

International Advanced Level

Subject: Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish)

The need for Transferable Skills

Sources: Cognitive/Intrapersonal and Interpersonal skills adapted and taken from the NRC framework

In recent years, higher education institutions and employers have consistently highlighted the need for students to develop a range of transferable skills to enable them to respond with confidence to the demands of undergraduate study and the world of work. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines skills, or competencies, as 'the bundle of knowledge, attributes and capacities that can be learned and that enable individuals to successfully and consistently perform an activity or task and can be built upon and extended through learning'.

To support the design of our qualifications, the Pearson Research Team selected and evaluated seven global 21st-century skills frameworks. Following on from this process, the team identified the National Research Council's (NRC) framework as the most evidence-based and robust skills framework, and have used this as a basis for our adapted skills framework.

The framework includes cognitive, intrapersonal skills and interpersonal skills. These skills have been interpreted to ensure they are appropriate for this subject. All of the skills listed are evident or accessible in the teaching, learning and/or assessment of the qualification.

Identifying and highlighting these skills in International Advanced Level qualifications ensures that it is not only the academic and cognitive skills that are developed, but those broader elements that universities highlight as being essential for success. Skills such as self-directed study, independent research, self-awareness of own strengths and weaknesses and time-management are skills that students cannot learn from a textbook but have to be developed through the teaching and learning experience that can be provided through an international curriculum.

In the tables below, we have taken the NRC framework skills and provided definitions of how each skill can be interpreted for this subject. This will enable teachers and learners to understand examples of how they can develop each skill through an International Advanced Level qualification.

NRC framework skill	Skill interpretation in this subject	Where the skill is covered in content	Where the skill is explicitly assessed in examination	Opportunity for the skill to be developed through teaching and learning approach
Cognitive skills				
Cognitive Processes and Strategies				
Critical thinking	Identification & recall of information	Unit 4: "This unit requires students to understand and convey their understanding of French language texts and recordings." (Specification p. 3).	AO1, AO2 Paper 2 and Paper 4 SAMS q. 1	Vocabulary learning and testing.
	Organisation & selection of facts & ideas	Unit 4: "The assessment rewards students for communicating relevant information effectively." (Specification p. 40).	AO4 Paper 4 SAMS Section C qq. 9-20	Essay planning in preparation for Paper 4 qq.9-20
	Use of facts, rules & principles	Unit 2: "Students will need to understand and manipulate grammatical structures in French/German/Spanish by selecting the most appropriate word form to fit a gap, and by manipulating sentences that appear in a previous exercise from the section and reforming the sentence around a given word." (Specification p. 16).	All AOs SAMS Paper 2 q. 8	Learning and application of grammar rules in different contexts.
	Inferring meaning, drawing conclusions	Unit 2: "Students will need to show understanding of both the general sense and specific details conveyed." (Specification p. 16).	AO1, AO2 SAMS Paper 2 qq. 1-7	Learning to listen and to read for gist and for detail, to make inferences. Practice of listening and reading comprehension exercises.
	Developing opinions, judgements or decisions.	Unit 3: "This unit requires students to demonstrate the effectiveness of their French-language skills by presenting and taking a clear stance on any issue of their choice. They will be expected to interact effectively with the teacher/examiner, defend their views and sustain discussion as the teacher/examiner moves the conversation away from their chosen issue. (Specification p. 21).	AO1, AO4 SAMS Paper 2 q. 9, Paper 3, Paper 4, qq.9-20	Developing the skills needed to express and to defend opinions in preparation for the Paper 3 speaking test.

Problem solving	Expert thinking	Paper 3: "students will be assessed on the breadth and depth of their research in their presentation."	AO1 SAMS Paper 3 (presentation and debate of an issue)	Students learn to select and to research an issue suitable for debate at A2 level. Students learn to select material judiciously, to synthesise material and to develop the ability to present and to defend their point of view eloquently, supported by evidence and research.
	Creativity	Paper 2: "Section C requires students to write an email or article in TL based on a short printed TL stimulus." (Specification p. 2).	AO2, AO4 SAMS Paper 2 q. 9	Students learn to respond to a TL text and bullet points, and to develop their ideas in order to write a relevant reply. Students practise this skill over all AS topic areas in preparation for Paper 2 q. 9.
	Developing strategy for decoding unfamiliar language	Paper 2: "Students will be required to read authentic French-language printed materials and to retrieve and convey information by responding to a range of test types in French." (Specification p. 16).	AO1, AO2 SAMS Paper 2 qq. 1-7 and Paper 4 qq. 1-7.	Students should prepare for the assessment in Paper 2 and Paper 4 by reading a variety of TL language sources including books, magazines, newspapers and the internet, as well as listening to TL radio broadcasts and podcasts. (Specification p. 15)
	Repair strategies	Paper 1 and 3: Students ask the examiner to repeat questions which have not been understood.	AO1 SAMS Paper 1	In preparation for the speaking tests (Papers 1 & 3), students learn and practise the language needed to ask for repetition of a question or for clarification of something the teacher/examiner has said.
	Understanding and separating a whole text into component parts.	Paper 4: Students will be required to read authentic French-language printed materials and to retrieve and convey information by responding to a range of test types in French. (Specification p.30).	AO2 SAMS Paper 2 and Paper 4 qq. 5-7	Students study and analyse different types of written texts from a variety of sources. Students practise reading such texts for gist and for detail in preparation for Paper 2 and Paper 4 reading comprehension exercises. Examples of exercises in class: Match the correct heading to the correct paragraph; Re-order sentences / paragraphs into a logical sequence.
Analysis	Giving opinions and judgements with justification.	Paper 3: "This unit requires students to demonstrate the effectiveness of their French-language skills by presenting and taking a clear stance on any issue of their choice. They will be expected to interact effectively with the teacher/examiner, defend their views and sustain discussion as the teacher/examiner moves the conversation away from their chosen issue. (Specification p. 21).	AO1 Paper 3	Students learn the language needed to present an opinion and to defend a point of view, backed up by pertinent facts and evidence, and practise the skill of doing so in preparation for the Paper 3 speaking test.
	Evaluate spoken and written information and make judgements on the basis of this information.	Paper 1: Students prepare to answer unseen questions relating to a short TL text. (Specification p. 9).	AO1 SAMS Paper 1 (all questions).	Students practise reading and responding to texts based on the four GTAs tested at As level.

Reasoning/argumentation	Decoding a new written and spoken extract and identifying and understanding explicit or implicit meaning and authorial aims.	Paper 4: "Students will be required to read authentic French-language printed materials and to retrieve and convey information by responding to a range of test types in French." (Specification p.30).	AO1, AO2 SAMS Paper 2 and Paper 4 qq. 1-7	Students study and practise the skills needed to decode unfamiliar texts and to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from context, by studying texts from a variety of written and recorded sources.
	Select, organise and present relevant information clearly and logically using appropriate vocabulary and structures.	Paper 4: Section C "Students must answer one question, in TL, that relates to a topic, text or film chosen from the prescribed list. The assessment rewards students for communicating relevant information effectively." (Specification p. 30).	AO3, AO4 SAMS Paper 4 qq. 9-20	Students study topic or text and, in preparation for Section C of Paper 4, practise selecting and organising information about the topic or text in order to write a considered and well-crafted response to a question.
Interpretation	Evaluate information in a spoken and written text and compare it with information in the task to make correct choices considering the salient features which would form the basis of a correct response.	Paper 2: "Students will be required to read authentic French-language printed materials and to retrieve and convey information by responding to a range of test types in French." (Specification p. 16).	AO1, AO2 SAMS Paper 2 and Paper 4 qq. 1-7	Students study and practise how to answer comprehension questions of different types and based on a variety of texts in order to develop the skills needed to do so precisely and accurately, selecting only the material relevant to the correct answer.
Decision making	Adapting one's writing to an appropriate form or register.	Paper 4: "students demonstrate an ability to manipulate French language in continuous writing." (Specification p. 29)	AO3, AO4 Paper 4 q. 9	Students learn expressions and the vocabulary needed to write an A level continuous response to a topic or text.
	Selecting appropriate material to answer questions on topics and texts.	Paper 4: "The assessment rewards students for communicating relevant information effectively" (Specification p. 30).	AO4 SAMS Paper 4 11. 9-20	Students study SAMS and past exam questions and practise planning and writing essays in response to these.
	Responding to the unfamiliar in spoken and written texts by showing flexibility of thought and attitude.	Paper 2 and 4: "Students will be expected to recognise and use French in a variety of contexts" (Specification p. 15).	AO1, AO2 SAMS Paper 1, 2, 3 and 4	Students practise the skill of responding to unfamiliar texts and spoken language, selecting appropriate language and knowledge to answer the question.
Adaptive learning	Carrying out successfully a planned activity, for example planning an essay and completing it to meet the plan.	Paper 2: "Students will write an essay, in TL, in response to a short TL language stimulus and four related bullet points. The assessment rewards students for communicating relevant information effectively." (Specification p. 26).	AO2, AO4 SAMS Paper 2 q. 9 and 4 q. 9-20	Students learn how to plan and write and practise planning and writing responses of the type required in Paper 2 q. 9 and Paper 4 q. 9-20
Creativity	Using spoken grammar and vocabulary to speak with some fluency on a subject of choice.	Paper 3: To access the highest tier of the mark scheme, students have to demonstrate "High incidence of spontaneous, fluent discourse." (Specification p. 25).	AO1 SAMS – no SAMS paper, mark scheme pp. 25-26 of Specification	Students research their chosen issue for Paper 3, then practise presenting and debating this and other issues.
	Using written grammar and vocabulary to write with some fluency on a subject of choice.	Paper 4: To access the highest tier of the mark scheme, students have to demonstrate that "Communication is fluent and varied throughout." (Specification p. 34).	AO4 SAMS Paper 4 qq. 9-20	Students learn the vocabulary and structures necessary to write with fluency about the topic / text studied in class, and practise doing the same.

NRC framework skill	Skill interpretation in this subject	Where the skill is covered in content	Where the skill is explicitly assessed in examination	Opportunity for the skill to be developed through teaching and learning approach
Intrapersonal skills				
Intellectual openness				
Adaptability	Adapting speech to meet unexpected requirements.	Paper 1 "The teacher/examiner will engage the student in a discussion. Students should not be allowed to produce rehearsed speeches; they should be encouraged to speak independently and spontaneously." (Specification p. 9).	AO1 SAMS Paper 1	Students practise with the teacher / in pairs responding to unseen questions on the topic being studied in class.
	Responding to an unseen text (listening or reading) adapting own abstract concepts to decode and understand the text.	Paper 4 "Students will be required to read authentic French-language printed materials and to retrieve and convey information." (Specification p. 30).	AO1, AO2 SAMS Paper 2 and 4 qq. 1-7	Students practise applying their knowledge of the TL to understand texts (spoken and written) and answer questions.
Personal and social responsibility	Using writing to undertake a specific task for which one is accountable or which develops social awareness in response to ideas in a text.	Paper 4 "Students will be expected to recognise and use TL in a variety of contexts and in relation to the following general topic areas: • Youth matters • Lifestyle, health and fitness • Environment and travel • Education and employment • Technology in the TL-speaking world • Society in the TL-speaking world • Ethics in the TL-speaking world." (Specification p. 29).	AO4 SA.MS Paper 4 qq. 1-7	Students respond in writing to a text on the topic of social issues.
Intellectual interest and curiosity	Undertaking self-directed research – pursuing a line of personal interest using a range of research methods, including information technology and wider knowledge sources.	Paper 3 "students must initiate and conduct their own research and develop their research skills when investigating their subject of personal interest (Specification pp. 22-23).	AO2 Paper 3	Students learn research skills and undertake research in an area of personal interest to them in preparation for the Paper 3 speaking test.
Initiative	Responding in a discussion. Drawing on information and language reserves to maintain, develop and extend the conversation.	Paper 3 Section B "the teacher/examiner must introduce at least two further issues for discussion. Students must not know in advance of the test which further issues the teacher/examiner will choose for discussion, these must be unpredictable elements of the test" (Specification p. 23).	AO1 SAMS Paper 1 and Paper 3	Students practise responding to unseen questions on GTA sub-topics (Paper 1) and issues suitable for the Paper 3 examination with the teacher / language assistant / peers.
Self-direction	Planning and carrying out research activity under own direction.	Paper 3 "students will be assessed on the breadth and depth of their research in their presentation. As such, students should mention newspaper and magazine articles, online written sources, journals, literary texts and any other suitable written source that can be referenced. Students may refer to other authentic sources they have used in their research during the discussion. These could include films, television, radio, online audio-visual material and interviews" (Specification p. 23).	AO2 Paper 3	In preparation for discussion of the candidate's chosen issue in Paper 3, students research the issue about which they wish to speak, assimilate information and practise presenting this orally.
Responsibility	Taking responsibility for any errors or omissions in work and creating a plan to improve.	Preparation for Paper 2 q. 9 and Paper 4 qq. 9-20	AO4 Paper 2 q. 9 and Paper 4 qq. 9-20	Students assess each other's work (peer assessment) consulting the relevant mark schemes. Students react to feedback and re-draft essays in order to improve their level of achievement.

Perseverance	Actively seeking new ways to continue to improve own learning despite setbacks, with willingness to re-draft, undertake further reading or keep at a task until completed.	Preparation for Paper 3	AO1 Paper 3	In preparation for Paper 3, students prepare to talk about their chosen issue, responding to teacher / peer feedback by undertaking further research and/or re-drafting the introduction to the chosen issue as necessary.
Productivity	Writing and / or speaking continuously, fluently and relevantly to an appropriately high standard.	Paper 1: To access the highest tier of the mark scheme for "Spontaneity and Development", students must demonstrate a "high incidence of spontaneous, fluent discourse / detailed development of responses" and that they are "able to respond readily to all questions" and to "develop and sustain discourse well." (Specification p.13).	AO1 SAMS Paper 1	Students become familiar with the mark scheme for the relevant units and practise preparing responses that will allow them to access the highest tiers of the relevant mark scheme.
Self-regulation (metacognition, forethought, reflection)	Developing strategies for reflecting on the success or otherwise of the work and tailoring a piece of written work to a specific form and purpose.	Paper 4 qq. 9-20: In order to access the highest tier of the mark scheme for "Content and Communication", students must demonstrate "excellent factual knowledge of the topic, text or film", "a wide range of relevant supporting evidence from the topic, text or film" and "a high level of depth in the response." (Specification p. 33).	AO4 SAMS Paper 4	Students learn to comment on their own and others' work (self-assessment and critical review) and to redraft and improve their work in light of this feedback. Tools to facilitate this include the relevant mark schemes from the specification and checklists of grammar points to check.
Ethics	Producing work (spoken or written) with a specific moral purpose for which one is accountable or exploring the ethical implications of a text or writing topic.	Paper 3: In order to access the highest band of the mark scheme for "Critical analysis", students must demonstrate "Consistently justified links between ideas, often well substantiated with insightful observations that form a well-rounded individual response." (Specification p. 27).	AO1 Paper 3	Students study potentially controversial issues in preparation for Paper 3 discussion.
Integrity	Employing working methods which are honest and appropriate.	Paper 4: In studying the chosen topic, text or film and associated critical material, students learn to assimilate material and to use it to inform their own response without plagiarism.	AO4 Paper 4 qq. 9-20	Understanding what constitutes plagiarism and why it is not acceptable. Respecting the views of others in the classroom / learning environment.
Self-monitoring/self-evaluation/self-reinforcement	Developing the self-motivated habit of planning, completing, and reviewing one's own work as a matter of habit, critically and constructively.	Paper 3: Students take responsibility for the choice and research of the issue they wish to present.	AO1 Paper 3	Students meet deadlines set by teacher in preparation for Paper 3. They assess their preparation in light of the mark scheme for this unit.

NRC framework skill	Skill interpretation in this subject	Where the skill is covered in content	Where the skill is explicitly assessed in examination	Opportunity for the skill to be developed through teaching and learning approach
Interpersonal skills				
Teamwork and collaboration				
Communication	The ability to express oneself clearly and without ambiguity in written and spoken TL.	Paper 3: In order to access the highest tier of the mark scheme, students need to use language which is "highly accurate but not necessarily error-free" and with "authentic pronunciation and intonation." (Specification p. 25).	AO1 SAMS Paper 1	Explaining a grammatical structure or a skill technique (verbally or written) to peers and teachers and answer questions from others.
Collaboration and Teamwork	Engaging in pair or group discussion or work designed to practise a skill and/or embed content.	Paper 4 qq. 9-20: In order to access the highest band for the mark scheme for "Content and communication", students demonstrate "excellent factual knowledge of the topic, text or film."	AO4 SAMS Paper 4 qq. 9-20	Students share and discuss ideas relating to the topic, text or film being studied and prepare answers to questions in Paper 3 Section C.
Interpersonal skills	Using verbal and non-verbal communication skills in a discussion.	Paper 3: In order to access the highest band of the mark scheme for "Critical Analysis", students must demonstrate "Consistently justified links between ideas." (Specification p. 27).	AO1 Paper 3	In response to a stimulus text and related prompt, students discuss issues in pairs or small groups, adopting and defending different points of view.
Empathy/perspective taking	Advocating the position of another in a piece of writing or in an oral presentation.	Paper 3: In order to access the highest band of the mark scheme for "Critical Analysis", students must demonstrate "ideas, often well substantiated with insightful observations that form a well-rounded individual response." (Specification p. 27).	AO1 Paper 3	Students consider ethical and/or potentially controversial issues from different points of view e.g. taking the part of different parties in a debate.
Leadership				
Leadership	Leading others in a group activity to effectively develop learning.	Paper 3: In order to access the highest mark band for "Critical Analysis" students must offer "ideas, often well substantiated with insightful observations that form a well-rounded individual response." (Specification p. 27).	AO1 Paper 3	In order to develop the ability to debate issues in Paper 3, students take it in turns to prepare and lead a discussion of suitable issues.
Responsibility	Taking responsibility for delivering, within agreed time constraints, one's own part within a group project.	Paper 4 Section C: In order to access the highest mark band for "Content and Communication" students must demonstrate "excellent factual knowledge of the topic, text or film." (Specification p. 33).	AO4 Paper 4	In order to develop the necessary "excellent factual knowledge", students undertake a group project relating to one aspect of the topic, text or film, with each student making a specified contribution (e.g. the study of one character) to a complete piece of work.
Assertive communication	Chairing a debate, allowing representations and directing a discussion to a conclusion.	Paper 3: students develop the ability to express "ideas, often well substantiated with insightful observations that form a well-rounded individual response." (Specification p. 27).	AO1 Paper 3	Students chair a debate on an issue suitable for debate in Paper 3, choosing a motion for debate, listening to the submissions of different parties and encouraging the formation of a conclusion.
Self-presentation	Presenting a topic to class as a part of own assessment.	Paper 2 q. 8: "Students will need to understand and manipulate grammatical structures in French." (Specification p. 16).	AO2 Paper 2 q.8	Students explain a grammar or lexical point to other members of the class. In doing so, they consolidate their own knowledge.