



# Your guide to understanding the new French (8652), German (8662) and Spanish (8692) GCSEs

First teaching from September 2024, and first assessment summer 2026.

# Students at the heart of our assessments

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### Why choose AQA

Ready to teach the new GCSE French, German and Spanish specifications? With AQA, you are. Having listened to hundreds of teachers like you, our specifications have been designed based on your feedback - and then trialled with real students, so you know the specification really does meet teachers' and learners' needs.

### Students at the heart of our assessments

All students should be able to succeed, irrespective of their background or experiences - that's why we've designed accessible assessments - to help every learner reach their full potential. Created for learners of all abilities, our specifications will help your students build their knowledge and understanding, while supporting you to deliver well-resourced lessons - and the results your students deserve.

### Support and resources

Listening to hundreds of teachers means our offering is tailored to you and the needs of your learners. Giving you everything you need, from new and updated resources to regular training and events to prepare you for first teaching. Support doesn't end there - our Curriculum Team is only ever a phone call away - ready to answer your questions.

### Expertise

Many of us are and have been teachers. We've all been learners. Our team of MFL experts are with you every step of the way through first teaching and beyond, ensuring you have everything you need to confidently teach the new specification. As the UK's most chosen awarding body, we have the largest community. So, whether you're looking for experiences from schools like yours or a different perspective, you're in good company.

### Qualification aims

- Attracting students of all abilities to languages.
- Showing students the value of language learning as a life-long skill.
- Celebrating the cultural diversity of languages in the countries and communities around the world.
- Encouraging students to broaden their horizons, stepping beyond their own experiences and learning more about the countries and communities where the language is spoken.
- Ensuring assessments are clear and accessible and that our content is engaging and relevant providing a solid foundation for further language learning or employment.



I love that learning another language allows you to connect with people from different cultures and communities. It allows you to see the world through someone else's eyes.

Sadaf - Curriculum Support Manager, MFL



The training and development materials provided by AQA in order to support HODs and teachers are always of the highest quality and the support on offer from the AQA MFL team is consistently excellent.

MFL Head of Department



# Why choose AQA

## Languages GCSEs that keep things straightforward for students.

### Listening

- Want Language GCSEs that keep things straightforward for students? We've made sure our listening paper is kept to the current length to reduce cognitive demand for learners, and changed the tasks that students told us felt confusing.
- Looking out for your learners, we've added checking time at the end of the Listening test.

### Speaking

- Giving your learners more opportunities to gain marks, our dictation rewards communication of meaning as well as accuracy. Our dictation has marks for both AO1 and AO3, so that half the marks are awarded for how well students have communicated the meaning of the spoken extracts as well as how accurately they have transcribed them. This means that students who struggle with accuracy can still be successful in this task.
- Don't worry about your school's facilities or resources - our speaking tests are easily deliverable in all schools.

- Learners can make unlimited notes during their speaking preparation time.
- All role-plays are based on informal social conversations. Students told us they find transactional role plays harder - so all our role plays are informal social conversations between friends, based on the topics in the specification.
- For the Photo card discussion, teachers can use questions entirely of their own choice, tailored to the interests and attainment levels of their learners to maximise achievement. Something familiar, and they have the vocabulary and grammar needed to succeed.

### Writing

- Did you know our assessment model gives the highest proportion of AO3 marks of any of the exam boards to the writing tasks? It's much easier for students to check grammar and accuracy in Writing and correct work than it is in Speaking, so this allows students chances of scoring higher marks. This change has also resulted in a fully equal split of AO2 and AO3 in Paper 4, so the final assessment model gives a very good balance across the four papers in terms of allocation of the different assessment objectives across the tasks.



Like many people, having inspirational teachers makes a huge difference and that was absolutely the case for me. I loved my French and German lessons.

Judith Rowland-Jones - Head of Curriculum, MFL

# Key resources and support

We'll be there every step of the way, supporting you in the run up to first teaching in September 2024 and beyond to ensure you feel clear and confident on the new requirements. We've got everything you need to prepare for first teaching:

- **Sample question papers and mark schemes** for the new specification. A second set of sample papers will be released on Centre Services in 2024.
- **The item commentaries that accompany our sample papers** help you understand the design of each task, including the content being tested as well as the accessibility considerations we have put in place to support students.
- Filter and create your own vocabulary lists, specific to your teaching needs with our **subject-specific interactive vocabulary resource**.

[Download our resource roadmap to see when all of the new and updated resources will be available.](#)



Growing up, I loved that we spoke more than one language to communicate in my home. Bangla kept me connected to my roots. It made me want to connect with my multi-cultural community even more, learn a new language and discover different cultures. Being bi-lingual has allowed me to build deep, meaningful relationships and be more open to exploring the world. I love being able to carry a bit of "home" with me everywhere I go.

Marjana Begum - Curriculum Administrator, MFL





We leave a spark, we leave that trail in them that wants them to go out and discover the world and I think that's why students love languages.

Adam – Teacher

# Assessment structure at a glance

## Paper 1: Listening

### What's assessed

- Understanding and responding to spoken extracts comprising the defined vocabulary and grammar for each tier
- Dictation of short, spoken extracts

### How it's assessed

- Written exam: 35 minutes (Foundation tier), 45 minutes (Higher tier)
- 40 marks (Foundation tier), 50 marks (Higher tier)
- 25% of GCSE

Recording controlled by the invigilator with built-in repetitions and pauses.

Each exam includes 5 minutes' reading time at the start of the question paper before the listening material is played and 2 minutes at the end of the recording for students to check their work.

### Questions

- Section A – listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally (32 marks at Foundation tier and 40 marks at Higher tier)
- Section B – dictation where students transcribe short sentences, including a small number of words from outside the prescribed vocabulary list (8 marks at Foundation tier and 10 marks at Higher tier)

## Paper 2: Speaking

### What's assessed

- Speaking using clear and comprehensible language to undertake a Role-play
- Carry out a Reading aloud task
- Talk about visual stimuli

### How it's assessed

- Non-exam assessment (NEA)
- 7–9 minutes (Foundation tier) + 15 minutes' supervised preparation time
- 10–12 minutes (Higher tier) + 15 minutes' supervised preparation time
- 50 marks (for each of Foundation tier and Higher tier)
- 25% of GCSE

### Questions

The format is the same at Foundation tier and Higher tier, but with different stimulus materials for the Role-play and the Reading aloud task. For the Photo card task, the same photos are used at both tiers.

- Role-play – 10 marks (recommended to last between 1 and 1.5 minutes at both tiers)
- Reading aloud task and short conversation – 15 marks (recommended to last in total between 2 and 2.5 minutes at Foundation tier and between 3 and 3.5 minutes at Higher tier)
  - Reading aloud task: minimum 35 words of text at Foundation tier and 50 words at Higher tier
  - Short unprepared conversation
- Photo card discussion – 25 marks (recommended to last between 4 and 5 minutes in total at Foundation tier, and between 6 and 7 minutes in total at Higher tier)
  - Response to the content of the photos on the card (recommended to last approximately 1 minute at Foundation tier and approximately 1.5 minutes at Higher tier)
  - Unprepared conversation (recommended to last between 3 and 4 minutes at Foundation tier and between 4.5 and 5.5 minutes at Higher tier)

## Paper 3: Reading

### What's assessed

- Understanding and responding to written texts which focus predominantly on the vocabulary and grammar at each tier
- Inferring plausible meanings of single words when they are embedded in written sentences
- Translating from the target language into English

### How it's assessed

- Written exam: 45 minutes (Foundation tier), 1 hour (Higher tier)
- 50 marks (for each of Foundation tier and Higher tier)
- 25% of GCSE

### Questions

- Section A – reading comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally (40 marks)
- Section B – translation of sentences from the target language into English, minimum of 35 words at Foundation tier and 50 words at Higher tier (10 marks)

## Paper 4: Writing

### What's assessed

- Writing text in the language in a lexically and grammatically accurate way in response to simple and familiar stimuli
- Translating from English into the target language

### How it's assessed

- Written exam: 1 hour 10 minutes (Foundation tier), 1 hour 15 minutes (Higher tier)
- 50 marks (for each of Foundation tier and Higher tier)
- 25% of GCSE

### Questions

#### Foundation tier

- Question 1 – student produces five short sentences in response to a photo (10 marks)
- Question 2 – student produces a short piece of writing in response to five compulsory bullet points, approximately 50 words in total (10 marks)
- Question 3 – student completes five short grammar tasks (5 marks)
- Question 4 – translation of sentences from English into the target language, minimum 35 words in total (10 marks)
- Question 5 (overlap question) – student produces a piece of writing in response to three compulsory bullet points, approximately 90 words in total. There is a choice from two questions (15 marks)

#### Higher tier

- Question 1 – translation of sentences from English into the target language, minimum 50 words in total (10 marks)
- Question 2 (overlap question) – student produces a piece of writing in response to three compulsory bullet points, approximately 90 words in total. There is a choice from two questions (15 marks)
- Question 3 – open-ended writing task (student responds to two compulsory bullet points, producing approximately 150 words in total). There is a choice from two questions (25 marks)



Studying languages has helped me to learn more about the wider world outside of my own experiences, and to connect with people from so many different backgrounds and cultures. I'm so grateful for the lifelong friends I've met through learning languages.

Chloe Burrows – Curriculum Support Manager, Languages

# Contact us

## Meet the team

Our Curriculum team will help and support you every step of the way during the transition to the new specifications to ensure you feel confident preparing your students for the new exams.



**Judith Rowland-Jones**  
Head of Curriculum,  
MFL



**Ian Rodmell**  
Curriculum Manager,  
MFL



**Sadaf Najib**  
Curriculum Support Manager,  
MFL



**Chloe Burrows**  
Curriculum Support Manager,  
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**Marjana Begum**  
Curriculum Administrator,  
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## Contact our team

8am–5pm, Monday to Friday

Tel: 01423 534 381

Email: [mfl@aqa.org.uk](mailto:mfl@aqa.org.uk)



I believe the new GCSE is going to bring greater clarity to us as language teachers, but also to support us in building the linguistic mastery of our students so they have a greater chance of success.

**Juliet - Teacher**