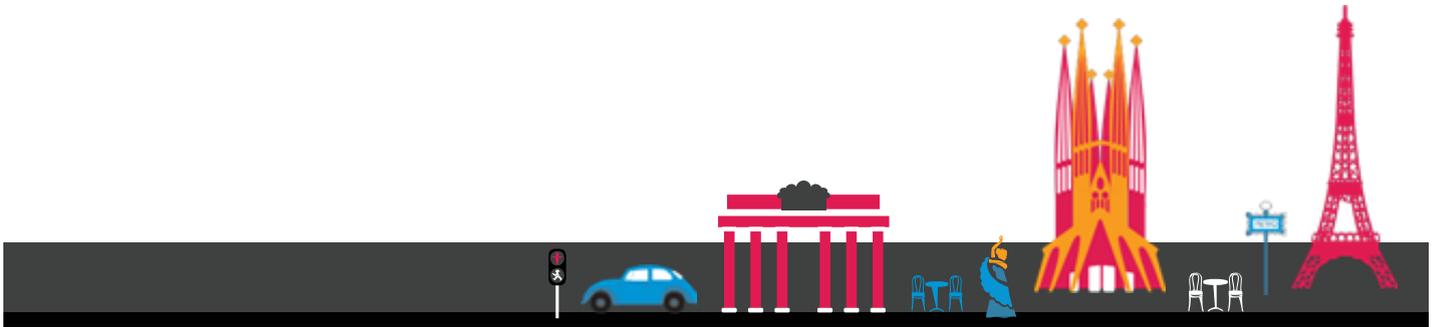




AS/A-level languages: your questions answered



v0.16 July 2017

Vertical black lines indicate a significant change or addition to the previous version of *Your questions answered v0.15 April 2017*.

General

How many teaching hours per week are recommended?

We don't make recommendations about teaching hours per week as this is a matter for schools and colleges to decide, depending on a number of factors. The guided learning hours for all AS qualifications is 180 and for A-levels 360.

How do the qualifications relate to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)?

AS and A-levels are not mapped onto the CEFR.

Why is there so much content in the sub-themes?

The detailed breakdown of each of the sub-themes (each of the 12 sub-themes is broken down into three further bullet points) has been included in the specification to show teachers and students the scope of each sub-theme. Setters cannot go beyond the scope of the detailed breakdown when setting questions so it is in students' and teachers' interests that we have published this. It is also worth remembering that students do not need to bring to the Paper 1 exam any knowledge of the target language speaking country as AO4 is not tested in Paper 1. Knowing the scope of the sub-theme and seeing how we interpret each sub-theme should be helpful in ensuring that students are well prepared for the exam in terms of familiarity with the vocabulary associated with the sub-themes. For the Speaking test, where students do need to bring AO4 knowledge, students do have some element of choice about the sub-themes they discuss.

If a student chooses to take the AS paper and continue A-level, then they will end up writing three essays in total?

Yes – if a student chooses to take the AS paper and continue to A-level, they will write one essay on AS Paper 2 and two essays on A-level Paper 2, ie three in total.

If students are taking the A-level exam only, will they sit Paper 1 and Paper 2 in the same year?

A student taking the A-level qualification (no longer referred to as A2) must take Papers 1, 2 and 3 in the same series.

In which paper are the translations?

At AS, the translation from the target language into English is on Paper 1. The translation from English into the target language is on Paper 2. At A-level, both the translation from the target language into English and the translation from English into the target language are on Paper 1.

Will there be any need to answer questions in English?

Some of the responses required on both the AS and the A-level Listening, Reading and Writing papers will be non-verbal answers as on the current A-level papers, ie letters or numbers. On the AS Listening, Reading and Writing (Paper 1) there will be a translation from the target language into English. On the A-level Paper 1 Listening, Reading and Writing there will also be a translation from the target language into English.

The translation into English will be the only response where students write in English.

In the A-level exam, will half of the questions asked be of an AS standard as well as half of A2 level?

No, in the A-level exams all the questions will be at the equivalent level to the current A2. The A-level exam assesses the work of the two year course of study at the level which students can be expected to have reached two years after GCSE. So, the sub-themes which are assessed in both the AS and the A-level exams will have a different level of demand in the two exams. Students taking A-level will have covered half of the work in Year 1 (along with any AS candidates) but will be examined on that work, as well as on the work covered in Year 2 of the course, at a level appropriate to A-level. If they enter for AS in year 12 and then for A-level in year 13 they will be examined on half of the content twice, first in the AS exam, then in the A-level exam with questions at a greater level of demand.

The above applies to all exam boards and is a feature of the new structure of the AS and A-level qualifications.

How does the assessment reflect the country-specific aspect of the content? How is this assessed?

Students are required to show knowledge and understanding of different aspects of the culture and society of

countries/communities where the language is spoken. This is assessed through the AO4 aspect of the Speaking (Paper 3) and Writing (Paper 2) tests. For Paper 2 a critical response (AS) or a critical and analytical response (A-level) to the book/film that the students have studied will be considered to fulfil this requirement. In the Speaking test the students will need to ensure that they demonstrate knowledge of the sub-theme in the context of the target language speaking country in their discussions. In Paper 1 (Listening, Reading and Translation) AO4 will not be assessed.

Are literary texts used as the basis for reading tasks?

There is a requirement in the DfE subject content for students to read and respond to a variety of text types including historical and literary. We have included at least one literary or literature-based text in both the AS and the A-level Paper 1 exams.

Why is there no language essay based on the themes?

The DfE subject content requires students to do reading and listening tasks (including summarising), translation in both directions and either one essay on a 'work' (AS) or two (A-level) as well as a speaking test. We felt that it would be inappropriate to extend the range of task types beyond those required by the subject content given the wide range of task types covered by the requirements.

What are the guided learning hours for AS and A-level?

The guided learning hours will be 180 for AS-level and 360 for A-level.

From AS onto A-level

If AS students decide at the end of the year if they are going to sit the AS exam or continue with the A-level, when would they be entered for the AS exam by the school?

When students begin to study the course at the start of Year 12 they have one of three options:

Option A: to start a two year linear course and sit the A-level exams at the end of Year 13. There is no requirement to sit the AS examinations in this scenario.

Option B: to study the AS course, sit the AS examinations and then decide to continue on into year 13 and sit the A-level examinations. Please note that in this scenario the AS examinations do not make any contribution to final grade awarded at A-level. This is the same in all subject areas.

Option C: to study the AS course and sit the AS examinations, thus completing their study of the subject. It is a good idea to consult with the Senior Leadership Team at your school/college as they may have a whole school policy regarding the entry of AS and A-level under the new government regulations. AS exam entries are made by February-March of the year of the exam.

To qualify to take the A-level, do students need to sit/pass the AS exam?

Students do not have to pass or even to sit the AS exam in order to take the A-level exam.

Grading and entries

Will the sample/specimen papers give us an idea about grades boundaries?

Grade boundaries are only available once students have taken a live examination. Grade boundaries are never available for untrials specimen papers as these papers have not actually been taken by students and have not been through the necessary marking and awarding process to decide where the grade boundaries lie. This applies to all subjects and all levels. We will publish exemplar marked work, with senior examiner commentaries, across the ability range to help teachers understand the requirements of the new exams.

For more information, see

<https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2017/02/03/grade-boundaries-the-problems-with-predictions/>

Can the AS level be re-sat if a student does not achieve the grade they expected?

Yes, students can re-sit the qualification as many times as they wish within the shelf life of the qualification.

How will grade A* be awarded in the new A-level?

There will be no rule for A* in the way there is for the outgoing specification and no A* grade boundary for individual papers. There will be an A* grade for the subject overall. It will be set to meet the predicted outcome.

The prediction for the grade boundaries (including A*) will be based on the outcomes from the previous year, taking into account any differences in the ability of the candidature compared to the previous year's candidature, as measured by mean GCSE results.

Does the AS qualification attract UCAS points?

Yes, it attracts 40% of the points that an A-level qualification attracts. Please refer to the UCAS link below for details.

<https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/new-tariff-fast-facts-v2.pdf>

Will students get information about their component boundary marks when their results are reported in 2018?

Centres will receive the component marks and the overall marks, but students will just get an overall grade. Centres are free to pass on information about the components if they wish to students.

Support and resources

Are there resources available to help teach the new books?

We have published on [aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk) guidance on possible approaches for teaching texts and films and we also plan to provide specific resources on each text and film to support teachers in preparing their students.

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/AQA-MFL-ASANDALEVEL-TG-STF.PDF>

Publisher resources will also cover this aspect of the specifications.

French: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/a-level-languages-textbooks-print-and-digital>

German: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/a-level-german-textbooks-print-and-digital>

Spanish: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/a-level-spanish-textbooks-print-and-digital>

When will the schemes of work be made available?

The AS and A-level schemes of work are available on [aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk), to allow teachers plenty of time to familiarise themselves with the schemes and to adapt them as necessary to suit their own requirements.

The schemes of work are available free of charge and in a format which allows teachers to adapt and edit them if they wish to do so.

French: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/as-and-a-level/french-7652/teaching-resources>

German: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/as-and-a-level/german-7662/teaching-resources>

Spanish: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/as-and-a-level/spanish-7692/teaching-resources>

Are there any resources for the individual research project?

There is a guide to the individual research project on [aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/AQA-MFL-ASANDALEVEL-TG-STF.PDF>

What resources are available to help teach the literature and film?

On the Teach tab on the AS and A-level web pages you will find guides to teaching literature and film as well as a document showing the available resources for the films and books on our prescribed lists.

http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/no_index/AQA-MFL-ASANDALEVEL-TL.PDF

http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/no_index/AQA-MFL-ASANDALEVEL-TF.PDF

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/AQA-MFL-ASANDALEVEL-TG-STF.PDF>

Does the order of the content in the approved textbooks follow the sample schemes of work on the website?

No, not necessarily; the sequence in the approved textbooks follows the specification. The schemes of work on the website show another way of covering the content and there are further suggestions in the course planning section of the Prepare to teach materials available on the Secure Key Materials section of e-AQA and in Prepare to teach recorded webcasts. We are simply showing a range of possible approaches and teachers should decide what works best for their own students and can use one of the suggested approaches as a starting point.

The sample schemes of work on the website refer to 18 'sessions' to deliver the grammar. How much time would that be?

The word sessions allows for different arrangements in different schools. The suggestion is for 18 separate time slots but the length will depend on how long lessons last in the school/college.

When will updated resources be available on Kerboodle?

For details on publisher resources, please contact the publisher direct on

<https://global.oup.com/education/secondary/subjects/mfl/?region=uk>

Are teacher books being produced to accompany the new student textbooks.

For details on publisher resources, please contact the publishers direct on

<https://global.oup.com/education/secondary/subjects/mfl/?region=uk>

<http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Product?Product=9781471857959>

When will the new textbooks be published?

For details on publisher resources, please contact the publishers directly:

<https://global.oup.com/education/secondary/subjects/mfl/?region=uk>

Where can I access the materials from the Prepare to teach meetings?

The materials can be accessed on the Secure Key Materials section of e-AQA and via the recorded webcast on the getting started section of the Plan tab of the relevant web page..

Will Exampro resources be limited until more exams have been added in future years?

The Exampro Question Bank resources on AS and A-level French, German and Spanish will be based initially on the sample AS and A-level assessment materials approved by Ofqual, but these will of course be supplemented by additional material as live question papers are sat from summer 2017. There is also a huge range of past questions from the current AS/A-level French, German and Spanish specifications, many of which will still be relevant to students studying for the new AS and A-level qualifications. Please see <http://www.exampro.co.uk/sec/languages.asp> for more information on Exampro resources.

Is membership of the Teachit languages site free?

You can download free PDF versions of the resources, and if you would like editable versions then individual subscriptions start from just £15 for 6 months.

Links to Teachit's KS5 pages where you can browse by topic and by skill (including grammar):

French:

<http://www.teachitlanguages.co.uk/ks5-french-topics>

German:

<http://www.teachitlanguages.co.uk/ks5-german-topics>

Spanish:

<http://www.teachitlanguages.co.uk/ks5-spanish-topics>

Could you clarify where the Schemes of Work can be found?

These have been developed by practising teachers to help you deliver the new, fully linear specifications and you'll find these in the 'Teach' folder on the resources page of our website for each language.

French:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/as-and-a-level/french-7652T>

German:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/as-and-a-level/german-7662>

Spanish:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/as-and-a-level/spanish-7692>

The French, German and Spanish suggested schemes of work show different possible approaches to teaching the courses. The schemes of work are not prescriptive and we understand that teachers will want to adapt them to meet the needs and interests of their own students. For this reason we've supplied them in Word format meaning they are fully editable, so you can create your own bespoke scheme using the ones provided as a starting point. Any of the three suggested models could quite easily be adapted for any of the three languages and also tailored precisely to suit the needs of your own students.

Where can we find translation practice?

For AS, there is a resource on the Teach tab with five practice translation into English and five from English into the target language. These will also be useful for Year 12 students who are not actually sitting AS as they provide translation practice at a level suitable for Year 12 students.

Themes

Has the theme of the Environment completely disappeared?

Yes – the theme of the Environment is no longer a topic under the new A-level specification. The core subject content at AS is 'Social issues and trends' and 'Artistic culture'. At A-level the core subject content is 'Social issues and trends' and 'Political and artistic culture'. The sub-themes under these themes do not include the Environment. However, students could choose to research the Environment for their research project.

Are materials available to help us teach to the sub-themes?

Further details on the subject content are available in the accredited specification for each language. Publisher resources will also cover these aspects of the specifications.

What does 'contemporary' mean? 21st century?

The definition of contemporary francophone music is popular francophone music which is played and listened to today. 'Contemporary' will be interpreted in broad terms and will not be restricted to the 21st century.

Can teachers and students choose themes from Social issues and trends and from Political and/or intellectual and/or artistic culture?

No, it's not the teachers and students who choose, it's the exam boards who set two themes for A-level (one of which is set for AS) from each of these two broad areas. So, all students who follow the AQA specifications, for example, will study the same themes and sub-themes.

Could students study the two themes from Social issues and trends (eg for Spanish: Aspects of Hispanic society and Multiculturalism in Hispanic society) in year 1 and the two themes from Political and/ or artistic and/or intellectual culture (eg in Spanish: Artistic culture in the Hispanic world and Aspects of political life in the Hispanic world) in year 2?

Yes, if there are no students taking AS at the end of year 1, this will be fine. If however there are students taking the AS at the end of year 1 they will need to have studied during Year 1 the two themes designated as AS themes ie for Spanish: Aspects of Hispanic Society and Artistic culture in the Hispanic world.

Why are some sub-themes different across the language and some the same?

The requirement to study the themes in the context of a country or countries where the language of study is spoken

allows for a focus on different aspects of the theme as appropriate to the society/societies in question and has the added advantage of preventing duplication for dual linguists.

Why do some sub-themes have 'German' or 'Germany' etc and could 'Germany' be taken as 'Austria' for example?

The same rule applies to all three languages: if the sub-theme has German or Germany (or indeed Berlin), Spain or Spanish in its title, then it must be studied in relation to Germany, Spain.

If however, the sub-theme does not specify France or French, German or Germany, Spain or Spanish, then it can be studied in relation to any relevant country or countries where the language is spoken.

The specification makes clear in which contexts each theme can be studied. For French, all the sub-themes can be studied in relation to any French-speaking country.

Will all 12 sub-themes be covered in one A-level exam paper?

Not necessarily, but over time all 12 sub-themes will be covered.

Which countries count as French-speaking countries?

For the purposes of the AS and A-level specifications, French-speaking countries are countries where French is, or has been, the official language, or one of the official languages, of the country.

Translation into the target language (AS Paper 2/A-level Paper 1)

Will there be any textual support for the translations into the target language?

Yes, this will appear within the translation exercise at both AS and A-level.

Are misspellings accepted in the translation into the target language?

The specimen mark scheme for each language has guidance on any misspellings which are accepted.

The translations are a minimum of 70 words at AS and 100 words at A-level. How much longer could they be?

We will aim to keep them close to the prescribed minimum, exceeding it by just a few words at most. Please refer to specimen materials. .

AS and A-level Paper 1

Does quality of language count when students are answering in the target language?

Only in the summary questions.

Will students be penalised for lifting language from the stimulus text or passage?

Not for content marks ie A01 or A02; provided that the student's response is relevant and answers the bullet points or questions, the student will get the mark for A01 or A02. In the summary questions there are also marks for A03 (language) and for these marks sections of lifted language will not be credited; individual words and short phrases can be lifted but students must show some manipulation of the language of the original text or passage in order to gain A03 marks. For examples, please refer to the specimen mark scheme which includes sample summaries.

AS and A-level Paper 1 summaries

Will students be penalised if their summary is longer than the prescribed word length?

If the student is mid-sentence when 70 words is reached at AS and 90 words at A-level, the examiner will mark the rest of the sentence or clause, ie to the first natural break up to 80 words at AS and 100 words at A-level. In AS, marking will stop at 80 words; in A-level, marking will stop at 100 words. This is exemplified in the sample answers in the mark scheme for the specimen papers.

Do students need to use synonyms for the words used in the stimulus listening and reading passages when they write their summaries?

No. Individual words and short phrases from the original passage can be used. However, students must manipulate the linguistic structures in order to score A03 marks in the summaries. This is exemplified in the sample mark

schemes for the specimen papers.

How will examiners know when to stop marking the summary?

Examiners will stop marking at the first natural break (end of the clause or sentence) after the point where 70 words is reached in AS and 90 words in A-level. They will annotate the script with a symbol at the point where marking stops.

What constitutes a word in French eg how many words is *je m'appelle* ?

A word in French has a space on either side so *je m'appelle* is two words, *il y a* is three words, *l'ami* is one word, *est-ce que* is two words, *est-ce qu'il y a* is four words.

What do the underlinings mean in the mark scheme?

The key ideas that are required in the answer in order to attract A01/A02 marks (ie content marks) are underlined in the mark scheme. However, these are key ideas and may be expressed using the same language as the stimulus text/listening passage or using different language from the stimulus text/listening passage.

If the summary asks for eg two reasons and the student gives three, the second of which is wrong, how will this be marked?

Provided that the third reason given by the candidate is within the word limit, it will be credited, if correct.

How will A03 marks be awarded? For example, is it necessary to avoid items of vocabulary from the stimulus text/listening passage to get a high A03 mark? What is the relationship between the A01/A02 mark (ie content mark) and the A03 mark?

There is no need to use different items of vocabulary from the original text/listening passage in order to access a high A03 mark as the A03 mark is for manipulating structures and showing a grasp of grammar. This could include using different items of vocabulary in some cases but need not necessarily.

Examiners will award the A03 mark on a 'best fit' basis. If, for example, a student produces 70 words of material at AS or 90 words of material at A-level which is relevant to six of the seven content points but omits one or more content points that student could still have access to 5 marks for A03. A mark of zero for A01/A02 will lead automatically to a mark of zero for A03 but otherwise the A01/A02 mark and the A03 mark are awarded independently.

If the material relevant to one of the content points appears after marking stops, the student can still have access to 5 marks for A03 based on the relevant material in relation to the other content points.

The mark scheme for A03 is below, along with the way in which examiners apply any level of response mark scheme.

Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and

then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

AS

Mark	A03 quality of language marks in listening and reading summary tasks
5	The language produced is generally accurate but there are some minor errors. The student shows a generally good grasp of grammar and is often able to manipulate complex structures accurately where required by the task.
4	The language produced is reasonably accurate, but there are a few serious errors. The student shows a reasonable grasp of grammar and is sometimes able to manipulate complex structures accurately where required by the task.
3	The language produced contains many errors. The student shows some grasp of grammar and is occasionally able to manipulate complex structures accurately where required by the task.
2	The language produced contains many errors, some of a basic nature. The student shows little grasp of grammar and is rarely able to manipulate complex structures accurately where required by the task.
1	The language produced contains many errors, most of a basic nature. The student shows very little grasp of grammar and is very rarely able to manipulate structures accurately where required by the task.
0	The student produces nothing worthy of credit.

A-level

Mark	A03 quality of language marks in listening and reading summary tasks
5	The language produced is mainly accurate with only occasional minor errors. The student shows a consistently secure grasp of grammar and is able to manipulate complex language accurately where required by the task.
4	The language produced is generally accurate, but there are some minor errors. The student shows a generally good grasp of grammar and is often able to manipulate complex language accurately where required by the task.
3	The language produced is reasonably accurate, but there are a few serious errors. The student shows a reasonable grasp of grammar and is sometimes able to manipulate complex language accurately where required by the task.
2	The language produced contains many errors. The student shows some grasp of grammar and is occasionally able to manipulate complex language accurately where required by the task.
1	The language produced contains many errors of a basic nature. The student shows little grasp of grammar and is rarely able to manipulate complex language accurately where required by the task.
0	The student produces nothing worthy of credit.

What is the relationship between the content mark (A01/A02) mark and the language mark (A03)? For example, could a student who only scored 3 of the 7 content points get 5 marks for A03?

There is no fixed relationship or capping between the marks for the content points and the marks for A03. These marks are awarded separately. Any parts of the student's summary which are relevant to the stimulus passage/text and in which they have demonstrated manipulation of complex structures will be considered for A03, including sections which do not gain marks for A01/A02. Marks for language can be awarded even where the student does not score the content marks, provided what they have written is relevant to the passage/text and meets the requirements for A03. However, a student who scores 0 for A01/A02 will be awarded 0 for A03.

To what extent is the A03 mark determined by the proportion of the summary that shows manipulation of structures and to what extent is it determined by the accuracy of such language? For example, could a student who showed manipulation of structures in only around half of their 70 word AS summary or 90 word A-level summary but did so with a very high degree of accuracy (with the remaining sections of the summary being lifted from the original) still get 5 marks for A03?

Both the proportion of manipulated structures and the accuracy of such language are taken into account. A summary where the student lifts around half of the language from the original passage/text is unlikely to meet the AS descriptor 'The student shows a generally good grasp of grammar and is often able to manipulate complex structures accurately' or the A-level descriptor 'The student shows a consistently secure grasp of grammar and is able to manipulate complex language accurately'. In order to reward students fairly, examiners need to be able to award a higher A03 mark to summaries where the student has shown manipulation of language throughout than to summaries where a significant proportion is lifted from the original.

Questions with target language answers

Can students lift extracts from the text/listening passage where no A03 marks are available?

Yes. Where the natural answer to a question consists entirely or partly of words or phrases from the recording or text, students may use that material without rephrasing it. Errors which do not distort the meaning will be tolerated. However, the A01/A02 mark will not be awarded for a response in which the student includes irrelevant material or

copies inappropriately from the stimulus, eg by 'lifting' an element from the original which does not match the phrasing of the question set.

If the question requires students to find a synonym within the text, the synonym needs to be in full, matching exactly the footprint of the item in the question (eg including the article) and it needs to be spelt correctly (including accents).

Translation into English

How accurate does the section need to be to get the mark? What happens if for example one word is translated wrongly but the rest of the section is correct?

The entire section needs to be correctly translated to get the mark. Examiners will annotate with a tick each section that is awarded a mark. See the published mark scheme for more detail.

AS and A-level Paper 2

Can students at A-level write an essay on the same film as they did for the AS exam?

Yes. A-level students need to answer two essay questions in Paper 2. One of these essays can be in response to a question on the book or film that they studied as part of their Year 12 studies and which they wrote about in the AS exam if they took AS. However, the questions set at A-level will focus on different aspects of the book/film and will be less structured than the questions at AS.

Will there be a maximum word length for the essays?

No. There is no maximum word length for the essays. Examiners will mark everything that a student is able to produce within the set time of the examination. We give a suggested word length for the essays which is 250 at AS and 300 at A-level, however examiners will not be counting the number of words as part of the marking process. It is possible to achieve the highest marks with an essay of around 250 words at AS and around 300 words at A-level. Lengthy introductions and conclusions are not helpful, though the essay does need to be coherent. See marked exemplar essays for examples.

Will the essays be in English?

No. The essays at both AS and A-level will be in the language of study.

How many words are expected for the AS and A Level book/film essay?

Guidance is 250 words for AS and 300 for A-level, but these are not limits, just suggestions. (Please see the sample papers on aqa.org.uk)

If at A-level you chose *Das Leben der Anderen* and *Zonenkinder* there might be overlap of thematic content across the two works. Would this be allowed?

This is allowed. Overlap in content between the two works studied from the set lists is quite acceptable.

Can I substitute a book on the list in the specification for a different book? I am at present doing *Bodas de sangre* and on the list you have *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*.

No. The list of literary texts and films are set by AQA and are the same for both AS and A-level. For AS Paper 2, students must answer ONE question in French/German/ Spanish on a set text from a choice of two questions, OR one question in French/German/Spanish on a set film from a choice of two questions. For A-level Paper 2, students must answer either one question in French/ German/Spanish on a set text from a choice of two questions AND one question in French/German/Spanish on a set film from a choice of two questions, or two questions in French/German/Spanish on set texts from a choice of two questions on each text. So students answer TWO questions for the A-level paper.

Will the A-level questions be different from the questions on the books/films in AS in the same year?

Yes. The questions set for AS will be more structured than the A-level questions and will focus on different aspects of the work from the A-level questions. AS questions will be more structured than A-level questions: they will have four optional bullet points for students to follow if they wish. AS questions will cover aspects such as plot, characterization,

imagery and other stylistic features as appropriate to the work. A-level questions will cover aspects such as issues and concepts raised in the work and form and technique of presentation (eg narrative voice in a book or cinematic technique in a film).

Can students study any book or film?

Students must study books and films listed in the specification. Each exam board has prescribed lists of books and films and students can study any book or film listed in our specifications.

In AS Paper 2, will there always be a choice of questions on the set text/film ?

Yes, there will be a choice of two questions every year for each book and film. This applies to AS and A-level.

Will students be required to read entire books, or just extracts?

Students must read the whole of the work prescribed on the list of set texts except in the case of poetry, where they should study at least 10 poems from the collection.

'Boule de suif et autres contes de la guerre' appears to be out of print. Is 'Boule de suif et autres histoires de guerre' acceptable?

Yes, either '*Boule de suif et autres contes de la guerre*' or '*Boule de suif et autres histoires de guerre*' is acceptable. We do not prescribe a specific edition of the above. All books and films must remain prescribed for the lifetime of the specification. We are aware of the issues of availability and of variations across different collections and editions. We do not prescribe set stories. Student should read all the stories in the collection they are studying and decide in the exam which stories to refer to, depending on the question they are answering. The only story we may require students to refer to is the 'conte' *Boule de suif*. Apart from that, our questions will leave it for students to decide which stories to refer to in their response. There will not necessarily be a question every year that requires reference to the 'conte' *Boule de suif*.

Are quotations needed in the essays?

No. Students can instead use close textual reference to justify and illustrate their points. Please refer to the marked exemplar essays on e-AQA. The same applies at AS.

Some of the marked exemplar scripts that attracted high marks are far longer than the recommended word length. Is it the case that it will in practice be necessary to write far in excess of the recommended length to get high marks?

It is entirely possible to gain the highest marks by writing concise essays within the recommended number of words. Lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary though the essay does need to be coherent. In the Teach tab (in the resources section for each language on the AQA website) there are exemplar essays written within the recommended word length and which would be awarded high marks.

What happens if a student answers with reference to the wrong work eg they have studied a particular film but answer one of the questions set on a different film or on a book?

No credit can be given in these circumstances. Each question is set on a particular book or film and only answers that refer to that particular book or film can be credited.

A-level Paper 2 Writing

What is a critical and analytical response?

In the context of the mark scheme for the books and films it means selecting relevant material, justifying ideas and points of view with evidence from the work, drawing conclusions and evaluating themes, issues etc. This is how Ofqual defines a 'critical and analytical response' in the subject level guidance (see Ofqual website) and they were keen to see that wording in the mark scheme. So, in summary a critical and analytical response is all the things mentioned within the descriptors for AO4.

If students make a serious language error in their essay, are they automatically prevented from accessing the 13 – 16 band for AO3? The 13-16 descriptor just refers to minor errors; it is only one band lower in the 9-12 band that serious errors are mentioned.

No, all level of response mark schemes work on the basis of 'best fit' so if the rest of the 13-16 descriptor fits the

work better, students could still access the 13-16 even with a small number of serious errors.

Why is the weighting of this paper only 20%?

We are conscious that not all students perform at their best when answering a question on literature and we wanted to make sure that students are credited for skills in the written language across a range of task types ie in the summary questions and translation into the target language in Paper 1 as well as in the essays.

AS Paper 2

What is a critical response?

This means using knowledge of the book or film to justify points of view, develop arguments and draw conclusions with appropriate evidence. A predominantly descriptive/narrative response will not meet the requirements for the upper bands.

Are the four bullet points compulsory?

No. They are optional and need not be followed.

Will essays be annotated by examiners?

Yes. For the full range of annotations used, please refer to the published mark scheme after the exam.

Must students use the examples of complex language published in the same mark scheme to gain high marks?

The examples of complex language published in the mark scheme are not prescriptive or exhaustive; they are simply examples, provided as a guide to the type of language that would be regarded as complex at this level.

Will examiners expect students to include points from the possible content in the mark scheme in their answers?

Not necessarily. The possible content is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

Does the mark for A04 dictate the mark for A03?

No. The two assessment objectives are assessed independently. However, if a student scores zero for A04, they will score zero for A03. Examiners use the marking grids by starting at the bottom band and working up until they find the best fit for the essay.

Are there any marked exemplar essays?

There are marked exemplar essays in the Prepare to teach material which you can access on e-AQA or via the recorded webcast on the Plan tab of the relevant web page. There are further marked exemplar essays on the Teach tab:

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/french/AQA-76512-ET.PDF>

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/german/AQA-76612-ET.PDF>

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/spanish/AQA-76912-ET.PDF>

AS and A-level Paper 3 Speaking

How many students are needed to qualify for a visiting examiner?

The minimum is 10 students. In 2018, these 10 must be from new AS Paper 3 and new A-level Paper 3. The Visiting Examiner option will not be available in 2018 for re-sit candidates for the legacy AS Unit 2 and legacy A2 Unit 4 tests.

Should schools/colleges doing the teacher-conducted option keep copies of the speaking test recordings?

Yes, we would strongly advise schools and colleges to keep copies of the recordings just in case the recording should

go astray or become damaged.

Do the questions which the student asks the teacher have to elicit A04 knowledge?

No. The question must elicit information or opinion (as opposed to clarification or repetition of what the teacher has already said) but need not elicit A04. Examples are provided in the specimen mark scheme.

Where can we find examples of the sorts of questions which students must ask in the speaking test?

The specimen assessments have examples for each of the 12 cards at AS and at A-level of the types of questions students could ask. This is published in the specimen mark schemes. The guidance on the requirements for the questions (eg that they must elicit information or opinion) is also in the specimen mark scheme for Paper 3 Speaking.

Does the teacher-examiner ask follow-up questions after the printed questions?

No, follow-up questions are asked in between the printed questions, which is a change from the legacy AS. There is no recommended number of follow-up questions; it depends on the student's responses. Follow-up questions can provide an opportunity for students to deal with unpredictable elements.

Do students need to quote facts and figures to gain A04 marks?

Facts, figures, statistics etc will not by themselves guarantee access to A04 marks. This sort of information is only creditworthy to the extent that students use it as evidence to demonstrate their understanding of the sub-theme eg to back up a point they make or a conclusion they draw or to justify an opinion.

Will examiners challenge students?

Examiners and teacher-examiners will ask students to justify points of view and give examples to support the conclusions they draw and the points they make. This will be through questions like 'Could you explain that?', 'Could you give an example?'

What will happen if the student forgets to ask a question?

The examiner or teacher-examiner will invite the student to ask a question. At AS, students must ask one question on each card and if they fail to ask a question arising from the material on the card the examiner will award the mark one band below the one otherwise awarded for A02. At A-level the student must ask two questions on each card. If they only ask one question arising from the material on the card, the maximum mark that can be awarded for A02 is 4; if they do not ask any question arising from the material on the card the maximum mark that can be awarded is 3.

How long should be spent on the three printed questions and follow-up questions before widening the discussion to other aspects of the sub-theme?

There is no hard and fast rule as evidence for the assessment objectives will be judged across the entire discussion of the sub-theme. There is no requirement to cover aspects of the sub-theme not covered on the card. However, if other aspects of the sub-theme are to be discussed, 3 minutes on the aspect covered on the card can be used a rule of thumb and may encourage opportunities for the student to demonstrate spontaneity and the ability to deal with unpredictable elements.

Are students penalised if the card is not dealt with within the first 3 minutes?

No, evidence for the assessment objectives will be judged across the 6-7 discussion as a whole. Opportunities to demonstrate A04 are likely to focus on the last of the three printed questions and the discussion beyond.

Is the A02 mark judged solely on the student's responses to the printed questions?

No, like the other assessment objectives, the mark for A02 is based on the whole of the discussion and it is therefore anticipated that the examiner will ask supplementary questions about the material on the card. The A02 mark also covers the questions which the student asks the examiner.

Will schools get feedback on the way teachers have conducted the tests?

A Tester performance records will be completed by the examiner and sent to the school only if something the teacher has or has not done has adversely affected the marks available to the students.

Does the preparation time have to be supervised?

Yes, for both AS and A-level the preparation time must be supervised. However, for A-level, visiting examiners will supervise the preparation time and it will be in the same room as the test, just before the test starts. For AS, centres with a visiting examiner must provide an invigilator for the preparation time. For centre-conducted tests the expectation would be that a separate invigilator would supervise the preparation time for AS, but the teacher-examiner would do so for A-level.

Can students make notes during the preparation time?

Yes, for AS and A-level students can make any notes they wish for the discussion of the sub-theme and they may use these notes in the discussion. For A-level students may not make notes for the research project presentation or research project discussion during the preparation time.

Students may use either additional answer sheets that can be used for any subject or the GCE MFL additional answer sheet that is included as an appendix to both the AS and the A-level Instructions for the Conduct of the Exams.

When does marking stop in the new AS tests?

Marking of the discussion of the first sub-theme (ie Part 1) will stop after 7 minutes. Marking of the second sub-theme will stop when the test as a whole has reached 14 minutes.

When does marking stop in the new A-level tests?

Marking of the discussion of the sub-theme stops after 6 minutes. Marking of the presentation of the project stops after 2 minutes. Marking of the discussion of the project stops after 10 minutes.

Will facts given by students which are not related to a target language speaking country simply be ignored when the AO4 mark is being considered?

That's correct; AO4 tests knowledge of the target language speaking country and so only such information can be credited.

How specific does the AO4 knowledge have to be?

Please refer to the marked exemplar work on e-AQA or in the recorded webcast from the Prepare to teach meetings, which is in Getting started on the Plan tab of the relevant web page. The mark scheme for the sample assessments also gives detailed indicative content, showing credit-worthy AO4 points for each specimen card. For AS, please refer also to the speaking test training webcast on the Assess tab of the relevant AS web page.

Does the discussion of the wider sub-theme on the card also need to relate to a target language speaking country?

Yes, the entire discussion of the sub-theme, both the aspects based on the printed questions (and any follow-up questions) and the aspects based on the wider sub-theme must relate to a target language speaking country.

Do students choose sub-themes for discussion in advance?

No, sub-themes and cards are allocated on the day according to the sequence chart; an example is provided in the specimen assessment materials.

Should the discussion of the sub-theme cover other aspects of the sub-theme beyond the aspect covered by the material on the card itself?

The important thing is that there is evidence of the student's ability to develop arguments, justify points of view and draw conclusions based on his/her understanding of the sub-theme. This evidence may come from only the aspect of the sub-theme covered on the card or from across other aspects of the sub-theme also. There is no requirement to cover in the discussion aspects of the sub-theme beyond the one covered on the card and students will be able to access the full mark range without doing so. However, students may be more likely to provide the evidence required across more than one aspect of the sub-theme.

Will the sequence table be the same each year?

No, the sequence table will change each year and will be published in the Examiner's Material.

What if the card is about a country that the student has not studied?

All cards can be accessed regardless of which country or countries students have studied. If a card focuses on a particular country, either the information required by the questions is contained within the card or the question invites the student to bring in information about any target language-speaking country.

What is complex language?

The mark scheme includes examples of complex language for both Paper 2 and Paper 3.

What is a minor error?

The mark scheme includes examples of minor and serious errors for both Paper 2 and Paper 3. In brief, a minor error is one which does not affect communication.

The AS training material states that examiners should not explicitly test comprehension. What does that mean?

Examiners should not ask in the target language, for example, 'What does the word mean?'

Will examiners have to invent their own questions to follow up after the 3 prescribed questions based on student responses in the oral exam at A level?

We will not be providing follow-up questions to develop the discussion of the sub-themes after the 3 prescribed questions on the stimulus cards. We will, however, be providing guidance and exemplar materials for teachers to exemplify the type of questions which may be asked. Full training will be provided for the conduct of the A-level speaking tests.

For full training in the conduct of the AS speaking tests, please refer to the webcast on the Assess tab of the relevant AS web page:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/as-and-a-level/assess/webinar-as-speaking-tests-in-french,-german-and-spanish>

In AS Paper 3 is there a general conversation section?

There is no general conversation in the AS speaking test. The test consists of two stimulus cards, each covering a different sub-theme. Students are given four cards. Two of the cards are from one sub-theme and students choose one of them. Students should choose one of the other two cards given to them. These will be from different sub-themes and not from the same theme as the first two cards. Students should spend between 6 and 7 minutes discussing each card. The students have 15 minutes before the test to prepare the cards. During the preparation time they may not have access to a dictionary.

Will there still be teacher examiners for speaking?

Yes – the arrangements for the speaking test will remain as per the current specification. Teachers will still be able to conduct the speaking tests at their school/college. If you have sufficient numbers of students you may also choose to have a Visiting Examiner. There will be an additional cost attached to this service. All tests will be marked by an AQA examiner.

Will students get a choice of card in the speaking test?

Yes, for AS they will be given four cards. Two will be from one sub-theme and they choose one of these cards for the first discussion. These two cards may come from a sub-theme within the theme Aspects of Society or from a sub-theme within the theme Artistic Culture. Students also choose one of the other two cards given to them. These other two cards will be from the theme not covered in the first discussion. The two cards will be from different sub-themes. The sequence table provided with the assessment material shows which cards to give to which students. For A-level, students will be given two cards, each from a different sub-theme and they choose one. One card will always be from one of the year 1/AS themes and one from the year 2 A-level only themes.

Will an invigilator be needed for the speaking tests?

For the AS test, there is a 15 minute preparation time before the test and an invigilator will be needed to supervise the student during that 15 minute preparation time. At A-level, there is no separate preparation time: the student prepares the card for 5 minutes at the start of the test, supervised by the teacher or examiner conducting the test.

When does the preparation time start?

The preparation time starts when the student is given the cards. The student must both choose which card (or cards at AS) to discuss and also prepare his/her chosen card(s) within the prescribed preparation time. This should ensure that all students have the same length of time to make their choice and prepare the card(s), ensuring that some students are not advantaged or disadvantaged compared to others. We were keen to give students a choice of card and students would be advised not to spend over-long in making their choice.

Where can we find Additional answer sheets for students to make notes on during their preparation time?

There is a GCE MFL additional answer sheet in the Instructions for the conduct of the exams. Either this MFL sheet or an additional answer sheet that can be used for any subject (available from Exams Officers) can be used.

Will the test period be the same as for the current exams?

The test period will be a 5-week window in April-May each year. The test period will be published in the Notes on the exam timetable each year and exact dates will vary from year to year. It is an Ofqual requirement that tests take place during a period of up to 5 weeks during April and May; this requirement is published in Ofqual's GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish).

When does the recording start?

The recording starts at the beginning of the Discussion of the sub-theme i.e. at the start of Part 1 of the test. It does not include the preparation time.

Can the teacher-examiner address students as 'Tu' rather than 'Vous', as 'Du' rather than 'Sie' etc?

The teacher-examiner can use, in each language, whichever form of address students are used to.

Will a discussion lasting less than 6 minutes at AS and less than 5 minutes at A-level be penalised?

There is no system of automatic penalties or capping. However, it is likely that a discussion significantly shorter than the prescribed minimum will be self-penalising as the student is unlikely to include sufficient evidence to meet the descriptor for the top band.

Is the Candidate Authentication Form required for AS?

No, for AS no authentication form is needed.

Does the fact that the Speaking tests are classed as non-exam assessment (NEA) mean that students can carry forward their marks for the Speaking test if they re-take the qualification?

Yes. Due to the Speaking tests being NEA, students will be able to carry forward the marks from the tests if they re-take the qualification (either AS or A-level) and they will not be required to re-take the Speaking test (though they can choose to re-take it, eg if they want to improve their mark). However, results for the written papers cannot be carried forward.

Can the teacher invite a third question from the students during the card-based discussion at A-level if one of the two they asked does not meet the requirements (conjugated verb, eliciting info or opinion)?

Yes. If the student's questions do not fully meet the requirements in respect of asking questions then the teacher-examiner should give the student the chance to rectify that by inviting them to ask a further question. Examples of the sorts of questions students would ask are included in the specimen mark scheme.

Does the question 'What do you think?' or 'What is your opinion?' constitute a question which a student could ask a teacher-examiner?

Yes, provided this question is asked at a point in the discussion where it makes sense and is relevant. This requires a judgement from the student about appropriate timing; they need to have understood the teacher examiner and be able to intervene in a timely way and for this reason it is a creditworthy question.

A-level Paper 3 Speaking

21 to 23 minutes for the oral examination with the 5 minute preparation included. Does this mean that the recording will be between 16 to 18 minutes?

The A-level speaking test will last 21-23 minutes including 5 minutes preparation time at the start of the test, supervised

by the teacher or examiner conducting the test. The test itself will last 16-18 minutes. Further detailed guidance on the details of timing the tasks for the AS and A-level is provided in an Instructions for French, German and Spanish speaking tests at aqa.org.uk.

Discussion of sub-theme

How many cards does the student discuss at A-level?

One. The student chooses one of two cards offered by the examiner. One of the two cards will always be from the Year 1/AS themes and the other from the A-level only ie Year 2 themes.

Can the teacher see the questions the student intends to ask (and has prepared) in order to avoid asking the student those same questions and leaving the student stuck with no questions to ask?

No. Teacher-examiners should be in a position to manage exchanges so that if the student asks a question they were thinking of asking the student, they can ask a different question. It is highly unlikely that the teacher-examiner will ask the student a question which the student had intended to ask the teacher-examiner: the student can see the three printed questions and obviously cannot ask those; any further questions from the teacher-examiner to the student should follow up on points the student has made so they are very unlikely to be the sorts of questions the student would prepare to ask the teacher-examiner.

Individual Research Project (IRP)

Is there a Candidate Authentication Form as well as an Individual research project form?

The authentication form and IRP form have been combined onto one single form. This will be called the Candidate Record Form (CRF) and will be available on the website in due course.

Can the student amend their copy of the CRF after handing it in?

It is essential that the version of the form which the student uses in the test is identical to the version the examiner is using. Therefore the form should be stored securely in the school/college when the student hands it in and that version of the form should be used in the test. A copy should be made, so that both the examiner and the student have exactly the same version.

Does the limitation on teacher feedback on the IRP mean that teachers can't feed back on performance in the mock exam and help student improve for the real test?

No. As the Instructions state, teachers cannot give feedback on the presentation. However, they can give feedback on the discussion. The presentation is a 2 minute monologue worth just 5 marks and only assessed for A04 (Good knowledge, reasonable knowledge etc) so if they get less than 5 it is obvious that they need to put more evidence of knowledge ie A04 into the presentation. The discussion is more complex, testing A01, A03 and A04 and out of 30 marks. The teacher can give feedback on any mock/draft/practice discussion. However this cannot be specific feedback on the language of the discussion. It can be general advice on the language of the discussion. General advice is defined in the specification as guidance that the teacher would include in the general teaching and learning of the class and which would apply to all projects rather than relating to an individual project and tailored to a specific student or group of students). The student cannot know exactly which questions will be asked in the discussion in the real exam.

Can the teacher support students in the preparation of the presentation of their IRP during the course of their general teaching? Can they include materials relating to topics chosen by their students, together with any relevant grammar points?

The list of what teachers can and cannot do is in the specification and in the Instructions for the Speaking Test on the website (along with the specimen assessments for Paper 3). Teachers cannot provide specific advice on the language of the student's presentation or discussion; they can only provide general advice on the type of language which students might use. This means that they can cover material which is general enough to cover any research subject/title but they cannot cover the language relevant to any particular research subject/title. In relation to content (as opposed to language), teachers cannot provide students with material they have specifically designed for a

student's project or give the student specific source materials. They can, however, suggest sources of reference (eg books, magazines, websites).

Can the foreign language assistant help the students with the language of their IRP?

The guidance in the specification detailing the ways in which teachers are and are not permitted to assist their student also applies to others, including foreign language assistants and private tutors. Students are required to sign the candidate record form to confirm that they have had no additional help beyond that permitted by the scheme of assessment and teachers have to sign to confirm that the work is, to the best of their knowledge, solely that of the student.

Should the teacher-examiner be an expert in the chosen research topic of their students?

No, this is not necessary. The role of the teacher-examiner is to ask questions which enable the student to show what they learned through their research ie to talk about their findings.

Will students be penalised if they choose the same research topic?

It's a requirement of the specification that students carry out individual research and so whilst several students could choose the same general area for research, each student in a school or college must have their own particular focus or slant on the topic and conduct some individual research. If these requirements are not met, students are at risk of being disadvantaged.

Should the project title be in English or in the target language?

It should be in English; the only target language on the Candidate Record Form should be any target language publications used as sources (eg titles of articles, titles of books, films). However, there may also be some target language within the project title eg 'The role of the STASI in the film *Das Leben der Anderen*'. Teachers can correct the language (both the English and target language) in the project title.

Can students take into the room some kind of artefact?

No. The only permitted material is the completed Candidate Record form.

Do the speaking independent research project titles need to be approved in advance of the speaking tests?

No, there is no need to have the titles approved in advance but teachers can check students' titles with their NEA adviser if they wish. Any subject/question of interest to the student can be chosen provided it is not the same film or one of the same books that they use for their written exam and provided it is in the context of a target-language speaking country. Examples of possible subjects for research can be found on alcab.org.uk and in the Guidance on the individual research project at aqa.org.uk Students must provide in advance a list of up to 10 sources and/or headings to indicate to the person conducting the speaking test the scope of their research.

Can I ask my IRP adviser to comment on mock discussions?

No. The IRP advisers can discuss the application of the mark scheme with reference only to marked exemplar tests published on our website. They are not permitted to comment on any other student work beyond advising on the suitability of project titles which students may have devised..

Will there be guidance on the types of questions to ask on the project?

Yes, the Instructions for the speaking tests on the Assess tab of the A-level web page gives examples of suitable questions to indicate the nature and level of questions that would be suitable.

Could a student write about a particular film in AS Paper 2 and use that film for their IRP the following year, provided that they studied a different film (or a second book) for A-level Paper 2 and did not use the film studied for AS Paper 2 in A-Level Paper 2?

Yes. Because AS is a totally separate qualification students could in theory use the same book/film for AS Paper 2 and for their IRP. However, in practice it is likely that the extent of teacher input when the AS film/book was covered in class will have exceeded what is permitted for a research project. For the project, the teacher is not permitted to give the student any resource specifically designed for their project or to give feedback orally or in writing on any written notes, drafts or preparatory work for the student's presentation or discussion. It is highly likely that this type of teacher input will have taken place in relation to the film/book studied for AS. If so, that book/film is not eligible as the basis for the research project.

Can the research project be a second film from a director whose film students are studying for the written paper?

Yes.

Could students do their project on a topic which they had covered in one or both of their Paper 2 works and/or under a sub-theme in the specification?

Yes, overlap of this kind is not a problem. For example, a student could research for their project an aspect of immigration as well as studying for Paper 2 two works covering immigration. The only constraint is that students cannot research for their project the same works that they have studied for Paper 2.

Can several students study the same subject and work together on the research?

If several students do choose the same general area, they must each have a different title and must do some individual research.

Does the project have to be one of the themes in the specification?

The research project may be linked to one of the themes or to a book or film, but need not be. The only condition is that the project is linked to a country where the language is spoken.

Will information contained in a textbook be discounted in the purposes of marking A04?

Information published in textbooks will not automatically be discounted. However, students are required to carry out individual research so we would expect evidence that students had, in their research, gone beyond what could be accommodated in classroom teaching or in textbooks. Students are required to list at least two sources on the Candidate record form, of which one must be an online source.

There is currently a recommendation of 15 hours for the cultural topic at A2. Will there be a similar recommendation for the independent research project?

We won't be specifically recommending a certain number of hours. What we suggest is to look at the weighting that the Individual Research Project carries in relation to the assessment as a whole and use this as a guide.

Will there be an opportunity to send individual student research topic titles to AQA to be sure they will fulfil the requirements?

Yes, teachers can send titles to their NEA adviser for checking.

Can students use their individual research project for the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)?

No. In EPQ there are some strict rules around dual accreditation. As a result students cannot use the same research from their languages A-level in their EPQ. However, if students wanted to use the topic from their A-level as a starting point and conduct research that extends and develops beyond this, then that would be acceptable.

Can students select for their IRP a topic they are studying in another subject area eg history?

Yes, provided it meets the requirement to relate to a target language speaking country. The restriction around the EPQ is due to rules about dual accreditation which are specific to EPQ.

What about using the same IRP topic in two languages?

The requirement for the IRP to be embedded in a target language speaking country means that even if the topic area is the same, the research ie sources and findings, will be different and it will effectively be a different project. There is therefore no reason why the student should not research the same area in relation to two different languages where relevant. In the same way, some of the sub-themes in our specifications are prescribed for more than language and the content is different due to the different target language speaking contexts.

The specification states that teachers cannot give feedback on the presentation of the IRP. Could someone else give feedback?

No, no one can give feedback on the student's presentation except to tell them if it exceeds 2 minutes.

Will there be a penalty if the presentation is shorter than two minutes?

There will be no automatic penalty. However, it is unlikely that the student will be able to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding of their chosen area of study in less than two minutes.

Can teachers give feedback on a different presentation in the mock exam from the one the student will deliver in the real exam?

Yes, but only if the presentation in the mock exam is based on a completely different subject or theme from the one on which the student's presentation in the real exam will be based. No feedback can be given to the student on the presentation they are preparing for their real exam, other than to let them know if it exceeds 2 minutes' duration.

Timetable

Will AS Paper 1 and AS Paper 2 be examined on the same day?

No, the two written papers will be scheduled for different days. See published exam timetable for details.

Our accredited AS and A-level specifications are available to download on our website:
aqa.org.uk/languages

Sign up at aqa.org.uk/languagesupdates to make sure you get the latest news on exam change.

Contact us

We're here to support you throughout the exam changes and beyond.

- Visit aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/as-and-a-level
- Call 01423 534381
- Email mfl@aca.org.uk