



GCSE languages

The accredited specification



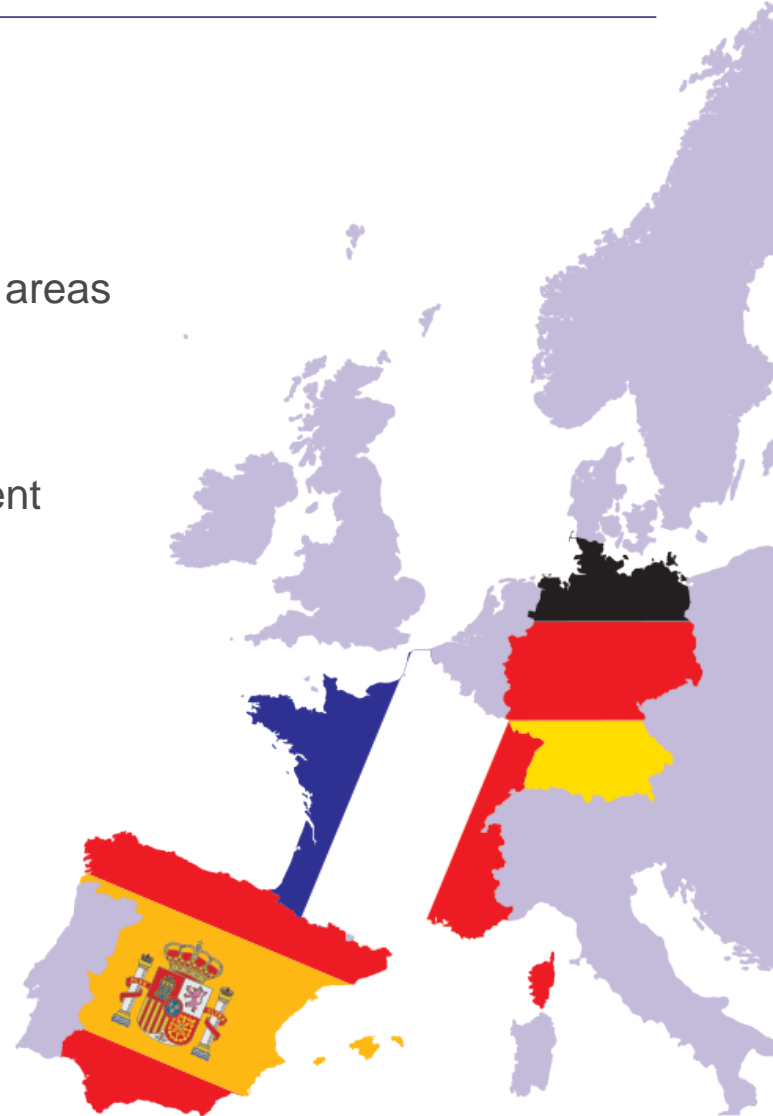
Structure of new specification

- Linear – all exams at the end of the course
- Four papers, each covering one skill:
 - Paper 1 Listening
 - Paper 2 Speaking
 - Paper 3 Reading
 - Paper 4 Writing
- All assessments set and marked by AQA
- 25% equal weighting for each skill
- Tiered papers in all four skills
- **But** students must sit either Foundation Tier **or** Higher Tier in **all four skills** – no mixing and matching as in current specification
- New grading system – 1-9 (with 9 being highest grade available)
- Foundation tier covers grades 1-5, Higher tier covers grades 4-9 (allowed grade 3 on Higher is awarded for students just failing to achieve grade 4)



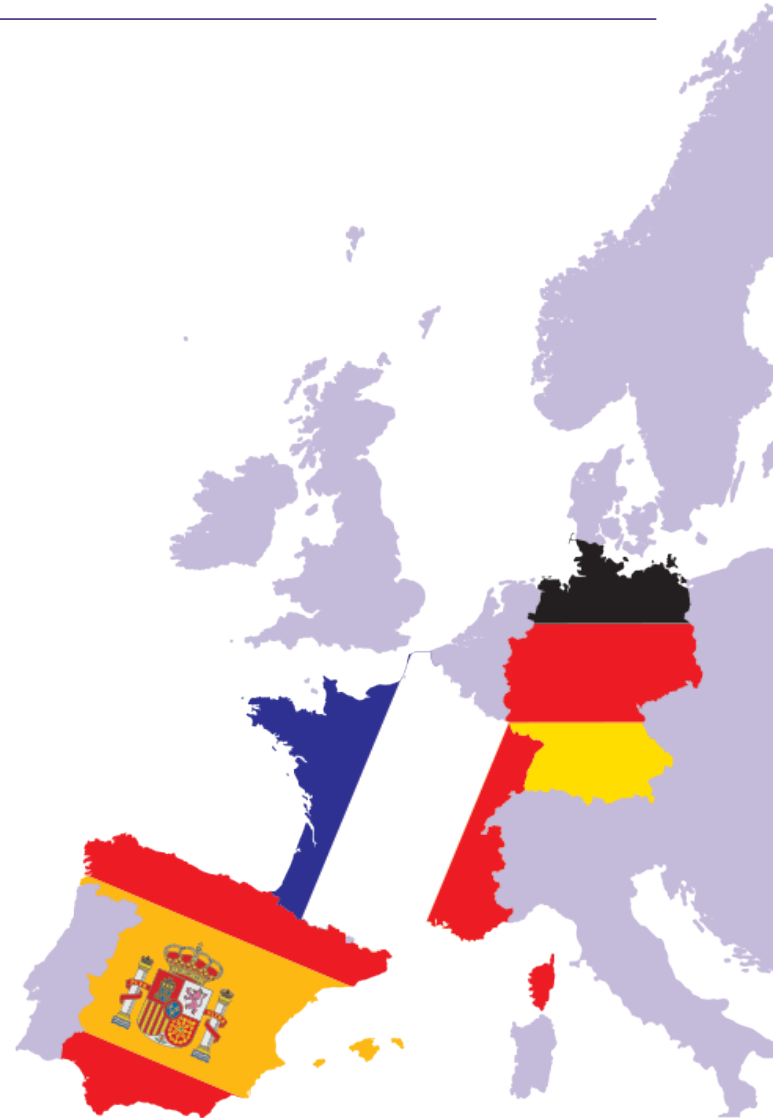
Compulsory themes from subject content

- **Theme 1** - Identity and culture
- **Theme 2** - Local, national, international and global areas of interest
- **Theme 3** - Current and future study and employment



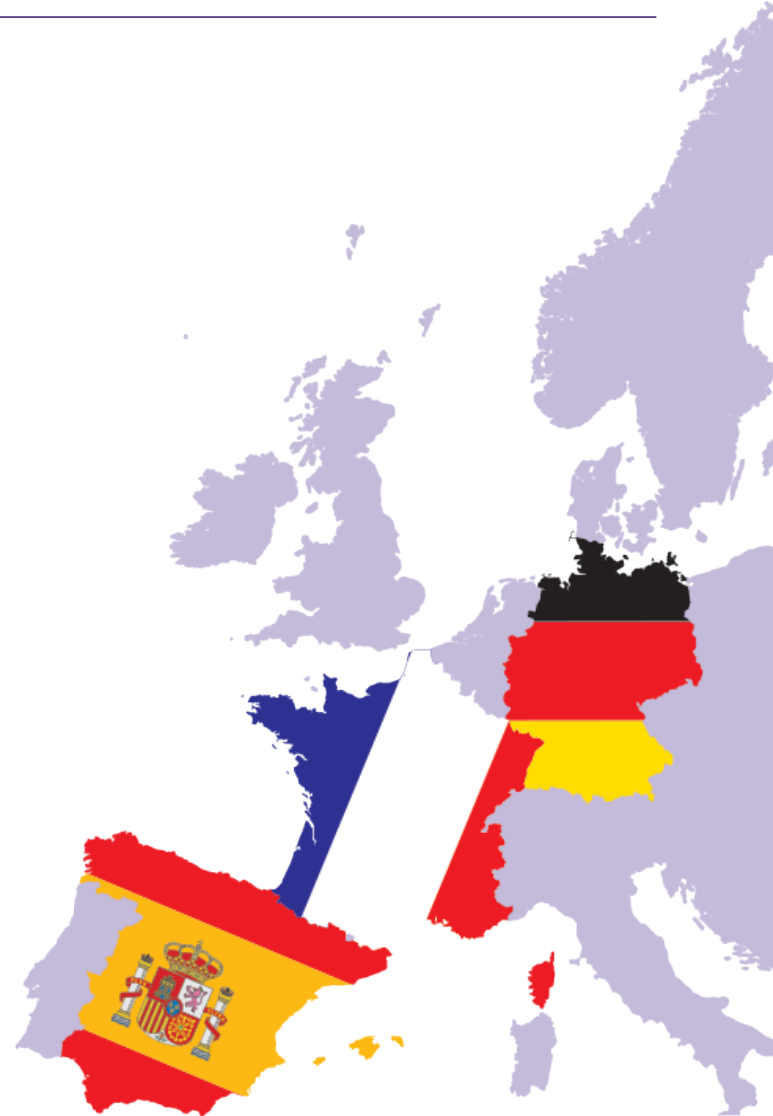
Identity and culture

- **Me, my family and friends**
 - relationships with family and friends
 - marriage/partnerships
- **Technology in everyday life**
 - social media
 - mobile technology
- **Free time activities**
 - music
 - cinema and TV
 - food and eating out
 - sport
- **Customs and festivals in target language-speaking countries/communities**



Local, national, international and global areas of interest

- **Home, town, neighbourhood and region**
- **Social issues**
 - charity/voluntary work
 - healthy/unhealthy living
- **Global issues**
 - the environment
 - poverty/homelessness
- **Travel and tourism**



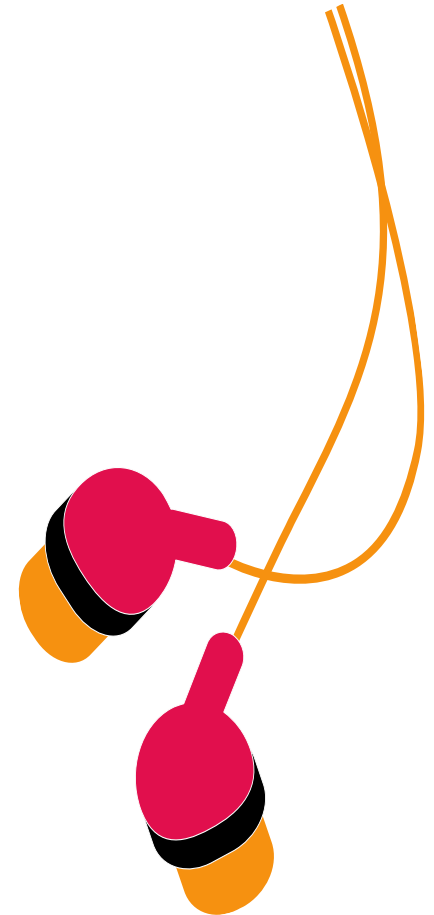
Current and future study and employment

- **My studies**
- **Life at school/college**
- **Education post-16**
- **Jobs, career choices and ambitions**



Paper 1: Listening

- Length of exams:
 - 35 minutes at Foundation Tier
 - 45 minutes at Higher Tier
 - includes five minutes' reading time at start of exam for each paper
- Pauses built into recording
- 40 marks at Foundation Tier
- 50 marks at Higher Tier
- 25% of the total GCSE marks
- Tasks ensure sufficient progression from Key Stage 3
- Contexts for the questions ensure authenticity
- Wide variety of different types of spoken language is included
- Detailed mark schemes are produced.



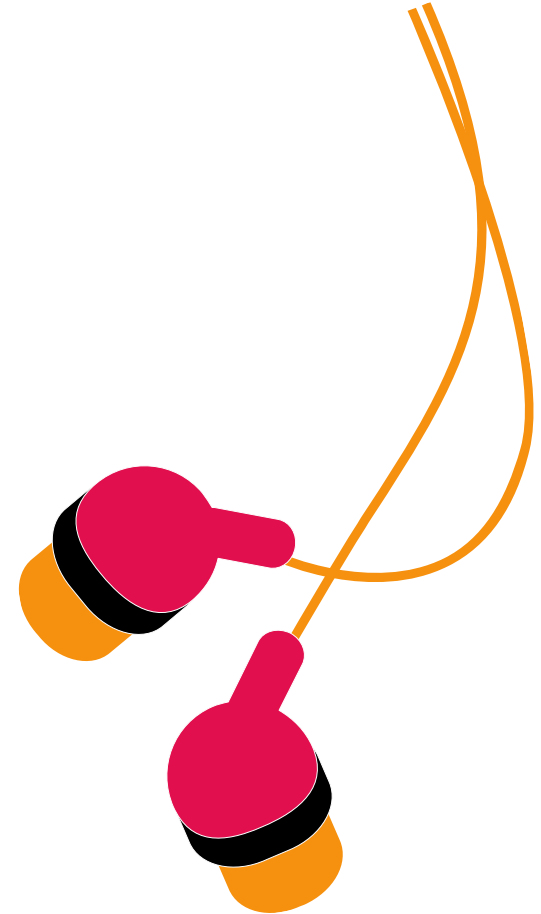
Paper 1: Listening

20% of the questions and answers are in the target language (to meet the new regulatory requirement for 20-30% of questions and answers to be in the target language)

Format of question papers (Foundation and Higher Tier)

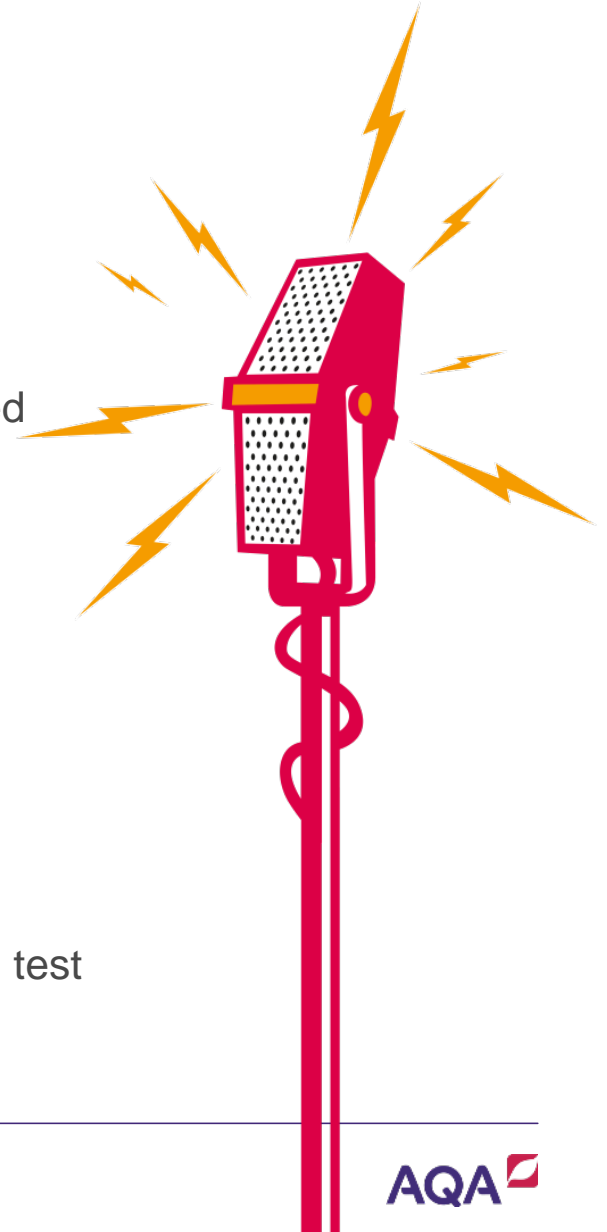
- **Section A** – questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally (Foundation Tier 32 marks, Higher Tier 40 marks)
- **Section B** – questions in the target language, to be answered in the target language or non-verbally (Foundation Tier 8 marks, Higher Tier 10 marks)

Written target language answers will be **marked for communication only**, not quality of language.



Paper 2: Speaking

- Tests conducted and recorded by the teacher within a specified five week period in April-May
- All tests set and marked by AQA examiners
- **Foundation Test:** 7-9 minutes and 12 minutes' supervised preparation time
- **Higher Test:** 10-12 minutes and 12 minutes' supervised preparation time
- 25% of the total GCSE marks
- Teachers will have access to the confidential material via Exams Officer up to three working days in advance of the test period to do their preparation

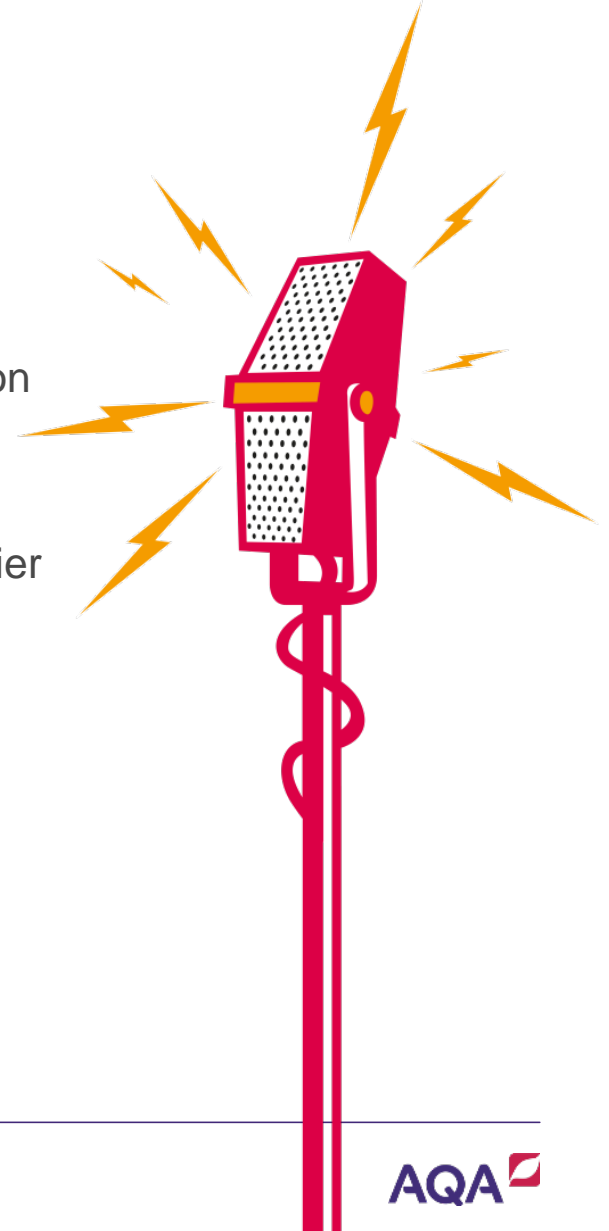


Paper 2: Speaking

Test will consist of three parts in this order:

- **Part 1** - role-play - two mins (15 marks)
- **Part 2** - discussion of photo card - two mins at Foundation Tier and three mins at Higher Tier (15 marks)
- **Part 3** - general conversation – 3-5 mins at Foundation Tier and 5-7 mins at Higher Tier (30 marks)

Total marks = 60



Paper 2: Speaking

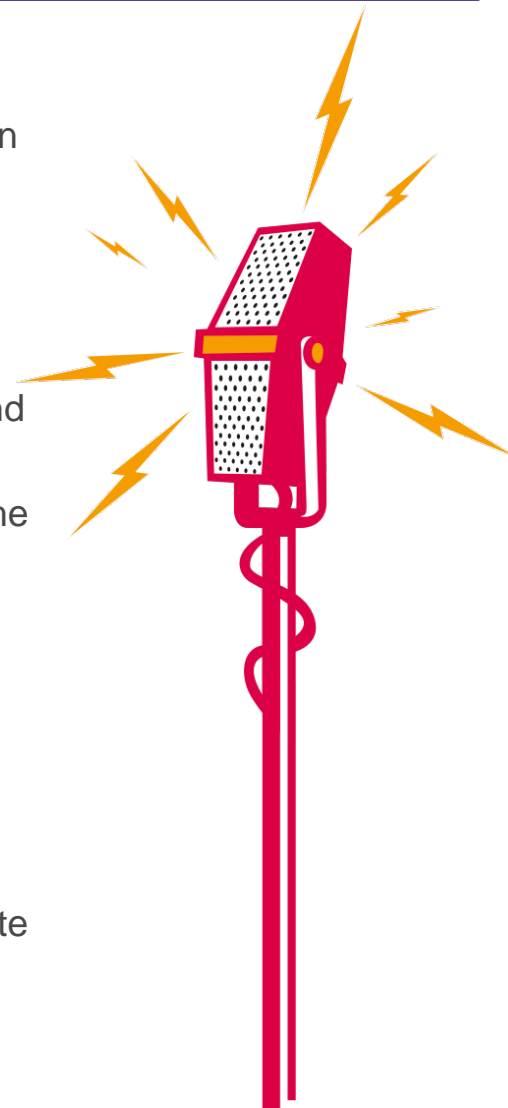
Allocation of marks across the speaking test

	Communication	Knowledge and use of language	Range and accuracy of language	Pron and intonation	Spontaneity and fluency	Total
Role play	10	5				15
Photo card	15					15
Gen Conv	10		10	5	5	30
Total	35	5	10	5	5	60

Paper 2: Speaking

Part 1 - role-play

- Nine role-plays for French, German, Spanish will be set at each Tier in every series (six will be set for small entry languages)
- One card per student (no choice of card)
- Instructions to students are in English. Scene setting and tasks are in the target language at both tiers
- Each role-play has five tasks which includes an unpredictable task and a task where the student is required to ask a question
- Students prepare their responses on an Additional Answer Sheet in the preparation time and can use these notes during the test
- They can write unlimited notes and a script if they wish
- The role-play will take approx two minutes at each Tier
- Teacher's role is scripted at both Tiers
- AQA specifies sequence of role-plays (in Teacher's Booklet)
- Assessed for Communication and Knowledge and use of language
- Mix of formal and informal role-play scenarios requiring the appropriate form of address
- Exemplification of application of marking criteria is included in the published mark scheme



Paper 2: Speaking

Role-plays

Instructions to candidates

- Your teacher will play the part of the receptionist and will speak first.
- You should address the receptionist as *vous*.
- When you see this – ! – you will have to respond to something you have not prepared.
- When you see this – ? – you will have to ask a question.

Paper 2: Speaking

Foundation tier – candidate role

Vous parlez avec le/la réceptionniste d'un hôtel en France.

- Chambre - combien de personnes.
- !
- Sorte de chambre (**deux** détails).
- Manger - où.
- ? Aller en ville – transport.

Paper 2: Speaking

Foundation tier – teacher's role

- You begin the role-play.
- You should address the candidate as *vous*.
- You may change the target language phrases given below **only** if the candidate's response makes them inappropriate.
- Remember that if you supply key vocabulary, candidates cannot be rewarded for it.

Paper 2: Speaking

Higher tier – candidate role

Estás hablando con tu amigo español/tu amiga española sobre la salud y la comida.

- Tú – persona sana o no.
- !
- Tu comida preferida y **una** razón.
- Tu última vez en un restaurante (**dos** detalles).
- ? El gimnasio.

Paper 2: Speaking

Role-play – Assessment criteria

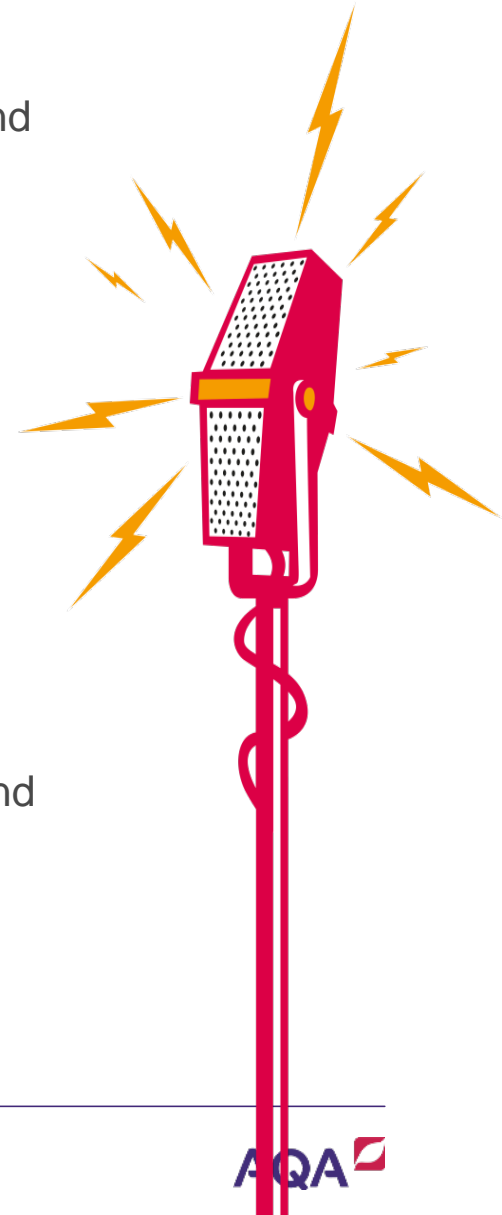
Mark	Communication
2	The message is conveyed without ambiguity.
1	The message is partially conveyed or conveyed with some ambiguity.
0	No part of the message is conveyed.

Mark	Knowledge and use of language
5	Very good knowledge and use of language.
4	Good knowledge and use of language.
3	Reasonable knowledge and use of language.
2	Limited knowledge and use of language.
1	Poor knowledge and use of language.
0	No language produced is worthy of credit.

Paper 2: Speaking

Part 2 – discussion of photo card

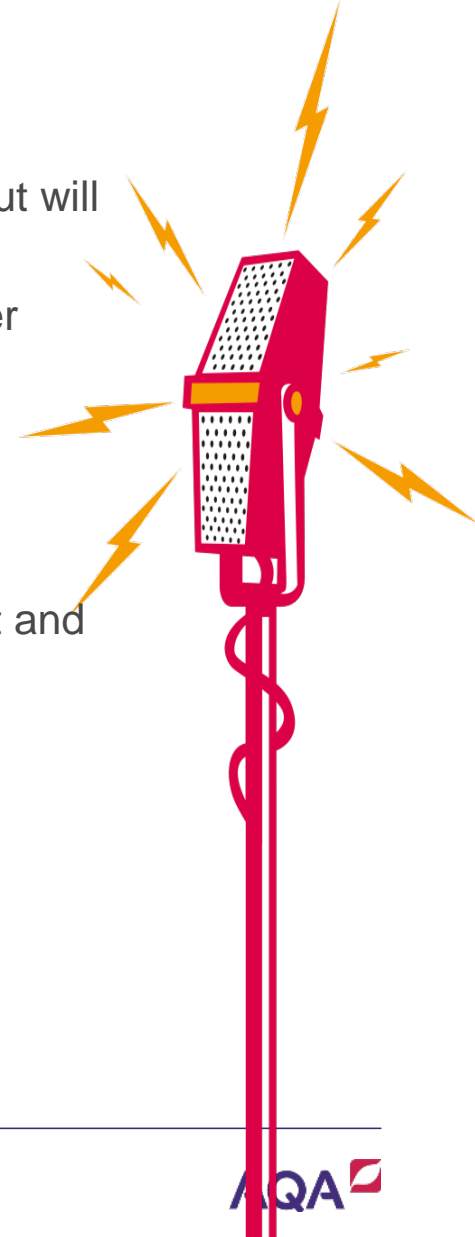
- Nine photo cards will be set in each series for French, German and Spanish (six will be set for small entry languages)
- One card per student (no choice of card)
- Photos are the same at Foundation and Higher Tiers
- Black and white photos in live exams
- Student's card contains three of the five questions which will be asked so the student can prepare their responses during the preparation time and use these notes in the test
- First question always the same – what is there in the photo?
- At Foundation tier, one question on the student's card will be in a tense other than the present
- The discussion will take approx two minutes at Foundation Tier and three minutes at Higher Tier (must be timed)
- Teacher asks questions as provided in Teacher's material
- AQA will specify sequence of photo cards (in Teacher's booklet)
- Assessed for Communication only



Paper 2: Speaking

Part 3 – General Conversation

- Based on the two Themes not covered in the photo card
- Student will nominate the first **Theme** (not topic) for discussion, but will not know the questions which will be asked
- No requirement to cover a specific number of topics/sub-topics per Theme
- 3-5 mins at Foundation and 5-7 mins at Higher (must be timed)
- Suggested questions covering full ability range provided for each Theme in the Teacher's Booklet – not compulsory
- Students are required to ask a question during this part of the test and this can be at any point. **NB:** There is a 1 mark penalty for Communication if a student fails to ask a question
- Assessed for:
 - Communication – 10 marks
 - Range and accuracy of language - 10 marks
 - Pronunciation and intonation – 5 marks
 - Spontaneity and fluency – 5 marks



Paper 2: Speaking

Sequencing table for Speaking tests

Candidate Order	Role play	Candidate's Chosen Conversation Theme	Photo card	Candidate's Second Conversation Theme
1	4	Theme 1	H (Theme 2)	Theme 3
		Theme 2	I (Theme 3)	Theme 1
		Theme 3	G (Theme 1)	Theme 2
2	9	Theme 1	F (Theme 3)	Theme 2
		Theme 2	B (Theme 1)	Theme 3
		Theme 3	D (Theme 2)	Theme 1

Paper 3: Reading

- Length of exams
 - 45 minutes at Foundation Tier
 - 1 hour at Higher Tier
- 60 marks (for each of Foundation and Higher)
- 25% of the total GCSE marks
- Tasks ensure sufficient progression from Key Stage 3
- Contexts and format of the tasks ensure authenticity
- Detailed mark schemes produced



Paper 3: Reading

New aspects

- 30% of questions and answers at each Tier in the target language (to meet regulatory requirement for 30-40% of questions and answers to be in the target language)
- Translation from target language into English (to meet regulatory requirement - minimum 35 words at Foundation Tier and 50 words at Higher Tier)
- Each paper contains literary extracts – adapted and abridged as appropriate (to meet new regulatory requirement for the inclusion of literary texts as a stimulus). Mixture of contemporary and historical sources will be used
- Literary texts are the same as any other stimulus on the question paper – all of the information required to answer the questions is included in the text
- Words can be ‘glossed’ if necessary



Paper 3: Reading

Format of question papers (Foundation and Higher Tier)

- **Section A** – questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally (33 marks at each Tier)
- **Section B** – questions in the target language, to be answered in the target language or non-verbally (18 marks at each Tier)
- **Section C** – translation of a short passage from the target language into English (9 marks at each Tier)

Written target language answers will be marked **for communication only**, not quality of language.



Paper 3: Reading

Mark scheme: Translation

Qu		Accept	Reject	Mark
15	Il y a un centre commercial	There is a shopping / commercial centre / mall		1
	dans ma ville.	in my town / city.	village	1
	Le samedi, j'aime	On /Every Saturday/ Saturdays, I like	The Saturday	1
	faire les magasins avec ma copine.	to go / going to the shops / shopping with my (girl)friend.		1
	Récemment, j'ai acheté	Recently, I bought		1
	un nouveau portable.	a new mobile (phone) / smartphone.		1
	C'était trop cher.	It was too expensive / dear.		1
	Je ne sais pas si	I don't / do not know if		1
	on va sortir la semaine prochaine.	we are going to / we will go out next week.	one	1

Paper 4: Writing

- Length of exams
 - 1 hour at Foundation Tier
 - 1 hour 15 minutes at Higher Tier
- 50 marks at Foundation Tier
- 60 marks at Higher Tier
- 25% of the total GCSE marks
- Overlap question aimed at grades 4-5 is identical (Foundation Q4 and Higher Q1)

New requirement for translation from English into target language at both tiers (minimum 35 words at Foundation and 50 words at Higher)

Tasks at both tiers are set in the target language (except for the translations)



Paper 4: Writing

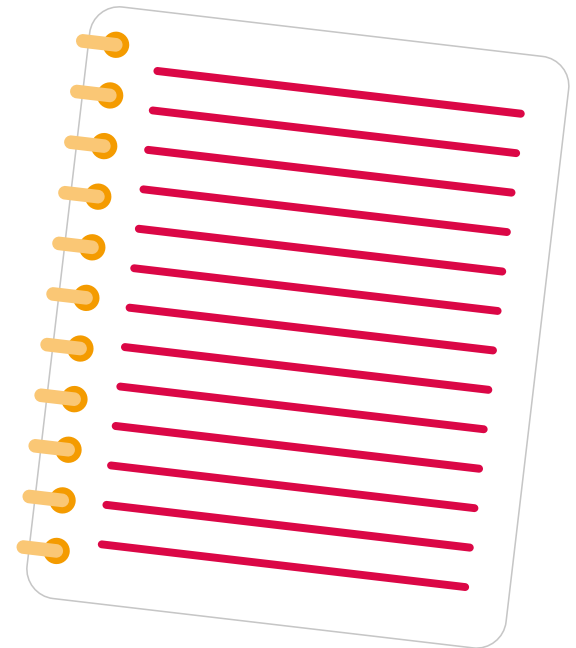
Allocation of marks across the Foundation Tier Writing test

	Communication	Content	Quality of language	Conveying key messages	App of grammatical knowledge of language and structures	Total
Q1	8					8
Q2		10	6			16
Q3				5	5	10
Q4		10	6			16
Total	8	20	12	5	5	50

Paper 4: Writing

Structure of Foundation Tier question paper

- **Question 1** – student produces four short sentences in response to a black and white stimulus photo (8 marks)
- **Question 2** – student produces a short text of approx. 40 words in response to four compulsory short bullet points (16 marks)
- **Question 3** – Translation from English (sentences) into target language (35-40 words) – (10 marks)
- **Question 4** – Structured writing task (student responds to four compulsory bullet points, producing approx. 90 words in total) – there will be a choice from two questions – (16 marks)



Paper 4: Writing

Foundation tier Question 1

Vous envoyez une photo WhatsApp à votre ami(e) français(e).



Qu'est-ce qu'il y a sur la photo ? Ecrivez **quatre** phrases en **français**.

Paper 4: Writing

Foundation tier Question 2

Du schreibst an deinen deutschen Freund über deine Hobbys.

Schreib etwas über:

- Musik
- Sport
- Einkaufen
- das Internet.

Du musst ungefähr 40 Wörter auf **Deutsch** schreiben.

Paper 4: Writing

Foundation tier Question 4/Higher tier Question 1

Vous décrivez votre vie d'adolescent(e) pour votre blog.

Décrivez :

- vos passe-temps préférés
- vos rapports avec votre famille
- une activité récente avec un(e) ami(e)
- vos projets pour le week-end prochain.

Ecrivez environ **90** mots en **français**. Répondez à chaque aspect de la question.

Paper 4: Writing

Structure of Higher Tier question paper

- **Question 1** – Structured writing task (student responds to four compulsory bullet points, producing approx. 90 words in total) – there will be a choice from two questions – (16 marks)
- **Question 2** – Open-ended writing task (student responds to two open-ended compulsory bullet points, producing approx. 150 words in total) – there will be a choice from two questions – (32 marks)
- **Question 3** – Translation from English (short passage) into target language (50-55 words) – (12 marks)



Paper 4: Writing

Allocation of marks across the Higher Tier Writing test

	Content	Quality of language	Range of language	Accuracy	Conveying key messages	App of grammatical knowledge of language and structures	Total
Q1	10	6					16
Q 2	15		12	5			32
Q 3					6	6	12
Total	25	6	12	5	6	6	60

Paper 4: Writing

Higher tier Question 2

Lees un blog sobre la vida de los jóvenes y se lo mandas a tu amigo español.

Escríbele un mensaje. Menciona:

- algo que hiciste recientemente que fue muy divertido
- qué haces para mantenerte feliz, en forma y saludable

Escribe aproximadamente **150** palabras en **español**. Responde a los dos aspectos de la pregunta.

Paper 4: Writing

Marking of translations into the target language

The translation is assessed for:

- conveying key messages (5 marks at Foundation tier and 6 marks at Higher tier)
and
- application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures (5 marks at Foundation tier and 6 marks at Higher tier).

When awarding marks, the student's response across all five sentences/whole passage should be considered. Mark scheme contains detailed exemplification of marking criteria.

Paper 4: Writing

Translation (Foundation): Assessment criteria

Level	Marks	Response
5	5	All key messages are conveyed.
4	4	Nearly all key messages are conveyed.
3	3	Most key messages are conveyed.
2	2	Some key messages are conveyed.
1	1	Few key messages are conveyed.
0	0	No key messages are conveyed.

Level	Marks	Response
5	5	Very good knowledge of vocabulary and structures; highly accurate.
4	4	Good knowledge of vocabulary and structures; generally accurate.
3	3	Reasonable knowledge of vocabulary and structures; more accurate than inaccurate.
2	2	Limited knowledge of vocabulary and structures; generally inaccurate.
1	1	Very limited knowledge of vocabulary and structures; highly inaccurate.
0	0	The language produced does not meet the standard required for Level 1 at this tier.

Other points of information

Grammar requirements

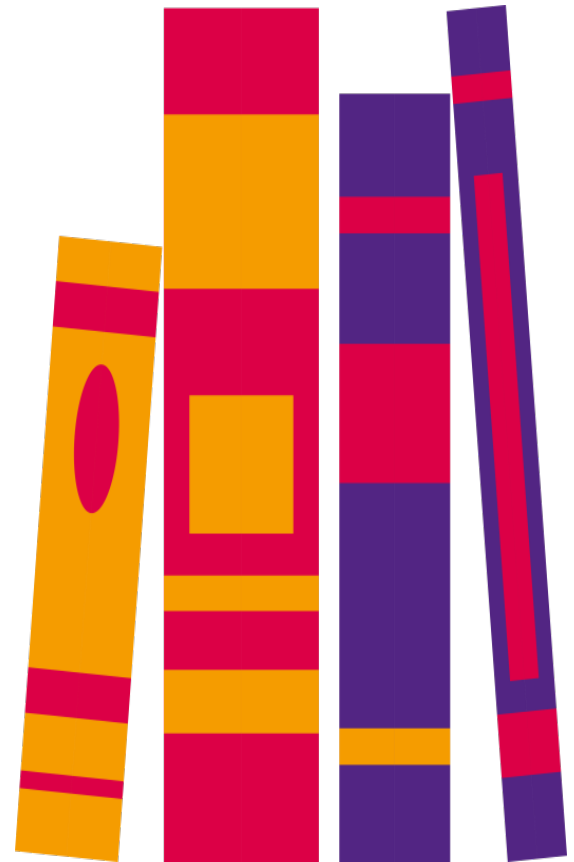
- Grammar list is provided in the specification
- It includes an indication of structures that students will be expected to recognise only and not produce independently

Communication strategies

- Whole section on this is provided in the specification (Section 3.4)

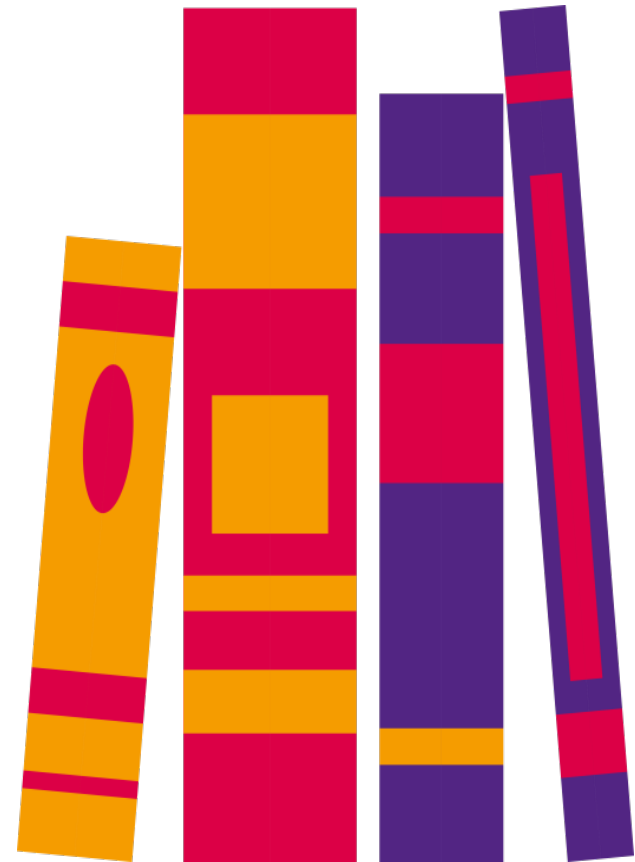
Dictionaries

- Students are not allowed to have access to a dictionary when taking any assessment or during the preparation time for the speaking test



Vocabulary lists

- Foundation and Higher lists in the specification (with English translations).
- Ofqual requirements state that:
 - assessments must not be restricted to use of words and/or forms of words on the vocabulary lists in such a way as to make the assessments predictable
 - Foundation Tier assessments must require students to understand and respond to common or familiar words and/or forms of words that are not on the vocabulary lists
 - Higher Tier assessments must require students to understand and respond to words and/or forms of words that are not on the vocabulary lists and which are less common or familiar than those used in relation to Foundation Tier assessments.



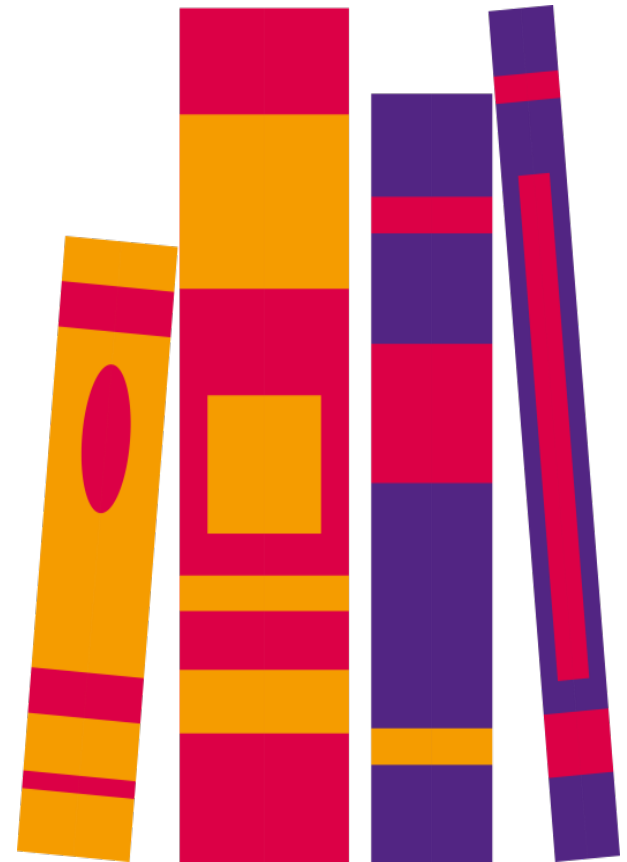
Vocabulary lists

What does this mean in practice?

This means that there will be words which are tested at both Tiers which are not on the vocabulary list.

At Foundation Tier, this could be words which students know from their prior study or words which are near cognates or which can be accessed through the communication strategies in the specifications.

At Higher Tier, we will be testing words which are less common or familiar than those tested at Foundation Tier. Again, students will be expected to use the knowledge from their prior study and communication strategies in the specification to access these words.



Resources

- Specifications are accompanied by a full set of specimen assessment materials and other support materials on our public website
- An additional set of specimen materials is available in e-AQA (Secure Key Materials) for mocks
- 2-year and 3-year schemes of work with mapping of content and grammar support/resources
- Marked student work for all four skills with commentaries from Prepare to Teach meetings in e-AQA (SKM)
- Lesson plans with suggested approaches for teaching new topics
- Grammar resources including lesson activities, presentations, games and worksheets – with accompanying teaching notes.



Resources

- Endorsed student textbooks in both printed and digital format (Oxford University Press)
- Exampro question bank for the new specifications
- Exampro Teacher Assessment Tracker to monitor KS4 progression
- Teachit Languages are producing a wide range of high quality resources
- AQA Events team for CPD courses – details available on Events page of AQA website



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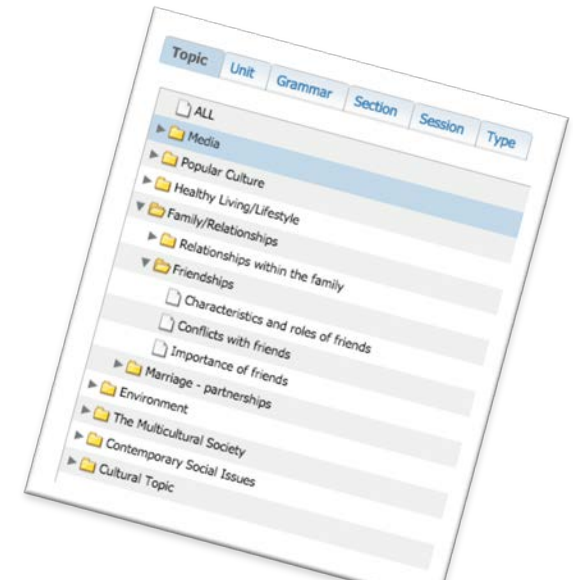
Visit [teachitlanguages.co.uk](https://www.teachitlanguages.co.uk) for hundreds of free resources you can trust

Question Bank



Create your own customised assessments in minutes using AQA questions aligned to the new specifications

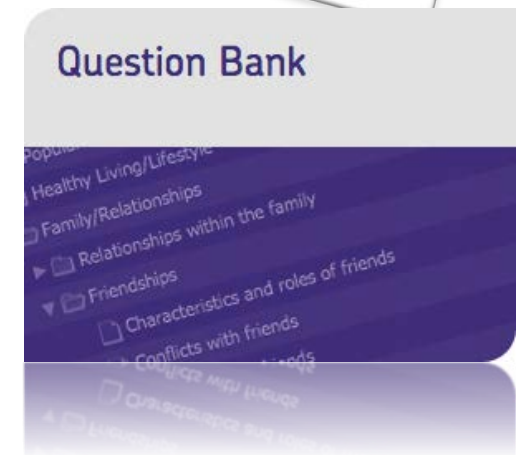
- Compile targeted topic tests, listening tasks, assignments or revision exercises for all four skills
- Produce matching mark schemes, examiner comments, audio files and transcripts at the touch of a button
- Search by tier, theme, target language, type of question
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Tracker

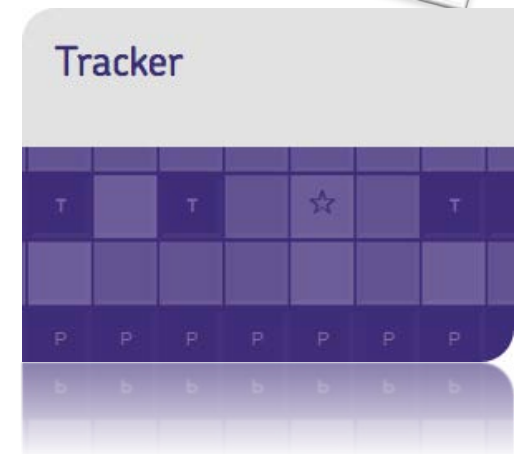
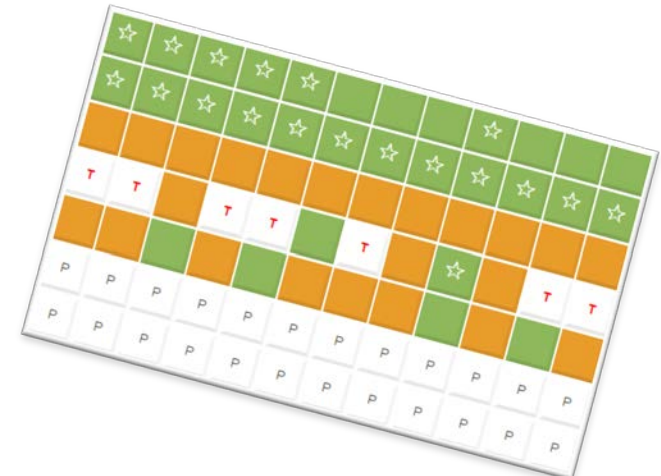
Track student progress with an easy-to-use teacher assessment tool that covers the complete scope of study

- Review classes and individual students at a glance
- Upload examples of student work and add notes to support judgements - great for teaching reviews and Ofsted
- Get a broad overview or drill down into the detailed objectives

Adjust the framework according to your scheme of work

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Help and support

We're here in the Languages team to support you throughout the specification changes and beyond.

If you have any questions, contact our helpful team.

- Visit: [aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/gcse](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/gcse)
- Email: mfl@aca.org.uk
- Call: **01423 534381**

