

GCSE FRENCH 8652/WF

Paper 4 Writing – Sample assessment material

Item commentary booklet – Foundation tier

General comment

All questions can be answered using the defined content (vocabulary and grammar) for each tier, with equal credit given for language used that is beyond the defined content but that fulfils the task requirements.

Question 1

Level of demand: Low (10 marks)

The mark scheme awards 2 marks for a relevant message clearly communicated and 1 mark for a message with some ambiguity or where there is some delay in communication. This will allow Foundation tier students of all abilities to gain some credit for what they know.

Rationale for item type

The GCSE Subject Content states that GCSE specifications in French, German and Spanish must require students to write text in the language in a lexically and grammatically accurate way in response to simple and familiar stimuli.

In this question, students are asked to respond to a familiar stimulus, in the form of a photo. The setting is a familiar one to young people as they are told that they are sharing photos online with their friends. Therefore, the context is authentic, as the sharing of photos via social networks is something 16 years old students do regularly. They also often include a brief written description of such photos.

The setting allows students to write five sentences about the photo, using either the 1st person (assuming that they and their friends or family are in the photo) or the 2nd person (assuming the student is responding to a photo shared by their friends).

Alternatively, they can write in the third person about the content of the photo. The photo is chosen so that students can write about it by using language from the grammar and vocabulary lists, but there is also equal credit for any language which falls outside of those lists. They must write, as far as is possible, in a lexically and grammatically accurate way as outlined in the subject content. However, in this low demand question, the emphasis is on communication and the mark scheme allows for some lack of accuracy provided that the inaccuracy does not cause any ambiguity.

This is a question type with which students and teachers are familiar in the outgoing specification, and it has proved to be a successful and accessible question for the majority of students and a way of easing them into the examination.

Content sampled (vocab/grammar)

There is a wide range of things to write about in this photograph eg students could describe the people, say who they are, describe the venue, say what the people are eating and drinking, say what the people are doing.

Mark scheme considerations

The mark scheme is designed to reward five sentences (5 x 2 marks) that students can produce in French. To make this question accessible to the full range of Foundation tier students, some acceptance of grammatical errors will be tolerated, unless they lead to a failure to communicate the appropriate information. Two marks will be awarded for a relevant message that is clearly

communicated; one mark is awarded for a relevant message where there is some ambiguity or where there is a delay in communication, for example by the use of an infinitive where a finite verb is required.

Although the photo is in black and white, if students wrote, for example, 'the boy is wearing a yellow shirt' this would be acceptable for full marks as it is a plausible sentence. The mark scheme gives examples of content that will be credited (indicative content), as well as answers that are not creditworthy at the 2 mark, 1 mark and 0 mark level, to help examiners and to promote valid and reliable assessment. The indicative content has been designed to demonstrate that all responses can be produced from the defined content only.

Accessibility considerations

This item is written in very straightforward language to ensure that all students understand what they have to do. This will ensure that there are no barriers to students' understanding of the task they have to complete. All text is written in plain, clear and consistent language to ensure that there are no barriers to students accessing the task.

The photo for this question will be in black and white.

The layout of the student answer booklet reassures students by giving them an indication in terms of space of how much they are expected to write. For visually impaired students, a written description in English of the photo will be provided in accordance with accessibility guidance used by Assessment Production colleagues.

Question 2

Level of demand: Low/medium (10 marks)

Rationale for item type

The GCSE Subject Content states that GCSE specifications in French, German and Spanish must require students to write text in the language in a lexically and grammatically accurate way in response to simple and familiar stimuli. This task rewards students who can produce short texts using simple sentences and familiar language accurately.

The stimulus is in written form and is in English so that it is easy for students to understand the requirements of the task. The written prompts are very open so that students have ample choice of what to write for each of the four bullet points. The approximate number of words to be written is 40; there is no requirement for equal coverage of the bullet points.

This is a low/medium demand question and the criteria for assessment are more challenging than for Question 1. There is still an emphasis on communication, but clarity has to be sustained over the whole of the question for a student to score highly for AO2. In addition to the need for clarity, there are also five marks available for AO3 and so the demand of the question is increased because there is a requirement for a variety of language and grammatical structures, as well as clarity of communication.

It is expected that students will use the present tense in their response, and this will give access to full marks, but other tenses used appropriately will be given equal credit. The prompts are chosen so that students can write about them by using language from the grammar and vocabulary lists, but there is also equal credit for any language which falls outside of those lists. This question type features in the outgoing specification, and it is a successful bridge between the low demand question and the greater challenge of part of the translation and of Question 5.

Content sampled (vocab/grammar)

Students have to write approximately 50 words on the topic of Education. This should be very familiar to them and should be accessible to all Foundation tier students. The context is felt to be authentic, as students of this age are very likely to write a description that includes the information required in the five tasks. The five sections to be included in this 50 word (approximately) passage are clearly indicated with bullet points. Students' answers are likely to be in the present tense, and they will in, all probability, write short, simple sentences, using familiar language. Some students might write in a tense other than the present, but their answers are likely also to contain short, simple sentences.

Mark scheme considerations

Students have to produce approximately 50 words (over the whole question) but some Foundation tier students might write a little more. The number of words produced is not important, provided that the whole question is addressed. Students' answers will be marked for AO2 (respond to written language in writing) and AO3 (demonstrate knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification). See the mark grid for this question in the mark scheme. There are five marks available for AO2 and five marks for AO3, and the mark grids contain clear descriptors with regard to the typical features of students' answers at 5 different levels. Additional guidance is provided in the glossary in the mark scheme to assist examiners.

The indicative content has been designed to demonstrate that all responses can be produced from the defined content only. Complexity, ie the extent to which a text uses features such as multi-clause units, pronouns, especially multiple pronouns, multiple verbs in one sentence or clause, long sentences, or morphology and syntax (word order) which is very different to English in form and/or function, will be limited at Foundation tier. The indicative content features two different pronouns and an example of multiple verbs used in one sentence, ie a limited level of complexity.

Accessibility considerations

The question stimulus has been kept short to prevent unnecessary reading for students. The command words are clear and contained in short phrases. This will ensure that there are no barriers to students' understanding of the task they have to complete. All text, including the five sections of the task, is written in plain, clear and consistent language to ensure that there are no barriers to students accessing the task. The five sections of the task that students must answer are indicated clearly with bullet points.

Students are given an indication of how much they are expected to write to score highly on this question and this information is included before the detail of the task to ensure it is not missed. The words "French" and '50' are shown in bold so that students know in what language to answer and how much to write (approximately). Each sentence is on a new line in accordance with accessibility guidance used by Assessment Production colleagues.

Question 3

Level of demand: Low/medium/high (5 marks)

Rationale for item type

The GCSE Subject Content states that in GCSE specifications in French, German and Spanish, students will be expected to apply their knowledge of the grammar specified appropriate to the task set and to the tier of entry.

In this question, students are asked to identify a word that would create a grammatically accurate sentence.

Students are required to write the correct spelling of the appropriate word in the space provided, taken from a choice of three.

Content sampled (grammar)

Regular and very high frequency irregular patterns in 1st, 2nd, 3rd persons of verbs in singular and plural in present and perfect tenses; agreement for gender and number with nouns following regular patterns of adjectives and highly frequent irregulars.

Mark scheme considerations

The mark scheme is designed to reward five marks (5 x 1 marks) for AO3, for the correct application of the knowledge of the grammar specified. Students must transcribe the word correctly, including any accents.

Accessibility considerations

This item is written in very straightforward language to ensure that all students understand what they have to do. This will ensure that there are no barriers to students' understanding of the task they have to complete. All text is written in plain, clear and consistent language to ensure that there are no barriers to students accessing the task. An example is provided to ensure students know how they should respond.

Question 4

Level of demand: Low/medium/high (10 marks)

Rationale for item type

The GCSE Subject Content states that 'GCSE specifications in French, German and Spanish must require students to: translate in writing short sentences or texts, from the language to English and vice versa, using a range of the vocabulary and grammar specified for each tier. In this context, translation means 'an appropriate and sufficient rendering of the meaning of the original language'. This task rewards students who can translate English sentences into French accurately and who can use a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures, including different verb tenses.

There are 10 marks for AO3: five marks are for rendering the original meaning of the English and five marks are for knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. There is likely to be some correlation between the two marks because rendering of the original message relies on knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. However, mark schemes will show answers which may not be totally correct, as regards spelling and grammar, but which will be accepted as far as rendering the message is concerned.

The additional mark for knowledge of vocabulary and grammar is to reward those students who not only render the original meaning, but who also produce accurate language in so doing. The translation is divided into 15 sections which are a combination of low, medium and high demand, thereby achieving discrimination over the question as a whole. This way of marking has been used in the outgoing specification and has been an effective way to discriminate between those students who can communicate the required message effectively, but whose language contains more errors, and those who are able to convey the messages more accurately.

Content sampled (vocab/grammar)

All the vocabulary, grammar and structures included are prescribed for the tier in the subject content. There is a range of vocabulary from all three themes, all of which is included in the vocabulary list. The range of grammar includes: present and past tenses, and a range of prepositions. See more detail below:

J'ai un frère.

All vocabulary has been taken from the vocabulary list for this tier. It is familiar to students and is a very accessible first sentence.

Il y a beaucoup de neige en janvier.

All vocabulary has been taken from the vocabulary list for this tier. It is familiar to students.

Mon portable est petit et rouge.

All vocabulary has been taken from the vocabulary list for this tier. It is familiar to students.

A mon avis le travail au collège est très dur.

All vocabulary has been taken from the vocabulary list for this tier. The higher demand here is the requirement of the word 'dur' The other vocabulary items, including the phrase 'à mon avis' are more familiar.

Hier, je suis allé en ville en voiture.

All vocabulary has been taken from the vocabulary list for this tier and is widely taught. The perfect tense is required here, which makes this the most challenging part to the question. However, it is a well-known verb within a familiar setting which is designed to compensate in part for the grammatical difficulty of the question. In addition, the vocabulary tested here is widely known at this level.

Mark scheme considerations

The mark scheme is designed to reward students who can both render the original meaning in the sentences and who can apply knowledge of vocabulary and grammar to produce these sentences. There are 10 marks available for AO3, 5 for rendering of the original meaning and 5 for knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

The mark grids contain clear descriptors with regard to the typical features of students' answers at 5 different levels which means that students can receive credit for rendering meaning even when they make some grammatical errors. In Grid one: Rendering of the original meaning, the number of ticks awarded for the 15 elements included in column 2 equates to the mark out of five in column 3.

A third grid contains four columns. The column 'Indicative content' indicates vocabulary taken from the vocabulary list for this tier. The column 'Alternative acceptable renderings' includes vocabulary outside the vocabulary list together with examples of language that the students might use. The language here is not necessarily a direct translation yet still sufficiently renders the meaning of the elements of the original language. This approach should allow all students access to some of the marks available for this question.

Minor errors will not be heavily penalised, and the higher ability Foundation tier students who can get the messages across in relatively accurate French should score highly on this question. Less able Foundation tier students should be able to score some marks by rendering a few of the messages in French that is inaccurate but still contains some correct vocabulary and structures. This approach also prevents students being penalised unduly harshly for careless errors. Nevertheless, only the most able Foundation tier students will score very highly on this question; it will provide a good spread of marks and should therefore make differentiating between students more successful. The differentiated mark grids reward students for what they know and can do. Sentences are broken down in such a way as to provide the best opportunities for students to score marks for AO3.

Alternative creditworthy responses are given where appropriate and other reasonable correct translations will be accepted. Additional exemplification has been included in the mark scheme – this will provide examiners with further guidance regarding the marks to award for both grids. This will be particularly helpful when the performance is uneven, for example if messages are not always rendered and/or the language used is not particularly accurate.

Accessibility considerations

The instructions given are written very clearly. The command words are in English to ensure that there are no barriers to students' understanding the requirements of each task. Students know that they have to translate the sentences into French. The word 'French' is shown in bold to emphasise this point. The English sentences have been constructed to allow Foundation tier students of all abilities to score some marks in this area of the question paper. Although the sentences must by necessity increase in difficulty to differentiate between students, all sentences are written in straightforward English.

Question 5.1

Level of demand: High (15 marks)

Rationale for item type

This is the overlap question and identical to Higher Question 2.1. This question is an alternative to Question 5.2. The stimulus is in written form and three bullet points in English target the three time frames: one requires reference to an activity in the present; one to an activity in the future; and one to an activity in the past. The recommended approximate number of words for this question is 90, although there is no need for equal coverage of the bullet points. There are two optional questions, so that students can choose the one where they feel more confident in being able to respond effectively. The two alternative questions have been carefully considered to ensure that the principle of comparability is fully respected. The topic areas in both questions are familiar, with the approach being appropriate for KS4 students.

One of the ways in which differentiation is established is through the requirement to use different tenses and this shows progression from Question 2. The criteria also ask for development of ideas for AO2, which is possible given the recommended number of words for this question. Clarity of communication is required, as it is in Question 2, but the tasks are more specific in Question 5 and the level of demand is therefore high at this tier. The AO3 criteria, as well as asking for different time frames, also require a variety of vocabulary and structure and some more complex language. The complexity of language is what a grade 4/5 student would be expected to produce at GCSE and so those elements of the grammar content which are exclusive to Higher tier would not be expected in this question. This is the approach that is taken in the current specification and it allows for good discrimination on the Foundation paper.

Content sampled (vocab/grammar)

This question gives a variety of opportunities for students aiming for Grade 4/5. Bullet point one targets the present tense. Bullet point two requires a response in the past tense (likely to be the perfect tense, although students could additionally use the imperfect tense). Bullet point three requires reference to the future (the future and/or conditional tenses would be appropriate). Students aiming for the lower grades have the option to use a contextualised present tense here.

There is a wide scope for content across all tasks. Vocabulary and grammar related to Free Time activities will be widely taught and known by students. A high-scoring answer would probably consist mainly of main clauses although there is ample opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to use adjectives, connectives and intensifiers to further develop their responses. The task can be answered fully in about 90 words, as indicated in the rubric.

Mark scheme considerations

Students' answers will be marked for AO2 (understand and respond to written language in writing) and AO3 (demonstrate knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification). See the mark grids for this question in the mark scheme. The mark grids have been designed so that there is a clear increase in demand on students if they are to score in the higher mark bands. The different levels of the mark grids have very clear descriptors which will allow examiners to identify the correct level to award to a student's answer.

The mark scheme clearly describes different levels of attainment/ability working up through the bands. Students can only achieve marks in the top bands for AO2 if they respond to all the bullet points, communicate clearly and convey a lot of information; they can only achieve marks in the top

band for AO3 if they use a good variety of appropriate vocabulary, display attempts at complexity of language and structure, refer to three time frames and any errors which occur are minor for the most part.

Although students aiming for the highest marks must write something about all the bullet points, the mark scheme will not penalise students who write a more detailed response on a particular element while only touching on another element. What is more important is that the student's opportunity to construct and develop a line of reasoning should not be limited. Indicative content is supplied so that examiners can see what might be expected of an answer that is worthy of full marks.

Additional indicative content is supplied so that examiners can see what mark would be given to a response showing unbalanced coverage of the bullet points, for example one where one bullet point was only covered briefly. The answer also contains a number of errors. A commentary has been provided so that examiners can see how the assessment criteria are applied to answers that do not score full marks. The indicative content has been designed to demonstrate that all responses can be produced from the defined content only.

Complexity, ie the extent to which a text uses features such as multi-clause units, pronouns (especially multiple pronouns), multiple verbs in one sentence or clause, long sentences, or morphology and syntax (word order) which is very different to English in form and/or function, will be limited at Foundation tier. The indicative content includes examples of infinitive constructions, longer sentences using connectives, a subordinate clause, present, perfect, imperfect and immediate future tenses and different persons of the verb.

Clear guidance is given for examiners about the grammatical and lexical features that are expected at each level within the AO3 mark grid. A helpful glossary is also provided. Indicative content will also be very valuable for teachers preparing students for this examination in that they will be able to see what expectations examiners have of high-performing students. These mark grids will be straightforward and clear to apply and will ensure high-quality accurate marking from examiners. The reliability of the mark scheme rests on the hierarchical nature of its demands and the straightforward nature of its design.

Accessibility considerations

The scene-setting at the start of the question has been kept deliberately short and is written in straightforward language. This is to ensure that students understand the context of the task without difficulty. The three parts to the question are clearly shown with bullet points in front of them. This will ensure that there are no barriers to students' understanding of the task they have to complete. A reminder on the front cover of the question paper tells students what they need to do to score highly in this question.

An instruction is included before the detail of the task to give students guidelines about how many words approximately they should write to access the highest marks for this question and in what language they should answer. To this end, the words '90' and 'French' have been shown in bold. A reminder is also given to students to write about all three bullet points. The choice of task in Question 5.1 is designed to appeal to all students and to give all students the chance to show what they know and can do. Each sentence is on a new line in accordance with accessibility guidance used by Assessment Production colleagues.

Question 5.2

Level of demand: High (15 marks)

Rationale for item type

This is the overlap question and identical to Higher Question 2.2. This question is an alternative to Question 5.1. The stimulus is in written form and three bullet points in English target the three time frames: one requires reference to an activity in the present; one to an activity in the future; and one to an activity in the past. The recommended approximate number of words for this question is 90, although there is no need for equal coverage of the bullet points. There are two optional questions, so that students can choose the one where they feel more confident in being able to respond effectively. The two alternative questions have been carefully considered to ensure that the principle of comparability is fully respected. The topic areas in both questions are familiar, with the approach being appropriate for KS4 students.

One of the ways in which differentiation is established is through the requirement to use different tenses and this shows progression from Question 2. The criteria also ask for development of ideas for AO2, which is possible given the recommended number of words for this question. Clarity of communication is required, as it is in Question 2, but the tasks are more specific in Question 5 and the level of demand is therefore high at this tier. The AO3 criteria, as well as asking for different time frames, also require a variety of vocabulary and structure and some more complex language. The complexity of language is what a grade 4/5 student would be expected to produce at GCSE and so those elements of the grammar content which are exclusive to Higher tier would not be expected in this question. This is the approach that is taken in the current specification, and it allows for good discrimination on the Foundation paper.

Content sampled (vocab/grammar)

This question gives a variety of opportunities for students aiming for Grade 4/5. Bullet point one targets the present tense. Bullet point two requires a response in the past tense (likely to be the perfect tense, although students could additionally use the imperfect tense). Bullet point three requires reference to the future (the future and/or conditional tenses would be appropriate). Students aiming for the lower grades have the option to use a contextualised present tense here.

There is a wide scope for content across all tasks. Vocabulary and grammar related to local environment will be widely taught and known by students. A high-scoring answer would probably consist mainly of main clauses, although there is ample opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to use adjectives, connectives and intensifiers to further develop their responses. The task can be answered fully in about 90 words, as indicated in the rubric.

Mark scheme considerations

Students' answers will be marked for AO2 (understand and respond to written language in writing) and AO3 (demonstrate knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification). See the mark grids for this question in the mark scheme. The mark grids have been designed so that there is a clear increase in demand on students if they are to score in the higher mark bands. The different levels of the mark grids have very clear descriptors which will allow examiners to identify the correct level to award to a student's answer.

The mark scheme clearly describes different levels of attainment/ability working up through the bands. Students can only achieve marks in the top bands for AO2 if they respond to all the bullet points, communicate clearly and convey a lot of information; they can only achieve marks in the top band for AO3 if they use a good variety of appropriate vocabulary, display attempts at complexity of language and structure, refer to three time frames and any errors which occur are minor for the most part.

Although students aiming for the highest marks must write something about all the bullet points, the mark scheme will not penalise students who write a more detailed response on a particular element while only touching on another element. What is more important is that the student's opportunity to construct and develop a line of reasoning should not be limited. Indicative content is supplied so that examiners can see what might be expected of an answer that is worthy of full marks.

Additional indicative content is supplied so that examiners can see what mark would be given to a response showing unbalanced coverage of the bullet points, for example one where one bullet point was only covered briefly. The answer also contains a number of errors. A commentary has been provided so that examiners can see how the assessment criteria are applied to answers that do not score full marks. The indicative content has been designed to demonstrate that all responses can be produced from the defined content only.

Complexity, ie the extent to which a text uses features such as multi-clause units, pronouns, (especially multiple pronouns), multiple verbs in one sentence or clause, long sentences, or morphology and syntax (word order) which is very different to English in form and/or function, will be limited at Foundation tier. The indicative content includes examples of infinitive constructions, a subordinate clause, longer sentences using connectives, present, perfect, imperfect, immediate future, future and conditional tenses and different persons of the verb.

Clear guidance is given for examiners about the grammatical and lexical features that are expected at each level within the AO3 mark grid. A helpful glossary is also provided. Indicative content will also be very valuable for teachers preparing students for this examination in that they will be able to see what expectations examiners have of high-performing students. These mark grids will be straightforward and clear to apply and will ensure high-quality accurate marking from examiners. The reliability of the mark scheme rests on the hierarchical nature of its demands and the straightforward nature of its design.

Accessibility considerations

The scene-setting at the start of the question has been kept deliberately short and is written in straightforward language. This is to ensure that students understand the context of the task without difficulty. The three parts to the question are clearly shown with bullet points in front of them. This will ensure that there are no barriers to students' understanding of the task they have to complete. A reminder on the front cover of the question paper tells students what they need to do to score highly in this question.

An instruction is included before the detail of the task to give students guidelines about how many words approximately they should write to access the highest marks for this question and in what language they should answer. To this end, the words '90' and 'French' have been shown in bold. A reminder is also given to students to write about all three bullet points. The choice of task in Question 5.2 is designed to appeal to all students and to give all students the chance to show what they know and can do. Each sentence is on a new line in accordance with accessibility guidance used by Assessment Production colleagues.