

FAQs 3: Edexcel Certificates and International GCSEs in Chinese/French/German/Spanish

Should students engage in a conversation (section B) relating to one of the prescribed topic areas or to a linked subtopic in the oral exam for International GCSEs and Edexcel Certificates?

The specification states that the two conversations must each relate to a different prescribed topic area. For each of these topic areas, it is assumed that the conversation would relate to one linked subtopic although **it is equally possible for students to broach other linked subtopics**. Much would depend on the individual student and the content of the conversation. Please see the illustration below:

If the teacher-examiner picks topic area D: 'The modern world' and starts with a question on the media and the candidate can get to grips with that sub topic, then it is conceivable that the media will fuel enough discourse to last three minutes. If the candidate is not fully able to deal with this and the discourse fizzles out after a short time, then of course, the teacher-examiner should select another subtopic within the same topic area to keep the conversation going.

It is also important to bear in mind that the content of some subtopics may overlap with content from others and/or naturally lead to discussion of other subtopics linked to the same topic area.

Why have no speaking unit stimulus materials been sent out to our centre for International GCSEs and/or Edexcel Certificates?

No Edexcel Certificate speaking unit stimulus materials are provided for the Edexcel Certificate in French/ German/ Spanish/Chinese oral units. Students must undertake a picture-based discussion task (using a picture that they have sourced for themselves) and then must engage in conversations that link to different topic areas.
For further guidance, please see the specification (including the Instructions for the Conduct of the Oral examinations in the 'Appendices' section)

Can we conduct our Edexcel languages orals over two days for large cohorts?

For GCE, Edexcel Certificate and International GCSE orals, it is possible to conduct the orals over more than one day if there is a large cohort. 'A large cohort' relates to a number of students that would prove impossible to accommodate in one day of examining. A typical maximum norm would be 15 candidates per teacher per day. If extending the examination period beyond one day, the orals would need to be done on consecutive days (they should not, therefore, be set on a Friday and Monday).

Are candidates allowed notes for the speaking unit of Edexcel Certificates and International GCSEs?

No, candidates must not have access to any notes during their speaking examination.

Are candidates allowed any preparation time before the conversation sections of the Edexcel Certificate and International GCSE speaking exams?

Candidates cannot have any special preparation time before engaging in conversations linked to two different topic areas. The speaking exam should move on to conversations straight after the picture-based task – without any preparation time during the exam. The recording must not be stopped.

It is anticipated that no preparation time will be needed as students will have prepared their picture in advance and will be familiar with all of the different topic areas to which the follow-on conversations may relate. You should find reference to the speaking unit-related sections of the specification and the separate Teacher Guide useful.

What do we put in the subtopic box on the candidate cover sheet for the Edexcel Certificate and International GCSE oral unit?

It is most important that you indicate the topic areas used for the conversations on this sheet. This is done simply by ticking the A, B, C, D or E box. It is also useful if you indicate the subtopic or subtopics covered in each of the conversations.

As there is limited space on the form, it is acceptable if the subtopics are abbreviated or if you simply refer to the main ones that have been covered over the two conversations. The subtopics can be written in English or the target language.

Should we introduce the topic areas in the target language?

During the test, it is expected that the topic areas are introduced in the target language as this should help to maintain the flow of the oral.

Are MS Word versions of the CD insert labels/USB record sheets available for paper 3 (Speaking) of the Edexcel Certificate and International GCSE (Chinese, French, German and Spanish)

You can now access MS Word versions of the [CD insert labels / USB record sheets \(Paper3\)](#) to facilitate the administration and submission of recordings of student work for Edexcel Certificate and International GCSE qualifications in Chinese, French, German and Spanish.

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