

Instructions for the conduct of the exams (Autumn 2020)

GCSE Modern foreign languages

These instructions apply to GCSE MFL exams in:

- Bengali 8638
- Chinese (Spoken Mandarin) 8673
- French 8658
- German 8668
- Italian 8633
- Modern Hebrew 8678
- Panjabi 8683
- Polish 8688
- Spanish 8698
- Urdu 8648

Staff conducting the tests must read and be familiar with both these instructions and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) [Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#) in advance of the exam.

One copy of these instructions, together with a copy of JCQ's instructions, must be available in each exam room.

Version 1.1

General instructions

These instructions must be read in conjunction with the JCQ document *Instructions for Conducting Examinations* which apply to all AQA exams.

- Two tests, one at each tier, will be available in each of listening, reading and writing. All tests will be set and marked by AQA examiners.
- The writing tests are timetabled in a separate session from the listening and reading tests. It is intended that, in accordance with the published timetable:
 - the Foundation and Higher Listening Tests should be conducted simultaneously
 - the Foundation and Higher Reading Tests should be conducted simultaneously
 - the Foundation and Higher Writing Tests should be conducted simultaneously.
- As the listening and reading tests are conducted in one single session, the listening question papers must be collected in before the reading test papers are distributed. Under no circumstances may candidates have access to both question papers at once. If a school or college decides that all or some candidates will do the reading exam first, then the reading papers must be collected in before the listening papers are issued.

The 2020 timetable is confirmed and available on our website.

- Candidates who take an exam later than the published starting time shown on the timetable must be kept under the direct supervision of school staff from 30 minutes after the published starting time for the paper concerned until the time when those candidates begin their exam.
- The timing given for the duration of the listening tests is approximate.
- Full details of the tests and entry requirements are given in the specifications.
- Unforeseen problems may occur during the conduct of the listening tests in particular. These instructions incorporate references to the most common problems which can occur and what action should be taken. The underlying principles throughout are:
 - be familiar with the instructions for the conduct of the tests
 - take prompt and appropriate action calmly
 - where directed to do so, inform AQA immediately after the tests, in writing, of the action which has been taken.
- Candidates are not allowed to use a dictionary in any of these tests.

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- Where students wish to use a laptop or PC to complete an MFL exam, they may have a card in the exam with a list of keyboard shortcuts for accents and special characters etc. The school or college must ensure that no other information is printed or written on the card and that the student has no access to any network or to the internet via the laptop/PC. Alternatively, students can add accents/special characters in pen to their printed response once they have completed the exam. We recommend the first option, since adding the accents/special character after printing (rather than at the time of writing, using keyboard shortcuts) tends to lead to more errors and omissions. If students do choose to add the accents in pen after printing this must be done **within the time limit of the exam** and not after the time allowed for the exam has passed.

Invigilation rules

- A teacher who teaches the subject being examined cannot act as an invigilator during any of the written exams in this subject. For example, a French teacher cannot invigilate any written French exams (written exams include listening and reading, as well as writing papers).
- A senior member of the teaching staff who has had overall responsibility for the candidates' preparation for the exam (eg the Head of MFL) cannot act as an invigilator for any written MFL exams.
- Teachers can act as an invigilator for another subject. For example, a French teacher who has no responsibility for preparation of candidates for Spanish could act as an invigilator for Spanish (as long as they are not Head of MFL).
- A subject teacher cannot be present in the exam room for any written exams for the subject they teach. For example, a Spanish teacher cannot be present in the exam room for any written Spanish exams (written exams include listening and reading, as well as writing paper).

Failure to comply with the above requirements constitutes malpractice.

Listening tests – Foundation and Higher

Requirements

- 1 Materials required:
 - CD and CD player
 - candidate question and answer booklets
 - transcript of the recording
 - a copy of these instructions
 - a copy of the JCQ document [Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#).
- 2 The tests will be provided on CD with the pauses built into the recording. The Foundation and Higher recordings will be on separate CDs.

Preparation

- 3 Each school or college will be supplied with three copies of the recordings per 75 candidates entered, ie:

Number of candidates	Number of copies
1–75	3 copies
76–150	6 copies
151–225	9 copies
	(and so on).

If further copies of CDs are required please contact dispatches@aga.org.uk. Schools and colleges must not make their own copies of the CDs – only copies provided by AQA may be used.

- 4 The listening test CDs and transcripts must be treated as confidential exam materials and should be stored in accordance with the JCQ document [Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#). The recordings must not be checked prior to the exam. The content of the material must not be disclosed to candidates prior to the exam.
- 5 In order to ensure that the quality of playback is not impaired, schools and colleges should ensure that CDs are kept:
 - out of direct sunlight
 - away from magnetic sources
 - away from sources of direct heat.
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- 6 The machine(s) which will be used to play the CDs for the tests should be checked and serviced. Particular attention should be given to ensure clear sound reproduction.

It is important that the CD should be played on a dedicated CD player or on an uncluttered PC due to the amount of memory and RAM needed to play a CD on a PC.

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- 7 Checks should be made on rooms to find those most suitable for listening tests. The following points should be considered:
 - external speakers for the CD player (or headphones if the test will be played in a language laboratory)
 - curtains or carpets to reduce echo
 - no outside noise.
 - 8 Spare CD players/PCs should be available in case of emergency.
 - 9 The equipment should be set up and tested at least 30 minutes before the start of the tests.

Digitising listening tests

- 10 Storing Listening Tests on a school or college's computer network or language laboratory.

For the purposes of digitising the listening tests on a school or college's computer network, schools and colleges may have access to the confidential Listening material **up to one working day** before the exam. If a listening test is on a Monday, this can be done on the previous Friday. Prior permission does not need to be sought from AQA.

You may download listening materials from our secure extranet site (Secure Key Materials), or from a CD, onto a secure area of the school/college network, no earlier than one working day before the exam. If an MFL listening exam is scheduled for a Monday, we will make the files available for download on the Friday prior to the exam. For any exams scheduled for the Monday immediately after the half-term holiday, we will make the files available for downloading on the Friday immediately before the holiday.

Wherever possible, we recommend that a member of staff from the school or college's ICT department or the Exams Officer undertakes this task. The material must be downloaded to the secure part of a school or college's network, ie the part of the network which is only accessible to ICT staff and not to students, until the permitted time.

Languages teachers are not allowed to check the recordings after the confidential material has been downloaded onto the secure network.

The confidential materials we supply for the purposes of the listening exam must be returned to the school or college's secure storage facilities as soon as the download to the secure network has been completed.

Appropriate measures must be in place to ensure that this material is kept totally secure until the time of the exam. Once the listening material has been downloaded, the exam room/area must not be left unsupervised or unlocked. Access to the internet, data stored on the hard drive or any portable media such as floppy disks, CDs or memory sticks is not permitted during the exam.

The use of headphones is permissible in situations where the listening material has been downloaded onto a school or college's computer network and is controlled directly by the invigilator who will be listening to the recording during the test, for example in a language laboratory. Candidates must not under any circumstances have individual control of the recording and invigilators must ensure that this regulation is met.

Conduct of the tests

- 11 A transcript of the recording is provided for the information of the invigilator and may be opened not more than 30 minutes before the start of the test.

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- 12 Because all candidates are answering the same questions at the same time, there is a particular need for close invigilation in this exam. Schools and colleges are reminded of the following regulation which can be found in the JCQ document *Instructions for Conducting Examinations*: 'The seating arrangements must be such as to prevent candidates from overlooking, intentionally or otherwise, the work of others; in particular, the minimum distance in all directions from school to school of student's chairs must be 1.25 metres.'
 - 13 Invigilators should note that the time taken to conduct the Listening Tests will vary. It is expected that the Foundation test will be completed in approximately 35 minutes and the Higher test in approximately 45 minutes.
 - 14 At the start of the test, candidates should be asked to complete the details on the front cover of their question and answer booklet. They should be reminded that they must use black ink or black ballpoint pen to write their answers and that they must write their answers in the spaces provided.
 - 15 When all candidates have completed the details on the front cover of the question and answer booklet, they should be told that they may not open their question and answer booklet until instructed to do so on the recording. The CD should then be started. The instructions on the front cover of the question and answer booklet form the recorded introduction to the CD. Candidates should be given the opportunity to ask any questions before the five minutes' reading time is played and warned that once the test begins, they will not be allowed to ask any further questions.
 - 16 The five minutes' reading time is pre-recorded on the CD, in common with all other pauses. There should be no reason for the CD to be stopped at any time during the test, except in an emergency. A tone on the CD will indicate the end of each item.
 - 17 No part of the recording should be replayed. Any problems with the conduct of the test should be reported in writing immediately after the test to irregularities-n@aga.org.uk
 - 18 A version of the recording, with 25% extra time incorporated, will be available for students entitled to 25% extra time. This version can be downloaded from e-AQA and is available for all GCSE listening tests (CDs with 25% extra time are not available).

The length of all pauses is extended by 25% in this version of the recording. If schools and colleges use a CD or download of the standard recording for students entitled to 25% extra time, the invigilator should pause the recording manually on hearing the bleep, to give candidates extra time to write their answer. The invigilator should allocate extra time across the whole test, up to the maximum extra time, according to the needs of the student(s).

Problems

- 19 If the test is interrupted, for example by external noise or by the illness of a student, the test should be allowed to continue in accordance with the instructions unless the circumstances are exceptional. No part of the recording should be replayed. If it is considered that candidates have been disadvantaged, an application for special consideration should be submitted via the Exams Officer. If there is no disadvantage to candidates but the recording has been stopped, AQA must be informed immediately of the incident in writing and this should be sent to irregularities@aga.org.uk .
- 20 If the CD player/PC breaks down during the test, candidates must be supervised in silence and must not be allowed to write. The CD should be transferred to the standby machine and the test continued. Notify irregularities@aga.org.uk in writing immediately after completion of the test.

Reading tests – Foundation and Higher

Requirements

- 1 Materials required:
 - one question and answer booklet for each candidate for the correct tier of entry
 - a copy of these *Instructions*
 - a copy of the JCQ document [Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#).

Conduct of the tests

- 2 Candidates should be asked to complete the details on the cover of their question and answer booklet before starting the test. They should be reminded that they must use black ink or black ballpoint pen to write their answers and that they must write their answers in the spaces provided.
- 3 At the conclusion of each test, the scripts should be arranged in attendance list order and dispatched with the attendance list, using the label(s) provided.

Note: Listening and reading tests

Schools and colleges should note that the listening and reading tests are conducted in one single session. The listening question papers must be collected in before the reading test papers are distributed. Under no circumstances may candidates have access to both question papers at once. If a school or college decides that all or some candidates will do the reading exam first, then the reading papers must be collected in before the listening papers are issued.

Writing tests – Foundation and Higher

Requirements

- 1 One question and answer booklet for each candidate at the correct tier.
- 2 Candidates may do rough work in the question and answer booklet. All rough work/planning notes must be crossed out.

Conduct of the tests

- 3 Candidates should be asked to complete the details on the cover of their question and answer booklet before starting the test. They should be reminded that they must use black ink or black ballpoint pen to write their answers and that they must write their answers in the spaces provided.
- 4 In the Foundation tier writing test, candidates must answer:
 - Question 1
 - Question 2
 - Question 3and **either**
 - Question 4.1 **or** Question 4.2.
- 5 In the Higher tier writing test, candidate must answer:
either
 - Question 1.1 **or** Question 1.2and **either**
 - Question 2.1 **or** Question 2.2**and**
 - Question 3.
- 6 At the conclusion of each test, the scripts should be arranged in attendance list order and dispatched, with the attendance list, using the label(s) provided.