

Edexcel GCSE

MFL Writing

Controlled Assessment

Teacher Support Book 2012

français

español

中文

Deutsch

Edexcel GCSE

Written Language

Controlled Assessment

Teacher Support Book

Chinese 2CN01

Chinese 3CN0W (Short Course – Written Language)

French 2FR01

French 3FR0W (Short Course – Written Language)

German 2GN01

German 3GN0W (Short Course – Written Language)

Italian 2IN01

Italian 3IN0W (Short Course – Written Language)

Spanish 2SP01

Spanish 3SP0W (Short Course – Written Language)

Urdu 2UR01

Urdu 3UR0W (Short Course – Written Language)

Welcome to the GCSE Written Language 2012 Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book

This CA Teacher Support Book has been designed to provide you with general information and answers to key questions that may arise as you prepare for and undertake controlled writing assessments in any of the following languages: **Chinese, French, German, Italian, Spanish** and **Urdu**. These assessments represent 30% of the GCSE Full Course (Written Language) and 60% of the GCSE Short Course (Written Language) qualifications.

Please read this book in conjunction with the relevant GCSE specification, sample assessment materials, the possible 'live' controlled assessment tasks that we have provided and related podcast guidance. Importantly, this support book is also accompanied by language-specific examples of candidate work with related assessment commentaries. These have been written by senior examiners to help inform your teaching and marking and are also available via the Edexcel website. Please visit the language-specific 'GCSE Controlled Assessment' section of our website.

These can all be downloaded from the Edexcel website (www.edexcel.com) via links on the language-specific GCSE homepage. They form part of a comprehensive package of support that also includes opportunities for training delivered either online or via face-to-face meetings.

Expert advice from the people who know

We hope you find this document useful and look forward to working with you on our new GCSE specifications. We are on hand to answer your questions so please feel free to get in touch.

To contact our GCSE Written Language senior examining team about a language-specific and assessment-related query, please email: TeachingLanguages@pearson.com

We look forward to working with you.

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Introduction to controlled assessment

Why controlled assessments?

The current Edexcel GCSEs in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Urdu feature controlled assessment writing tasks. These have replaced the traditional writing coursework and written examinations from previous specifications and have been introduced in response to the QDCA GCSE subject criteria.

The assessments enable teachers and candidates to have much more control of assessment content. You are able to select content that is most appropriate for your candidates and can customise the tasks to coincide with their language needs and interests.

You also have control of how and when you assess your candidates – either through ongoing assessments or in specific internally timetabled assessment slots. January 2013 was the last opportunity to submit work during the winter series for Unit 4 Writing in French, German and Spanish. From May 2013, all GCSE languages specifications will be assessed in the summer examination series only. The GCSE subject criteria mean that teachers do not have to mark the writing assessment; this will be done by Edexcel.

This book offers key guidance on content, preparation of candidates and writing assessment issues as well as administrative procedures for the conduct of writing assessments.

What will candidates actually do?

Candidates need to complete two separate writing assessments, each of which must be undertaken in controlled conditions in a single assessment session of no more than 1 hour (minimum 45 minutes). It is anticipated that candidates will produce *at least* 100 words (100 characters for Chinese) in each of the two assessment sessions.

Candidates must have access to the stimulus material and a bilingual dictionary. They will be able to refer to up to 30 words of their own notes and, if desired, up to five small drawings that they prepare in advance of the assessment. These notes must be produced on a standard form (CA4) available from our website (please consult the controlled assessments area on the relevant GCSE language-specific homepage).

Although candidates may undertake tasks that link to any theme of your choice, the following areas have been identified as popular themes for controlled writing assessments:

1. Media and culture, 2. Sport and leisure, 3. Travel and tourism
4. Business, work and employment

Flexible tasks offering candidate-focused assessment

Each of the broad themes give candidates the scope to engage in activities that coincide with their true interests, experience and aspirations. Assessment scenarios should provide opportunities for them to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of target language vocabulary and grammar, as well as to inform, describe, give detail, express feelings and to give opinions in the target language. Teachers can adapt Edexcel-produced stimulus material or create their own. They have considerable control over assessment content so that they can target assessment to the specific interests, learning needs and optimal performance of each candidate.

Section 1: Introduction to controlled assessment

Teachers must ensure that the formal assessments used enable candidates to demonstrate their ability to use language for different purposes. There would be little reward and limited motivation for candidates to undertake tasks that are very similar.

To support you, Edexcel has produced banks of controlled assessment writing tasks that relate to each of the four identified themes (Media and culture, Sport and leisure, Travel and tourism, Business, work and employment). These include examples of the type of tasks that you might set. These can all be downloaded from the language-specific GCSE 'Controlled assessment' section of our website.

You can either use the tasks as provided or modify them to suit the particular needs and interests of your candidates. You may wish to alter content so that it relates to your local area or, possibly, change bullet points to provide more structure for certain candidates or less prescription for others. Both PDF and Word versions of the tasks have been produced to facilitate this. Alternatively, you are free to devise your own tasks and, if you wish, link these to a centre-devised theme instead of the four identified themes.

Tasks must be refreshed every two years. This applies to both Edexcel-provided and teacher-produced 'live' tasks. However, this does not mean that all tasks have to be completely rewritten. The replacement of at least one significant bullet point can usually lead to significant change.

You can set controlled assessment writing tasks that focus on one or more themes and you can cover the same theme(s) across writing and speaking units. However, it is important that the tasks feature different content and address different purposes. For example, it would not be acceptable to submit an oral presentation about a holiday resort and a written controlled assessment that describes the same or a similar resort from the same candidate.

Centre-devised option

You are not constrained by the four identified themes (Media and culture, Sport and leisure, Travel and tourism, Business, work and employment) and may opt to devise themes of your own that are more appropriate to the needs and interests of your candidates. This option enables candidates to develop language skills:

- in contexts that coincide with learners' studies in other curriculum areas (hospitality, retail, etc.) and, potentially, as additional and specialist learning BTEC or other vocational programmes;
- that relate to alternative topic areas (e.g. school and work); or
- that link to project work (e.g. regional studies), possibly undertaken as part of content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

It is not necessary to approach Edexcel to approve centre-devised themes although you are free to email your suggestions to: TeachingLanguages@pearson.com

Naturally, teachers who have opted to undertake controlled assessment writing tasks that are linked to a different theme from the above will need to devise their own tasks.

Different pathways possible

The writing assessment tasks facilitate a range of delivery pathways. In the writing unit, your candidates could cover a broad range of themes or they could focus on just one or two. If desired, language tasks could be used that refer to either general contexts or more applied and vocational contexts linked to the world of work. Candidates could, for example, be asked to play the role of an employee of a firm in Manchester writing to a French-speaking customer from Belgium.

Overview of assessment

There are four units in the GCSE languages full course specification and two units in the short courses. The table below enables you to see how the writing unit fits in the GCSE Full Course (Written Language) or the GCSE Short Course (Written Language). The writing units are in bold.

Specification cash-in code	Subject title	Units required to be eligible	Weighting
GCSE 2CN01 (Full Course)	Chinese	5CN01 (Listening and understanding) 5CN02 (Speaking) 5CN03 (Reading and understanding) 5CN04 (Writing)	20% 30% 20% 30%
GCSE 3CN0W (Short Course)	Chinese: Written Language	5CN03 (Reading and understanding) 5CN04 (Writing)	40% 60%
GCSE 2FR01 (Full Course)	French	5FR01 (Listening and understanding) 5FR02 (Speaking) 5FR03 (Reading and understanding) 5FR04 (Writing)	20% 30% 20% 30%
GCSE 3FR0W (Short Course)	French: Written Language	5FR03 (Reading and understanding) 5FR04 (Writing)	40% 60%
GCSE 2GN01 (Full Course)	German	5GN01 (Listening and understanding) 5GN02 (Speaking) 5GN03 (Reading and understanding) 5GN04 (Writing)	20% 30% 20% 30%
GCSE 3GN0W (Short Course)	German: Written Language	5GN03 (Reading and understanding) 5GN04 (Writing)	40% 60%
GCSE 2IN01 (Full Course)	Italian	5IN01 (Listening and understanding) 5IN02 (Speaking) 5IN03 (Reading and understanding) 5IN04 (Writing)	20% 30% 20% 30%
GCSE 3IN0W (Short Course)	Italian: Written Language	5IN03 (Reading and understanding) 5IN04 (Writing)	40% 60%

Section 2: Assessment information

GCSE 2SP01 (Full Course)	Spanish	5SP01 (Listening and understanding) 5SP02 (Speaking) 5SP03 (Reading and understanding) 5SP04 (Writing)	20% 30% 20% 30%
GCSE 3SP0W (Short Course)	Spanish: Written Language	5SP03 (Reading and understanding) 5SP04 (Writing)	40% 60%
GCSE 2UR01 (Full Course)	Urdu	5UR01 (Listening and understanding) 5UR02 (Speaking) 5UR03 (Reading and understanding) 5UR04 (Writing)	20% 30% 20% 30%
GCSE 3UR0W (Short Course)	Urdu: Written Language	5UR03 (Reading and understanding) 5UR04 (Writing)	40% 60%

Teacher support and guidance

When writing the new series of GCSE specifications, all awarding bodies took a closer look at controlled assessment requirements for every subject; the QCDA required GCSE controlled assessments in both speaking and writing units and these must now take place in controlled conditions.

The controlled assessments for writing are a completely new phenomenon and account for 30% of the qualification (60% of the GCSE Short Course (Written Language)). This section considers the following stages of controlled assessment for writing:

- General preparation phase
- Task setting
- Task taking
- Task marking
- Task submission and administration

This support and guidance section incorporates practical frequently asked questions that teachers have already asked, together with the corresponding answers. It must be stressed that the controlled assessments for writing offer teachers a great deal of flexibility in terms of content, format and timing of assignments so that responses to some questions may sometimes vary according to different approaches adopted across centres. Nevertheless, in terms of the general regulations applied to the controlled assessments for writing, we have aimed to provide clear and unequivocal guidance.

General preparation phase

It is important that candidates are well prepared for the controlled assessments in writing and that they do not undertake their assessments 'cold'. Candidates are allowed task-specific preparation time, but the general preparation undertaken prior to the release of the stimulus is undoubtedly the most important preparation phase.

It is important that the teaching and learning time equips candidates with a range of vocabulary and structures which they can subsequently incorporate, manipulate, expand on and adapt when carrying out their assessment tasks. The general preparation phase allows you to give unlimited feedback on content and to mark work. It provides the general foundations for formal assessment. Once it is completed, you can then set a task and conduct your candidates' assessment.

As an example, if covering the topic of 'Holidays' in the general teaching and learning phase you are likely to cover related vocabulary, types of holidays candidates might have been on, ones they would like to plan for the future, which ones appeal, which ones don't, other opinions, what activities they could do on holiday, who they might go with, and so on. In class, you could practise a variety of tenses, encourage the candidates to make use of more complex structures, and equip them to write a full-length piece that is coherent and reads well. The candidates would then be able to draw on what they have learned as they start preparing for a task that is more focused and different to work covered earlier, although still linked to the same theme and subtopic(s).

Task setting (limited control)

This section considers various aspects of task setting, including when and how tasks can be set and issues concerning the 'task-specific' preparation period. It offers guidance on the following controls:

- Collaboration control
- Feedback control
- Time control
- Resource control

You are free to assess when it is most appropriate for your centre and candidates. This could be either on an ongoing basis when candidates are 'ready' or in formal assessment windows. Some centres intend to have one 'end assessment' for writing as required in previous GCSE specifications and carry out another assessment either as part of mock Year 11 examinations or as a Year 10 end-of-year assessment. Staff at other centres may prefer to undertake termly assessments and submit the best two marks.

You must ensure that candidates undertake two distinctly different task types but these can both, if desired, refer to the same theme.

The task-specific preparation period enables candidates to plan for their assessment and to produce up to 30 words in a bullet points or mind map format using a Candidates Notes Form – Writing (CA4). This is available for download via the language-specific GCSE controlled assessments section of the website.

Collaboration control

Task preparation should be individual, although candidates can be informed by general working with others (for example, they could engage in vocabulary building or grammar activities with each other as they prepare for the written task). Teachers must make certain that each candidate is responsible for the language and structures produced in the assessment. A Unit 4 Candidate Mark Record Sheet (CM4) will need to be completed and signed by the candidate and teacher. These can be downloaded from the Edexcel website on the language-specific homepages, via the links to controlled assessment.

Feedback control

Once controlled assessment tasks have been issued, it is not possible for teachers to offer any task-specific feedback to candidates other than to check that the task brief has been fully understood. To facilitate this, a Student Checklist Form has been produced and this can be completed in conjunction with the Candidate Notes Form – Writing (CA4). This form enables you to check that your candidates are 'on track' with the task set.

Time control

Tasks can be set at any time during the delivery of the GCSE course and up to a maximum of 6 contact hours over a maximum of 2 weeks before the formal assessment take place. However, it is anticipated that many candidates would need significantly less preparation time – especially if the assessment logically follows on from a period of general preparation linked to a related topic and the same theme. Each of the two required controlled assessments must take place with a time limit of 1 hour (45 minutes minimum/1 hour maximum). It is not possible to split the time allocation for one assessment over more than one session (e.g. two sessions of 30 minutes).

Section 2: Assessment information

Resource control

During the task-specific preparation period, candidates can refer to a variety of resources they find useful. These include textbooks and exercise books in addition to dictionaries, the task stimulus, Controlled Assessments – Writing Form (CA4) and their checklist. Candidates may take the stimulus and notes forms out of the classroom during the allocated task-specific preparation time.

During the controlled assessment itself, candidates can have access only to the stimulus, their Candidates Notes Form – Writing (CA4), and a dictionary.

The task setting and candidates' task-specific preparation phase is a crucial one and has attracted a variety of questions from teachers – some of the most common are given below.

Where can teachers access the tasks?



The tasks are available via the language-specific GCSE controlled assessment section of our website. The accompanying Student Note Forms are also located in this section.

The Edexcel-provided tasks are not compulsory content and you may adapt these or create other material of your own. You can also use the sample assessment materials as long as they are adapted in some way (e.g. change of *at least one* significant bullet point).

All tasks must be refreshed every 2 years. This applies to both Edexcel-provided and teacher-produced stimulus material. The tasks do not have to be rewritten completely and can simply be updated and adapted as indicated above.



When can candidates see the task?



Up to 2 weeks and a maximum of 6 contact hours are provided for candidates to undertake the task-specific research and preparation. Candidates must not be given more than this time to prepare.



Section 2: Assessment information

How much flexibility is there for me to devise my own tasks?



Teachers can have overall control of task type and task setting to reflect the interests and needs of their candidates. Candidates should be encouraged to exercise choice whenever possible.

Unless the task is set in a target-language country, the task should be set in English. Using a target language in the task could prove counterproductive, as some candidates might be tempted to copy some elements without manipulating the language. Such copying would not gain candidates any marks. A task that is too long could lead to more able candidates dealing with the bullet points too superficially; they could, potentially, gain more marks if they were to develop a logical argument that refers to fewer disparate bullet points.

Remember that centre-devised tasks do not have to relate to the themes identified in the specification (Media and culture, Sport and leisure, Travel and tourism, Business, work and employment) because teachers are free to produce tasks linked to other candidate interests.

Centre-devised tasks do not have to be approved by Edexcel, but if you require reassurance about a specific task that you have devised, you can email TeachingLanguages@pearson.com



Can teachers set the same task to a whole class?



Teachers are free to set the same task to a group. They could make certain changes to allow for differentiation in ability (for example, varying the number of bullet points for less and more able candidates) but the generic task would essentially remain the same.

Teachers are strongly advised when setting their own tasks to refer to the assessment criteria and the grade descriptors. These can be found in the specification booklet. In order for candidates to access the full range of marks, they need to have the opportunity to express opinions and to use a range of tenses. Higher marks for Knowledge and application of language are gained by those candidates who at least attempt a range of more complex structures. If the stimulus does not prompt them to do so, they risk being disadvantaged.

Where bullet points are used, care should be taken over the rubric. If candidates *must* address all the points, they will be penalised under Communication and content if they do not; if they *could* address the bullet points, they run the risk of omitting the very ones which give them access to the higher grades. Teachers are recommended to look carefully at the tasks set by Edexcel and to use them as a model of good practice when setting their own.

Candidates of different abilities will, of course, produce very different and individual outcomes even though a common brief has been set. An article about a famous sportsperson would involve, for example, different choices and would, therefore invite different information, opinions and questions.



Can my less able candidates write shorter tasks?

“

It is entirely possible for teachers to set two short tasks in a single assessment session rather than set one long task. It is important to note, however, that candidates aiming for Grade C and above are expected to show evidence of being able to write at greater length, so this option should not be offered to them.

As an example, candidates might be asked in a task linked to the theme of Business, work and employment to produce a CV and a letter of application. More able candidates would find this far too restrictive, whereas less able ones could possibly complete a form and also write a few lines about themselves and provide personal details. By being given such a stimulus, they have a greater possibility of reaching the minimum word count of 100 words.

Examiners will, of course, still assess the work of candidates who do not reach the 100-word minimum word count. The assessment grids must be used whatever the length of the candidate's writing. Under Communication and content, a short piece would be unlikely to gain more than 4–6 marks as the level of response is *minimal*) or even 1–3 marks if only *little relevant information is conveyed*). The marks for Knowledge and application of language and for Accuracy will be similarly restricted, because candidates will have given evidence only of limited vocabulary and structures.

It is clearly important to set tasks that are within the capabilities of candidates, but equally one must be mindful of the need to enable them to access the fullest possible range of marks.

”

Is it possible to set all the speaking and writing tasks on the same theme or do they have to be mixed?

“

The same theme is possible for all although you must ensure that all tasks feature different content and purposes. For example, a spoken task on a given theme could use informal language, while a written task on the same theme could use more formal language. An informal oral discussion about a visit to the cinema could be complemented by a more formal written review of a different film.

”

Task taking (high control)

When can I offer the controlled assessment unit?

“

Candidates may take the writing tasks at any time in the year. January 2013 was the last opportunity to submit work during the winter series for Unit 2 Writing in French, German and Spanish. From May 2013, all GCSE languages specifications will be assessed in the summer examination series only. Only complete assessments – including both written tasks – can be submitted.

”

Is it permitted to split the 1-hour assessment session into two?

“

This is not permitted. The two controlled assessment sessions must last 1 hour each (minimum 45 minutes). Those candidates who are allocated two shorter tasks as one assessment must complete them both in the same session.

”

When candidates are preparing the writing tasks, can I look over what they are preparing and give them advice?

“

Teachers must not provide direct task-specific feedback on content that candidates produce in the task preparation phase, for example: “That’s wrong – you should change it”. However, you are able to clarify the task brief for candidates, e.g. “This is similar to what we were doing last week, remember to cover... and....” On issuing the task, you can also suggest that they check tenses, adjectival agreements, evidence of opinion, etc. as part of their overall task brief. To facilitate this, Edexcel has produced a Student Checklist Form that may be used in conjunction with the Candidate Notes Form – Writing (CA4). Both are available for download from the Edexcel website.

Remember that the general preparation undertaken prior to the release of the stimulus constitutes the most crucial preparation phase. This allows you to give unlimited feedback on content and to mark work; it provides the general foundations for the formal assessments.

”

Section 2: Assessment information

Is it possible for candidates to word process their controlled writing assessments, as they used to be able to do with coursework?

“

This is possible, but candidates have to produce their work under the same controlled conditions as those candidates who are writing their responses.

Such candidates would have to use a computer which has had the target language spelling and grammar checkers disabled. They can refer to an online dictionary, but other Internet-based reference materials would have to be inaccessible to the candidates.

Candidates of Chinese GCSE may only word process one of their two controlled assessments.

”

Can the writing assessment be undertaken in an ordinary classroom, or does a special examination room have to be used?

“

It is possible to use an ordinary classroom, as long as candidates are sitting the correct distance apart, and only have access to the task, their Candidate Notes Form – Writing (CA4) and a dictionary. If the room contains displays that might be of use to candidates (e.g. of grammar or key vocabulary), then these must be covered. However, if desired, centres may use examination rooms for these assessments.

The controlled assessment tasks must be undertaken in controlled conditions and should usually be conducted by the class teacher. More information about rooming requirements is given on the JCQ website:

www.jcq.org.uk/exams_office/controlledassessments/

”

What happens if a candidate starts the 2-week preparation period, then falls ill and misses the assessment?

“

Once the candidate has received the ‘live’ writing assessment task, then he or she must complete it within the 2-week period.

If candidates are absent and unable to undertake a controlled assessment within the allocated 2-week period, then they should be given a refreshed task, in which at least one of the bullet points of the original has been changed significantly. They then start a new assessment period (maximum of 2 weeks) and complete the assessment in the normal way.

There are no restrictions on communication between candidates who have and who haven’t completed the assessment, as there would be in a live examination, because all candidates will know the task in advance.

”

Section 2: Assessment information

Suppose it is the teacher who is away for the 2-week period?

“

If the task has not been given to the candidates, then the assessment can be delayed, because it is permissible to take it at any time.

If the task has been given to candidates, then any teacher can supervise its preparation and conduct. If it is felt that candidates are being disadvantaged, then a refreshed task, in which at least one bullet point has been significantly changed, should be set by the teacher on his or her return.

This is to ensure comparability between centres, so that no candidate is unfairly penalised or advantaged.

”

Are the pupils allowed to take home the draft of the writing assessment to prepare or learn?

“

It is not intended or recommended that candidates take home completed drafts to learn. An important feature of the new examination is to assess candidates when they are ready, rather than encourage any rote learning of scripts or text.

Candidates may, however, undertake some preparation for their controlled writing task outside the classroom and access a range of resources including work undertaken in the classroom, exercise books and notes during the task-specific preparation time allocated (maximum of 6 guided learning hours). There is no need for candidates to produce a draft in the preparation phase and, indeed, full drafts must not be produced at home (or in other unsupervised conditions).

It is, therefore, possible for centres, if they wish, to allow candidates to take partial or completed drafts home for independent revision purposes (e.g. not to redraft completely) within the task-specific preparation period.

Teachers and candidates will, of course, be required to sign an Authentication Statement declaring that each assessment has been carried out without undue assistance (so that the final assessed product is the candidate's own work and has been produced by the candidate individually).

For most candidates, it is recommended that less time is spent on the task-specific preparation phase (possibly just one lesson) and more time on the general, non-task-specific (but still theme and subtopic-related) preparation phase.

”

Task marking (high level of control)

I want to mark my candidates' practice writing assessments so that I can work out their current and target grades. How can I do this?

“

Teachers can mark their candidates' work using the assessment criteria contained within the specification. However, you must ensure that you do not record your marks or write on any of the submitted pieces of work.

Teachers are advised to consult the grade descriptions for writing given in the new specification and draw on existing marking expertise in their centre when making any grade-related decisions. Candidates should be aware that any estimated grades could be different to the official grades awarded.

Samples of marked candidate work together with examiner commentaries are available in the language-specific GCSE controlled assessment section of our website.

”

I have a candidate who has written an excellent piece of work that is only 125 words long. How do I mark this?

“

It is expected that candidates aiming for Grade C and above will produce at least 200 words in their controlled assessment. Although marks are always applied on a best fit basis, examiners must see evidence of extended writing. Extended writing could approach 200 words (and there is no implication for candidates to go much beyond 200 words) but 125 words is significantly short. A mark of 7–9 for Communication and content requires the candidate to go beyond a minimal response; your candidate is only just reaching this level.

However, your candidate might have performed well on Knowledge and application of language and on Accuracy within the 125 words. Examiners will use the full range of marks in these categories, but your candidate might not, for example, have demonstrated as much evidence of an ability to use a range of complex structures or apply as wide a range of vocabulary and structures as someone who has produced 200 words. This would need to be reflected in the marks.

”

Section 2: Assessment information

What if candidates produce a lot more than 200 words in a single session – will they be penalised?

“

It is entirely possible that some candidates produce work that significantly exceeds the recommended target of ‘over 200 words’. Examiners for this GCSE unit will be instructed to mark all of a candidate’s submission and there will be no cut-off point.

Teachers are, however, advised to recommend their candidates against doing this. Experience shows that candidates run a very strong risk of penalising themselves, in two ways.

Firstly, the overall shape of their work could easily become distorted if it goes on too long. Irrelevant material could possibly start to creep in. They are then less likely to move into the ‘Coherent and pleasant to read’ category (13–15 marks) for Communication and content.

Secondly, there is a distinct possibility that the incidence of error will increase, the more a candidate writes. Candidates would be better advised to restrict themselves to the recommended target word count and then to allow some time for review and checking within the time available.

”

How many marks are allocated to content and how many to language?

“

Up to half of the marks (15/30) are awarded for Communication and content and up to half are allocated to language, of which up to 10 marks are given for Knowledge and application of language, and up to 5 marks for Accuracy.

”

What key features do examiners look for when assessing candidates’ work?

“

For Communication and content, examiners first look to see what the task type is, and then to what extent candidates have dealt with it. How well have they covered all the points? Is there any irrelevance? Next, they determine how well organised it is, and how easily a sympathetic native reader would understand what is written.

For Knowledge and application of language, examiners look for points worthy of credit – appropriate vocabulary and structures, use of adjectives and adverbs, use of more complex structures – even where these are not entirely accurate.

Finally, they award a mark for Accuracy, noting that to obtain a mark of 4 or 5 the candidate must have at least attempted more complex language. In order to obtain a mark of 5, the work does not need to be faultless, but basic language, however accurate, cannot gain more than 3 for Accuracy.

”

Section 2: Assessment information

What is meant by ‘more ambitious structures’ in the marking criteria for Knowledge and applications of language?

“

Every language, of course, has its own ‘more ambitious structures’. Examples of these might be the use of a variety of tenses; use of negative and interrogative constructions; indirect speech; subordinate clauses; constructions using the infinitive; participles; passive voice; comparative and superlative adjectives; adverbial phrases.

”

Why might a mark of zero be awarded?

“

For Communication and content, a mark of zero might be awarded if the work was totally irrelevant to the set task; if it was almost entirely incomprehensible (for example, if there was too much interference from the candidate’s mother tongue); or if it was too short to contain any assessable material.

A mark of zero for Communication and content will automatically mean a mark of zero for Knowledge and application of language and for Accuracy.

”

Must candidates use past, present and future tenses in each piece of work in order to obtain Grade C or above?

“

Not necessarily. The grade description for C states that candidates ‘use a variety of structures and may include different tenses or time frames’.

Candidates are advised to use at least two tenses in their work so as to demonstrate use of ‘a range of tenses’, as stated in the assessment criteria for Knowledge and application of language (5–6 marks). However, what is equally important is that they use tenses which are relevant to the task in hand. It is also important to stress that the examiner will be looking for use of other language structures in addition to use of different verb tenses.

”

Section 2: Assessment information

Is it possible for teachers to photocopy their candidates' work before sending it to Edexcel, to correct the copies, and to share this information with candidates?

“

It is possible for teachers to assess candidates' work and to share the marks with candidates. However, they must not correct the work. Live examination materials must not be used for teaching or training purposes until after the results have been published and the stimulus materials are no longer 'live'.

”

Is it possible to send written work to Edexcel for marking other than at the designated time?

“

It is not possible to send material to Edexcel except as part of the formal assessment. Examiners are not permitted to mark live work from candidates outside of formal examinations.

”

Task submission and administration

If candidates produce a poor piece of work for the writing assessment, can they redo it?

“

They cannot redo an identical task. They can take a new or refreshed task (as defined above) under controlled conditions at a later stage (either linked to the same theme or on a new theme). The teacher can then decide which are the best two pieces to submit for the final assessment.

”

Can candidates resit their writing controlled assessment?

“

Although individual unit resits will no longer be possible with the introduction of the linear GCSE specifications (first teaching – September 2012/first award – summer 2012), controlled assessment unit results may be carried forward if a candidate wishes to retake a full GCSE qualification.

”

Can candidates retake a controlled assessment task?

“

Candidates can be assessed on repeat occasions but must not undertake the same assessment task twice if it is being counted towards their final assessment.

”

What documentation needs to be sent to Edexcel with the candidates' work?

“

Full details on what to include in your moderation sample can be found in the Administrative Support Guide (ICE) which is available for download from the Edexcel language-specific GCSE controlled assessment section of our website.

It is not necessary to send the Student Checklist Form for controlled assessments; these should be retained securely in the centre until 30 September.

”

Section 2: Assessment information

When should controlled writing assessments be submitted?

“

Tasks can be carried out at any time during the GCSE course but there are specific submission windows for work to be marked. For all languages, controlled assessments for writing can be submitted in the summer series (15 May deadline). Alternatively, and exclusively for those candidates entered for GCSE French, German or Spanish in summer 2013, work may be submitted by 10 January 2013. This January marking facility will be withdrawn after 2013.

”

What about candidates who qualify for extra time in examinations?

“

Some candidates qualify for extra time in examinations due to special circumstances or requirements. Please refer to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) booklet *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration, General and Vocational Qualifications* for details of access arrangements available, evidence requirements, key dates and procedures. Requests should be sent to:
Special Requirements Team
One90 High Holborn
London WC1V 7BH

”

How do I ensure that my candidates meet the terminal assessment rule?

“

You need to ensure that candidates are assessed for 40% of their GCSE in the terminal (last) examination series. In practice this usually means that two units in the GCSE should be taken/submitted in the final summer series. Controlled assessment tasks undertaken earlier in the year can be submitted as terminal assessment. Candidates must take at least two units in the final series.

NB: This rule applies to candidates sitting a modular GCSE in 2012/13 only.

”

What impact will the introduction of new linear GCSE specifications (first teaching from September 2012 and first award 2014) have on controlled assessments?

“

All units, including speaking and writing controlled assessment ones in the revised 2012 specifications, must be externally moderated or marked at the end of the GCSE course (15 May submission deadline). However, controlled assessments may still be undertaken at any time during the course prior to submission.

”

Supporting you with controlled assessment

Need help with controlled assessment? Our experts are on hand to support you...



- Email your [Subject Advisor, Alistair Drewery](mailto:TeachingLanguages@pearson.com), directly at TeachingLanguages@pearson.com
- **Call 0844 576 0035** to speak a member of the Subject Advisor team for languages
- Visit the [Languages Community Forum](#) to speak to other teachers, ask advice and see documents and links that Alistair Drewery has posted
- Get the latest languages news, advice and reminders straight to your inbox - [sign up for email updates from your subject advisor](#).

TeachingLanguages@pearson.com is our free email service that enables you to get languages-specific support and is supported by a team of senior examiners who will help answer your subject-specific questions. They will usually email you within two working days of receiving your question.



You can find documents relating to controlled assessment below, including:

Forms

You'll find the controlled assessment forms you need here.

Guidance

We've updated the controlled assessment Teacher Support Book with answers to FAQs from you.

All these documents can also be found on the main **GCSE Languages** page, alongside other key documents including:

- The **Administrative Support Guide (ICE)**
- **Principal Moderator** and **examiner reports**
- **Sample assessment materials.**

You should also refer to the [JCO controlled assessment guidance document](#).

Appendix 1: Frequently asked questions concerning controlled assessment

- 1 **I understand my candidates can do a speaking and a writing task on the same theme. How much overlap is allowed across these assessment tasks?**

Some overlap is acceptable and understandable as long as the tasks are distinctly different. Speaking and writing tasks can be linked to the same theme but the purpose of the tasks set must be different. The specification states that *Teachers must ensure that the formal assessments used enable students to demonstrate their ability to use language for different purposes. Although the context of the tasks may be common, teachers must check that there is **no direct overlap of content** across the formal speaking and writing assessment.* It is important to ensure the content is distinctly different – not just the context and purpose of the tasks in the two skills.

Here is an example where there is significant direct overlap:

Speaking task: *Presentation and discussion on house, home town and local area*

Give a presentation about your house, home town and local area. Your teacher will then ask you some questions which may refer to any of the following:

1. *what your house is like*
2. *what you would like to change in your house*
3. *information about the town where you live*
4. *advantages of living in your local area*
5. *what you did recently in your local area*

You should also be prepared to respond to questions your teacher might ask you.

Writing task: *House, home town and local area*

Write an article for a [target language] magazine about your home and local area.

You may wish to refer to the following:

1. *what your house is like*
2. *advantages and disadvantages of living in your local area*
3. *things to do and see in your local area [might overlap potentially with point 3 in speaking task]*
4. *what you did recently in your local area*
5. *what you would like to change in your house or local area*

Section 4: Appendices

One of these tasks should be modified to minimise the extent of the direct overlap of content and to allow the candidates to demonstrate their ability to use a range of language.

The speaking task could be turned into an open interaction; an example is given below:

Your family has decided to visit [TL country] and wants to exchange homes with a [target language]-speaking family. You speak to a representative from an agency in the (target language-speaking) country that arranges this. There are three homes to choose from:



*During the course of the conversation, you **may** need to do the following:*

- *explain what sort of home you want*
- *explain where it should be and why*
- *say what you will do while you are in (target language-speaking)*
- *choose which of the three homes you want to exchange with*
- *say why your choice of home (and area) would be suitable for the (target language-speaking) family*

Be prepared to ask at least two questions.

Alternatively, teachers may use tasks that overlap in this way if only one of these tasks (speaking or writing) is counted towards final assessment or if one of these is used informally in your centre as part of the candidates' general language learning and development.

2 I am using the Edexcel GCSE textbook with my candidates. Can I use the tasks set at the end of each chapter for their speaking and writing controlled assessment tasks?

As long as candidates are NOT expecting to use a textbook derived stimulus, then this would be acceptable. However, we would recommend that teachers alter such stimuli in some way – perhaps changing or adding a bullet point. This could also help to ensure that the tasks are more candidate-focussed. Candidates must not know what the task is in advance of the task-specific preparation period.

Section 4: Appendices

3 In task setting, what exactly does the 70-word limit refer to? Does it apply to both speaking and writing assessment tasks?

The following information relates to controlled assessment speaking and writing tasks and is given in the specification: *As tasks are designed to develop target-language speaking or writing skills, related stimuli should feature a minimal amount of text (maximum 70 words) and may feature visual prompts, potentially with some additional English-language explanation of context. Prompts and cues may be set in either English or TL, appropriate to the specific scenario.*

The 70 words limit refers therefore to any stimulus element provided and NOT to the complete task itself. There is no word limit for the task but you are advised to set tasks that are as concise and precise as possible.

4 Can the CA2/CA4 notes form include conjugated verbs?

Yes, conjugated verbs may be included. The notes should be written in bullet point or mind map format and could be in either English or the TL (or a mixture of both*). Candidates should be discouraged from writing notes in full sentences as this does not represent the best use of their 30 words of notes (GCSE French, German, Spanish, Italian and Urdu). Coding such as writing down the first letter of key words in key sentences is not allowed. However, it is acceptable for candidates to produce bulleted notes that are colour-coded for specific paragraphs/aspects.

GCSE Chinese candidates may produce 50 characters of notes plus five pictures or 30 English words (or pinyin) plus five pictures or 30 characters plus 20 English words (or pinyin) plus five pictures.

5 Are candidates allowed to have printed images on or attached to their CA2/CA4 form (30 words sheets) for the controlled assessments? Some candidates have found pictures on the Internet.

No. The instruction to candidates on both controlled assessment forms states: *You may also produce up to five small drawings in the box below.* This means that candidates may produce their own simple drawings to support them during the task-taking phase. Visual learners may find this particularly useful.

If we allowed pictures from the Internet, etc., candidates might spend too much time researching appropriate images rather than on developing language skills. In addition, there are issues of copyright to consider.

6 Are candidates allowed to talk to their classmates during the controlled assessment preparation time?

Yes they may (for both speaking and writing) but candidates must not produce any extended pieces of language for one another. The resulting assessable work must be the individual candidate's own. Please refer to the Joint Council for Qualifications document [Instructions for conducting controlled assessments](#)

7 Are candidates allowed to take any drafts home?

Candidates may take home the controlled assessment task, their exercise books, textbooks and the CA2 and CA4 forms. We would recommend that they do not take a draft home.

Candidates may engage in general revision/preparation for their assessment at home and they should not produce a full draft at home. The [following notice](#) appears on the GCSE 09 MFL web pages.

*The GCSE 2009 specifications for **French, German, Spanish, Italian, Urdu and Chinese** state that stimuli for the controlled assessments should not be taken out of the classroom. However, since task-setting regulations permit a 'limited' level of control and as it is logical for most students to source their stimuli for picture-based discussions at home, this requirement has been revisited. Consequently, **it is possible for students to take a copy of the task stimuli home** if undertaking related research within the prescribed task specific preparation period.*

Although it is possible for students to do some background preparation/research at home, teachers must be able to confirm that the final assessed product is the candidate's own work and has been prepared individually, without assistance from anyone else. (The latter is a QCDA requirement across all awarding bodies and teachers and students will need to complete a form to confirm this.) Students should not, therefore, be expected to produce full drafts of writing tasks (for example) at home.

Initial guidance was revisited following the publication of guidance for JCQ on controlled assessments (published after publication of our specifications) and in response to teachers' feedback. A notice was produced on [August 19th 2009](#) to advise teachers of this amended guidance.

NB: Students may also refer to other resources when undertaking research and preparation including textbooks and exercise books

Students should not be instructed to take drafts home with the aim of learning them by heart.

8 Does the task have to be taken within the two weeks' preparation time or after it?

The *time control* allows for maximum of up to 2 weeks and no more than 6 hours' contact time. As the most important stage in the process is the general teaching and learning phase during which time speaking and writing activities can be undertaken with unlimited teacher feedback, many teachers consider it more appropriate to allocate more time to the general, pre-task release preparation phase rather than the task-specific preparation phase. In such cases, the task for formal assessment would be undertaken well within the 2-week period.

Teachers may give their candidates the maximum of 6 learning hours over a maximum period of 2 weeks. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that the task taking goes beyond this maximum period so that candidates do not exceed the preparation time allowance. It is expected that the tasks will be undertaken within the 2-week period although, if necessary, it may be possible for some candidates to undertake assessments on the day after the maximum 2 weeks period of preparation has elapsed.

Section 4: Appendices

9 **Would a week's half-term holiday count as part of the fortnight task-preparation period if a controlled assessment was set just before half-term?**

Centres are discouraged from setting controlled assessments just before a school holiday. If this approach is adopted, the half term would have to form part of the 2-week preparation period.

10 **What forms need to be sent with the controlled assessments? Is there a checklist for teachers so we know what we need to send off?**

Please refer to the Administrative Support Guide (ICE) document in the language-specific GCSE controlled assessments area of the website which includes a checklist. This document may be refreshed and updated periodically and you are recommended to refer to the Edexcel website for the most up-to-date documentation before submitting candidates' work.

11 **If a candidate wants to retake a task, does he/she need to do a completely new one?**

If a candidate wants to retake a task on a specific theme, the task must not be exactly the same as one that the candidate has used previously. It will be necessary to change or 'refresh' the task (e.g. at least one significant bullet point.)

12 **How do you define a refreshed task?**

All tasks used for live assessments **must** be refreshed every 2 years. This means that at least one significant bullet point must be changed.

13 **If a candidate is resitting a unit with controlled assessments (Units 2 and 4), can s/he resubmit one piece?**

This is not possible for the controlled assessments in Writing. These are marked by Edexcel and can be treated in a similar way to examination scripts and may not always be returned to centres.

However, it is possible for a candidate to resubmit ONE controlled assessment task in speaking if this is what the centre wishes to do. In this case, the centre will need to ensure the work is reassessed (because this is a fresh assessment series) and the original centre marks adjusted if appropriate. Of course, this would be possible only with those pieces of candidate work that have been recorded.

Centres might consider whether candidates who wish to do a speaking controlled assessment may benefit more from undertaking a different or refreshed task because they may well have made some progress since their first assessments.

Appendix 2: Frequently asked questions concerning writing-specific controlled assessments

- 14 Can a candidate who writes fewer than 200 words still score a Grade C? Does writing fewer than 200 words mean that a candidate cannot gain a Grade C for writing controlled assessments?**

It is expected that candidates aiming for Grade C and above will produce over 200 words in their controlled assessment tasks. Clearly, marks are applied on a *best-fit* basis and examiners will reward the individual pieces on their own merit. However, at the top end, examiners must see evidence of extended writing. Therefore, in order to access the full mark scheme, extended writing should, at least, approach 200 words. Consequently, a piece of writing of about 125 words, for example, would be significantly short and would be unlikely to access uppermost marks.

- 15 Are there any penalties if candidates write more than 200 words?**

No, there is no upper word limit. However, the assessment is qualitative rather than quantitative and candidates will have no longer than 1 hour in which to undertake the writing controlled assessment. Over-long pieces of written work are often self-penalising and candidates might be better advised to produce just over 200 words and use any 'spare' time constructively to check what they have written.

- 16 If my candidates write two shorter pieces which together make up 100 words, do these pieces of writing have to be on a different theme or topic?**

It is possible to set two short tasks rather than one long one in a single assessment session. However, this type of activity is envisaged for only very weak candidates. There is an expectation that most candidates operating at a notional 'foundation tier' level will undertake a single task of at least 100 words in the allocated time – and not two shorter ones.

If it is appropriate to set two shorter tasks, candidates should be set two tasks on the same theme. For example, on the theme of Business, work and employment they could be asked to complete a simple job application form and then write a short letter of introduction (i.e. a few lines about themselves) to afford them a greater chance of reaching the 100 words minimum word count.

Whilst examiners will, of course, assess the work of candidates who do not reach the minimum word count, it is extremely unlikely that those who write fewer than 100 words will score more than 4–6 marks for Communication and content because the level of such a response will be minimal. In addition, the marks awarded for language (both Knowledge and application of language and Accuracy) will be restricted because such candidates will have shown evidence of only limited vocabulary and structures.



français

español

中文

Deutsch