



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



GCE AS and A level subject criteria for modern foreign languages (MFL)

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Aims	3
3. Subject content	4
4. Key skills	5
5. Assessment objectives	5
6. Scheme of assessment	6
7. Appendix 1	7

1. Introduction

1.1 These subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced (A) level specifications in modern foreign languages (MFL). They provide the framework within which the awarding body creates the detail of the specification.

Subject criteria are intended to:

- help ensure consistent and comparable standards in the same subject across the awarding bodies
- define the relationship between the AS and A level specifications, with the AS as a subset of the A level
- ensure that the rigour of A level is maintained
- help higher education institutions and employers know what has been studied and assessed.

Any GCE specification which contains significant elements of MFL must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.

2. Aims

2.1 AS and A level specifications in MFL should encourage students to:

- develop an interest in, and enthusiasm for, language learning
- develop understanding of the language in a variety of contexts and genres
- communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the language for a range of purposes
- develop awareness and understanding of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of countries or communities where the language is spoken
- consider their study of the language in a broader context.

2.2 AS and A level specifications in MFL should enable students to:

- derive enjoyment and benefit from language learning
- acquire knowledge, skills and understanding for practical use, further study and/or employment
- communicate with speakers of the language
- take their place in a multilingual global society.

2.3 AS and A level specifications should also:

- provide a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for students who do not progress to further study in the subject.

2.4 In addition, A level specifications in MFL should:

- provide a sufficient basis for the further study of languages at degree level or equivalent.

3. Subject content

3.1 AS and A level specifications in MFL must specify that, in order to study the subject at AS and A level, students should normally have acquired the knowledge, understanding and skills equivalent to those specified for GCSE at higher tier in the relevant language.

Knowledge, understanding and skills

3.2 AS specifications must require candidates to:

- listen and respond to a variety of spoken¹ sources, including authentic sources
- read and respond to a variety of written texts, including authentic sources, covering different contexts, registers, styles and genres
- adapt their spoken¹ and written language appropriately for different situations and purposes
- use the language accurately to express facts and ideas, and to present explanations, opinions and information in both speech¹ and writing
- understand and apply the grammatical system and a range of structures as detailed in the AS specification (see Appendix 1 for French, German and Spanish)
- transfer meaning from the modern foreign language into English, Welsh or Irish, and/or vice versa.

Spoken¹ and written sources must include material that relates to the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of one or more of the countries or communities where the language is spoken.

3.3 In addition, A level specifications must require candidates to:

- use the language to present viewpoints, develop arguments, analyse and evaluate, in speech¹ and in writing
- understand and apply the grammatical system and a range of structures as detailed in the A level specification (see Appendix 1 for French, German and Spanish)
- study aspects of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of one or more of the countries or communities whose language is being studied

¹ Understanding and responding to the **spoken** form of the modern foreign language, and/or communicating through the **spoken** word may not apply to specifications for certain languages, subject to an agreement with the regulatory authorities.

- transfer meaning from English, Welsh or Irish into the modern foreign language, and/or vice versa. If one skills is not assessed at AS level it must be assessed at A2 level.

4. Key skills

4.1 AS and A level specifications in MFL should provide opportunities for developing and generating evidence for assessing relevant key skills from the list below. Where appropriate, these opportunities should be directly cross-referenced, at specified level(s) to the key skills standards which may be found on the QCA website (www.qca.org.uk).

- Application of number
- Communication
- Improving own learning and performance
- Information and communication technology
- Problem solving
- Working with others.

5. Assessment objectives

5.1 The assessment objectives for AS and A level are the same.

5.2 All candidates must be required to meet the following assessment objectives. The assessment objectives are to be weighted in all specifications² as indicated.

Assessment objectives		Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
AO1	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language. ¹	35–40%	25–30%	30–35%
AO2	Understand and respond, in speech ² and writing, to written language.	35–40%	45–50%	40–45%
Assessment objectives		Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
AO3	Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification.	25%	25%	25%

5.3 The assessment objectives apply to the whole specification.

6. Scheme of assessment

6.1 Assessment must be entirely through external assessment.

Synoptic assessment

6.2 All specifications must include synoptic assessment at A2.

6.3 The definition of synoptic assessment in the context of MFL is as follows:

- Knowledge, understanding and skills in MFL are closely linked. Synoptic assessment covers both knowledge of the language and skills in using it which have been developed in different parts of the A level course. Candidates will demonstrate understanding and the ability to use advanced level language skills in one or more tasks. Synoptic assessment in MFL should draw on all A level assessment objectives.

6.4 Examples of synoptic assessment tasks might include:

- an assessment for which candidates study a topic with reference to both written and spoken⁴ sources and respond to these in speech⁴ and/or writing
- two assessments, one requiring candidates to respond in speech⁴ to a written stimulus and to discuss this, the other requiring candidates to respond in writing.

Answers in English, Welsh or Irish

6.5 A maximum of 10 per cent of the total marks for the subject at each level (AS and A level) may be awarded for answers in English, Welsh or Irish.

Resources in examinations

6.6 In A level examinations, the use of dictionaries will not be permitted in any assessment.

Quality of written communication

6.7 AS and A level specifications will be required to assess the candidates' quality of written communication in accordance with the guidance document produced by QCA.

⁴ Study through **spoken** sources and response in **speech** may not apply to specifications for certain languages, subject to an agreement with the regulatory authorities.

Appendix 1

AS and A level candidates will be expected to have studied the grammatical system and structures of the language during their course. In the examination they will be required to use actively and accurately grammar and structures appropriate to the tasks set, drawn from the following lists. The lists are divided into AS and A level. The examples *in italics* are indicative, not exclusive. For structures marked (R), receptive knowledge only is required.

French: AS level

- Nouns:** gender
singular and plural forms
- Articles:** definite, indefinite and partitive
- Adjectives:** agreement
position
comparative and superlative
demonstrative (*ce, cet, cette, ces*)
indefinite (*chaque, quelque*)
possessive
interrogative (*quel, quelle*)
- Adverbs:** comparative and superlative
interrogative (*comment, quand*)
- Quantifiers/Intensifiers** (*très, assez, beaucoup*)
- Pronouns:** personal: subject, object: direct and indirect
position and order
reflexive
relative (*qui, que*)
relative: *lequel, auquel, dont* (R)
object: direct and indirect
disjunctive/emphatic
demonstrative (*celui*) (R)
indefinite (*quelqu'un*)
possessive (*le mien*) (R)
interrogative (*qui, que*)
interrogative (*quoi*) (R)
use of *y, en*
- Verbs:** regular and irregular verbs, including reflexive verbs
modes of address (*tu, vous*)

impersonal verbs
verbs followed by an infinitive (with or without a preposition)
dependent infinitives (*faire réparer*) (R)
perfect infinitive
negative forms
interrogative forms
tenses: present
 perfect (including agreement of past participle)
 imperfect
 future
 conditional
 future perfect (R)
 conditional perfect (R)
 pluperfect
 past historic (R)
passive voice: present tense
 other tenses (R)
imperative
present participle
subjunctive mood: present (common uses, eg after expressions of possibility,
necessity, obligation and after conjunctions such as *bien que*)

Indirect speech

Inversion after speech (R)

Prepositions

Conjunctions

Number, quantity and time (including use of *depuis*, *venir de*)

French: A level

All grammar and structures listed for AS level, plus:

Pronouns: relative: *lequel, auquel, dont*
 possessive (*le mien*)
 demonstrative (*celui*)
 interrogative (*quoi*)

Verbs: dependent infinitives (*faire réparer*)
 future perfect tense
 conditional perfect tense
 passive voice: all tenses

subjunctive mood: present
perfect
imperfect (R)

Inversion after adverbs

Inversion after speech

German: AS level

The case system

Nouns: gender
singular and plural forms
genitive singular and dative plural forms
weak nouns
adjectives used as nouns

Articles: definite and indefinite, including *kein*

Adjectives: adjectival endings
comparative and superlative
demonstrative (*dieser, jeder*)
possessive
interrogative (*welcher*)

Adverbs: comparative and superlative
interrogative (*wann, warum, wo, wie, wie viel*)

Qualifiers *sehr, besonders, kaum, recht, wenig*

Particles *doch, eben, ja, mal, schon*

Pronouns: personal
position and order
reflexive
relative
indefinite (*jemand, niemand*)
possessive
interrogative (*wer, wen, wem, was*)

Verbs: weak, strong, mixed and irregular forms of verbs
reflexive usages
modes of address (*du, ihr, Sie*)
impersonal verbs
separable/inseparable
infinitive constructions: *lassen* with infinitive (R)

modal verbs (*dürfen, können, mögen, müssen, sollen, wollen*): present and imperfect

tenses; imperfect subjunctive of *mögen* and *können*

auxiliary (*haben, sein, werden*)

infinitive constructions (*um ... zu, ohne ... zu, verbs with zu*)

infinitive constructions: *lassen* with infinitive

negative forms

interrogative forms

tenses: present

perfect

perfect (modal verbs) (R)

imperfect/simple past (all verbs)

future

conditional

future perfect (R)

conditional perfect (R)

pluperfect

passive voice (verbs with a direct object) (R)

passive voice (verbs with an indirect object) (R)

imperative

subjunctive in conditional clauses (imperfect)

subjunctive in conditional clauses (pluperfect) (R)

subjunctive in indirect speech (R)

Prepositions: fixed case and dual case

Clause structures: main clause word order

subordinate clauses (incl. relative clauses)

Conjunctions: coordinating

subordinating: most common, including *damit, ob, so dass*

subordinating: *als ob, seitdem* (R)

Number, quantity and time (including use of *seit, seitdem*)

German: A level

All grammar and structures listed for AS level, plus:

Verbs infinitive constructions: *lassen* with infinitive

tenses: perfect (all verbs, including modal verbs)

future perfect

conditional perfect

passive voice (verbs with a direct or indirect object)

subjunctive in conditional clauses (pluperfect)

Other uses of the subjunctive (with *als*, *als ob*)

Conjunctions subordinating: *als ob*, *seitdem*

All forms of indirect speech

Variations of normal word order

Spanish: AS level

Nouns: gender
singular and plural forms

Articles: definite and indefinite (including *lo* plus adjective)

Adjectives: agreement
position
apocopation (*buen*, *mal*)
comparative and superlative
demonstrative (*este*, *ese*, *aquel*)
indefinite (*alguno*, *cualquiera*, *otro*)
possessive (short and long forms) (*mi*, *mío*)
interrogative (*cuánto*, *qué*)
relative (*cuyo*)
exclamatory (*qué*)

Adverbs: comparative and superlative
interrogative (*cómo*, *cuándo*, *dónde*)

Quantifiers/Intensifiers (*muy*, *bastante*, *poco*, *mucho*)

Pronouns: subject
object: direct and indirect
position and order
reflexive
relative (*que*, *quien*, *el que*, *el cual*)
disjunctive/emphatic
demonstrative (*éste*, *ése*, *aquél*, *esto*, *eso*, *aquello*)
indefinite (*algo*, *alguien*)
possessive (*el mío*, *la mía*)
interrogative (*cuál*, *qué*, *quién*)

Verbs: regular and irregular forms of verbs, including reflexive verbs
modes of address (*tú*, *usted*)
radical-changing verbs
impersonal verbs

verbs followed by an infinitive (with or without a preposition)

perfect infinitive

negative forms

interrogative forms

reflexive constructions (*se vende, se nos dice que*)

uses of *ser* and *estar*

tenses: present

preterite

imperfect

future

conditional

perfect

future perfect (R)

conditional perfect (R)

pluperfect

passive voice: present and preterite tenses

other tenses (R)

continuous tenses

imperative

gerund

past participle

subjunctive mood: present

perfect

imperfect

pluperfect

uses of subjunctive: polite commands

negative commands

after verbs of wishing, command, request, emotion

to express purpose (*para que*)

to express possibility/impossibility

after conjunctions of time (*cuando lleguemos*)

in conditional sentences after *si*

all other common uses (R)

Prepositions: personal *a*

uses of *por* and *para*

Conjunctions: common, including *y, pero, o, porque, como, cuando*

Number, quantity and time: constructions with *hace* and *desde hace*

Spanish: A level

All grammar and structures listed for AS level, plus:

Verbs: future perfect tense
conditional perfect tense
passive voice: all tenses

subjunctive mood: all common uses

ⁱ 'Understand and respond in **speech** to **spoken** language' and 'respond in **speech** to written language' may not apply to specifications for certain languages, subject to an agreement with the regulatory authorities.

For specifications without a speaking component the following applies:

Assessment objectives		Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
AO1	Understand and respond, in writing , to spoken language.	25–30%	15–20%	20–25%
AO2	Understand and respond, in writing , to written language.	45–50%	55–60%	50–55%

For specifications with neither a speaking nor a listening component the following applies:

Assessment objectives		Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
AO1	N/A			
AO2	understand and respond, in writing , to written language	75%	75%	75%