) Write a review of a café for a website.

You **must** include the following points:

- where the café is
- your opinion of the food
- when you will next visit the café.

Write your answer in French. You should aim to write between 40 and 50 words.

(14)

Choice of tasks

Clear, accessible task

Three bullet points, with requirement to use future form clearly indicated.

If you answer Question 2(b) put a cross in the box .

(b) Write a review of your mobile phone for a website.

You must include the following points:

- what your phone looks like
- your opinion of your phone
- how you will use it this weekend.

Write your answer in French. You should aim to write between 40 and 50 words.

In both options, the form requested, 'review', remains the same, but the subject matter changes, 'café' or 'mobile phone', to focus students' decision making on their preferred subject.

Clear instruction to students that they 'must' cover the bullet points to meet the mark criteria.

Clear information about the amount of writing expected for the task.

'Review' is a formal context, as public facing, but there is no requirement to use a formal register.



Crossover question: Foundation Tier, Question 3; Higher tier, Question 1

Choose either Question 1(a) or Question 1(b)

If you answer Question 1(a) put a cross in the box .

1 (a) Write to your friend about shopping.

You **must** include the following points:

- types of shops in your area
- your opinion of one shop with reasons
- what you have bought recently
- where you will go for your next shopping trip.

Write your answer in **French**. You should aim to write between 80 and 90 words.

(18)

Four bullet points, with requirement to use **past** and **future** forms clearly indicated.

In both options, the form requested, 'write to your friend', remains the same, but the subject matter changes, 'shopping' or 'transport', to focus students' decision making on their preferred subject.

If you answer Question 1(b) put a cross in the box .

(b) Write to your friend about transport.

You **must** include the following points:

- public transport where you live
- your opinion of public transport with reasons
- how you went to school last week
- where you will go this summer.

Write your answer in **French**. You should aim to write between 80 and 90 words.

(18)

Inclusive bullet point that does not expect all students to 'go on holiday this summer'. Students could write about where they will travel locally 'this summer' ie cycle to the park.

Clear information about the amount of writing expected for the task.



Higher tier, Question 2

Choose either Question 2(a) or 2(b).

If you answer Question 2(a) put a cross in the box .

2 (a) Write about healthy living for an online magazine.

You **must** include the following points:

- what makes a healthy diet
- the pros and cons of eating out
- what healthy activities you did last week
- how you will stay healthy this weekend.

Write your answer in **French**. You should aim to write between 130 and 150 words.

(22)

Second bullet point requires students to present a wider range of opinions, both **pros and cons** on the subject.

Clear information about **the larger amount of writing expected** for the task.

(b) Write about schools for an online magazine.

You **must** include the following points:

- what makes a good school
- the pros and cons of single-sex schools
- what happened at your school recently
- your education plans for next year.

Write your answer in **French**. You should aim to write between 130 and 150 words.

(22)



Translation task, Foundation tier

4 Translate the following five sentences into French. (10)

(a) I love school.
.....

(b) My favourite subject is History.
.....

(c) The teacher is interesting and I learn a lot.
.....

(d) Last year I studied at home every evening.
.....

(e) If I work well, I can find a good job.
.....

Clear layout, with sentences increasing in length and/or grammatical complexity.

Translation task, Higher tier

3 Translate the paragraph into French. (10)

I like singing French songs at home. My favourite artist comes from Paris. I always listen to her in the evening. Last month my friends and I went to a concert in town. I want to continue to play an instrument in future because music is very important to me.

.....

.....



Ramping of demand

In the writing paper, 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.

Table showing ramping of demand in GCSE French SAMs

	Foundation	Higher
Q1	<p>Picture task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One colour image • Write 4 short sentences • Purpose: describe • Present timeframe required • 8 marks (focus on communication – AO2) 	<p>Crossover with FT Q3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open response, 80-90 words • Informal context • Select one of two options • Purpose: express an opinion and justify, narrate (in the past tense), express future plans (future tense) <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • types of shops in your area • your opinion of one shop with reasons • what you have bought recently • where you will go for your next shopping trip. </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present, past and future timeframes • 18 marks
Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open response, 40-50 words • Formal context • Select one of two options • Purpose: give an opinion, present facts <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where the café is • your opinion of the food • when you will next visit the café. </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present and future timeframes • 14 marks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open response, 130-150 words • Formal context • Select one of two options • Purpose: Express pros and cons, explain, narrate in present, past and future timeframes, express future plans/actions <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what makes a healthy diet • the pros and cons of eating out • what healthy activities you did last week • how you will stay healthy this weekend. </div>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present, past and future timeframes • 22 marks
Q3	<p>Crossover with HT Q1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open response, 80-90 words • Informal context • Select one of two options • Purpose: express an opinion and justify, narrate (in the past tense), express future plans (future tense) <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • types of shops in your area • <u>your opinion of one shop with reasons</u> • what you have bought recently • where you will go for your next shopping trip. </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present, past and future timeframes • 18 marks 	<p>Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 paragraph of 5 sentences • 10 marks (holistically marked) • 50-55 words • Present, past and future timeframes (future used only if necessary for the coherence of the text) • Variety of first and third person sentences
Q4	<p>Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 sentences (thematically linked) • 10 marks (holistically marked) • 35-40 words • 4 present timeframe sentences, 1 past timeframe sentence • At least 1 third person sentence 	



Summary of mark scheme design

In the Writing paper, we are targeting assessment objectives AO2 (respond to written texts in writing) and AO3 (Demonstrate knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification).

In Question 1 of the Foundation tier paper, the picture description, we only assess 'communication and content' (AO2).

In all other open-response questions and the translations, on both the Foundation and Higher tier, students are assessed on both 'communication and content' (AO2) and 'linguistic knowledge and accuracy' (AO3).

Students are rewarded for any relevant content and are not penalised for writing more or fewer words than recommended.

The SAMs provide detailed guidance on the approach to applying the mark schemes for each task.

Improving mark scheme design

Following research with our customers, we have made significant improvements to the clarity and layout of the mark schemes, including:

- concise and easy-to-apply mark schemes with simplified language
- practical layout: AO2 and AO3 mark grids appearing side by side and on the same page, grids in order of questions, exemplification after each question type
- helpful infographic, to indicate the progression between terms like 'sometimes' and 'mostly', and glossary of terms used in the mark scheme

Differentiation terms within the mark scheme (AO2 and AO3 grids: all questions)
 As guidance, the illustration gives an indication of the relative relationship of terms used in the mark grids.

Note: The illustration should be referred to in conjunction with individual mark grids as each term does not necessarily equate to high or low marks. For example, although "**frequent development...**" equates to higher marks "**frequent errors...**" would conversely equate to lower marks.



- graduated criteria, starting with the highest marks at the top, to allow the full range of differentiation between candidates, whilst remaining compassionate.
- more marks available at the top of the HT mark scheme, for Question 2, to allow for the top-performing candidates to be recognised
- examples of types of errors (e.g. minor and major errors)
- exemplification of all question types, based on real student responses to support marking
- illustration of the distinction between AO2 and AO3 marking (to ensure students are rewarded for communication success despite errors in accuracy)

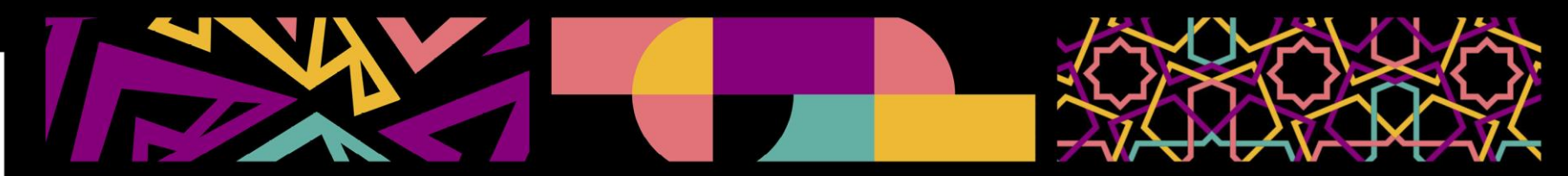
Interaction between AO2 and AO3 marks (all questions)

- The response to stimulus mark (AO2) does not limit the mark for linguistic knowledge and accuracy (AO3), except where a student produces a response that is wholly irrelevant to the task set. In this circumstance, 0 marks for both (AO2) and (AO3) will be awarded.
- Linguistic and grammatical errors are accounted for in the AO3 grid and should therefore be disregarded when applying the AO2 grid.

On the following pages, we provide some examples of the Writing paper mark criteria but do look at the SAMs for the full guidance and exemplars provided for the marking on the writing tasks.

Mark allocation across AO2 and AO3

Question	AO2	AO3	Total
	Communication and content	Linguistic knowledge and accuracy	
FT Q1	8	0	8
FT Q2	9	5	14
FT Q3 / HT Q1	13	5	18
HT Q2	17	5	22
Translation FT Q4 / HT Q3	6	4	10



Examples of mark criteria layout

Foundation tier, Question 1

Question 1 – Foundation tier (8 marks)

For this question, students are expected to produce four short sentences describing the picture. The mark grid is applied once to each individual sentence. There is a maximum of 2 marks for each sentence. Students are awarded marks for clear communication and relevance in relation to the picture.

Mark	AO2: Response to stimulus
2	Relevant information clearly communicated in a sentence or clause.
1	Relevant information partially communicated in a sentence or clause.
0	No rewardable material.

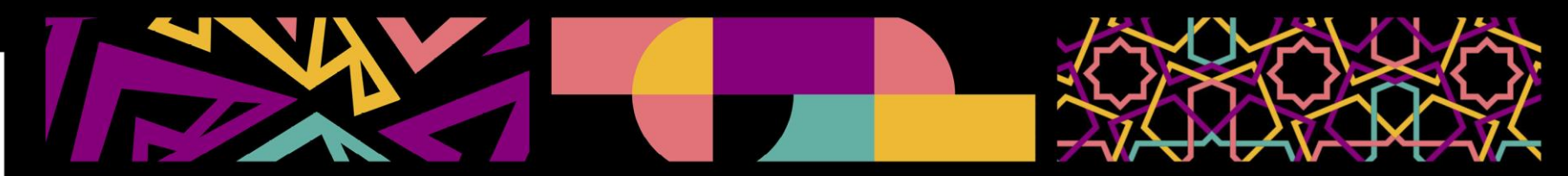
Guidance on application of mark grid for Question 1 Foundation tier

To exemplify application of the marking criteria, the grid below demonstrates a possible range of performances based on the mark grid.

2 marks	La mer est bleue.	Je vois la bleue mer.	Le pere est content.	Le père est contente.	Il y a cinq personnes ils sont camo la plage*
	Relevant information clearly communicated in a complete sentence or clause with a verb; may or may not contain minor errors which does not delay understanding of the sentence such as lack of or incorrect accents, minor spelling errors, incorrect word orders, missing punctuation.				
1 mark	Mer bleu.	Le mer sont bleu.	Le père content.	Le père être content.	Il as cinq personnes.
	Relevant information partially communicated, not a complete sentence or clause with a verb, or some ambiguity due to incorrect forms of verbs or other major errors.				
0 marks	Bleu.	Je vois un arbre.	Content.	Un pear content.	Ils sont camo
	No rewardable material, no relevant information clearly communicated, or not a complete sentence or clause.				

Specific guidance for Question 1

*Students can still gain 2 marks for a sentence where only one clause contains clear, relevant information, e.g. "*Il y a cinq personnes ils sont camo la plage.*"



Crossover question: Foundation Tier, Question 3; Higher tier, Question 1

This format exemplifies the layout we use for all our longer writing tasks across foundation and higher tier.

One grid for **AO2: Response to stimulus** and one grid for **AO3: Linguistic knowledge and accuracy**.

As the total marks available for questions varies depending on the question, the number of marks per band will vary, so do ensure you refer to the appropriate mark scheme in the SAMs for each task.

AO2: Response to stimulus		AO3: Linguistic knowledge and accuracy	
Mark	Descriptor	Mark	Descriptor
11-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All four bullet points addressed Frequent development of ideas Response is comprehensible; an occasional message may be unclear. 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures, some extended sentences; occasional complex language Generally successful use of three timeframes Generally accurate language; some minor errors, there may be an occasional major error.
8-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three or more bullet points addressed Some development of ideas Response is generally comprehensible; some messages may be unclear/difficult to understand immediately. 	3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures; occasionally extended sentences Some successful use of at least two timeframes Some accurate language; mostly minor errors with some major errors.
5-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or more bullet points addressed Occasional, brief development of ideas Some parts of response are comprehensible; the message sometimes breaks down. 	1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures; short, simple sentences Limited success with timeframes Limited accuracy in the language; frequent errors both major and minor.
1-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or more bullet point addressed Little or no extra detail added to ideas Limited parts of response are comprehensible; the message often breaks down. 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No rewardable material.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No rewardable material. 		

Clear detail about the minimum number of bullet points that must be covered in order to be awarded a mark in that band.

Clear detail on expected use of time frames



Translation task, Foundation Tier

Question 4 – Foundation tier translation (10 marks)

There are two mark grids to be applied to this question:

- AO2: Response to stimulus
- AO3: Linguistic knowledge and accuracy.

The Response to stimulus grid (AO2) assesses how appropriately the meaning of the original language is transferred. Any appropriate wording is rewarded. The linguistic knowledge and accuracy grid (AO3) assesses the accuracy of the target language. Examiners **must** use the *Additional guidance*, the *Exemplification of the mark scheme*, exemplification of live scripts issued at standardisation and their professional judgement before deciding on a mark.

AO2: Response to stimulus		AO3: Linguistic knowledge and accuracy	
Mark	Descriptor	Mark	Descriptor
5-6	The meaning of the original language is appropriately transferred; only the occasional message may be unclear or incomplete.	4	Vocabulary and grammatical structures are generally accurate; some minor errors, there may be an occasional major error.
3-4	The meaning of some parts of the original language is appropriately transferred; the message sometimes breaks down or is incomplete.	3	Vocabulary and grammatical structures are sometimes accurate; errors include some major errors.
1-2	The meaning of limited parts of the original language is appropriately transferred; messages are frequently unclear and/or incomplete.	2	Vocabulary and grammatical structures are limited in accuracy; frequent errors occur, both major and minor.
0	No rewardable material.	1	Minimal instances of accurate vocabulary and grammatical structures; errors throughout, most of them major.
		0	No rewardable material.



Translation task, Higher Tier

Question 3 – Higher tier translation (10 marks)

For this question, students' work is marked by Pearson using assessment criteria given in two mark grids:

- AO2: Response to stimulus
- AO3: Linguistic knowledge and accuracy.

The Response to stimulus grid (AO2) assesses how appropriately the meaning of the original language is transferred. Any appropriate wording is rewarded. The linguistic knowledge and accuracy grid (AO3) assesses the accuracy of the target language. Examiners **must** use the *Additional guidance*, the *Exemplification of the mark scheme*, exemplification of live scripts issued at standardisation and their professional judgement before deciding on a mark.

AO2: Response to stimulus		AO3: Linguistic knowledge and accuracy	
Mark	Descriptor	Mark	Descriptor
5-6	The meaning of the original language is consistently and appropriately transferred; any lack of clarity is rare.	4	Vocabulary and grammatical structures are consistently accurate; any errors are minor.
3-4	The meaning of most of the original language is appropriately transferred; the occasional message may be unclear or incomplete.	3	Vocabulary and grammatical structures are generally accurate; minor errors occur, major errors are rare.
1-2	The meaning of some parts of the original language is appropriately transferred; the message sometimes breaks down or is incomplete.	2	Vocabulary and grammatical structures are sometimes accurate; errors include some major errors.
0	No rewardable material.	1	Vocabulary and grammatical structures are limited in accuracy; frequent errors occur, both major and minor.
		0	No rewardable material.

AO2 descriptors:

The descriptor for marks 1-2 at HT, maps to the descriptor for marks 3-4 on the FT. Achieving top marks at HT requires greater consistency than to achieve top marks on FT.

AO3 descriptors:

The descriptors for marks 3, 2 and 1 at HT, map to the descriptors for marks 4, 3 and 2 respectively on the FT.