

# FACTFILE: GCSE FRENCH WRITING



## WRITING

### Learning Outcomes

You should be able to:

- communicate in writing for a variety of purposes;
- write short texts, using simple sentences and familiar language to convey meaning and exchange information;
- translate sentences from English into French to convey key messages accurately and to apply grammatical knowledge of language and structures in context;
- produce clear and coherent extended text to present facts and express ideas and opinions for different purposes and in different settings;
- make accurate use of a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures;
- manipulate the language, using and adapting a variety of structures and vocabulary with accuracy and fluency for new purposes (including using appropriate style and register); and
- make independent and creative use of the language to identify key points, express and justify your thoughts and points of view.

These lists are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

### Skills

Communication.  
Using ICT.  
Self-management.  
Working with others.  
Problem solving.  
Managing information.  
Being creative.

### Preparation

Be aware of the specification requirements. There are three Contexts for Learning: each of them is equally important.

**Context 1:** Identity, Lifestyle and Culture

**Context 2:** Local, National, International and Global Areas of Interest

**Context 3:** School Life, Studies and the World of Work

Develop a good knowledge of vocabulary and structures related to the topics on the French Specification.

Learn vocabulary under topic areas as set out in the Vocabulary List in the French Specification (Appendix 5) which is available on the CCEA website.

There is often a useful Vocabulary List summarising important words and structures at the end of a unit in your textbook.

Try to learn vocabulary in phrases and sentences to gain confidence when you are using it.

Complete as many past paper writing questions as possible - this will help you become familiar with the style of questions used in the exam.

Manage your time effectively – do not leave preparation for this examination until the last minute!

Look up the mark scheme in the Specimen Assessment Materials and make sure that you know what is required to access the top marks.

## Assessment Format

Be aware of the assessment format and grade boundaries of this component of the GCSE examination. Remember that you can take this exam at either Foundation Tier or Higher Tier. Each paper has four questions and assesses your ability to write in French.

### Foundation Tier

The Foundation Writing examination lasts **60 minutes**. All the rubrics and questions will be in English.

Foundation Tier Writing has 4 questions – questions 1 to 3 are worth 10 marks each.

Question 1(a) begins with a short list, asking you to list 4 items in French. For question 1(b) you must write three short phrases; each phrase must contain 2 or 3 words in French. 1(a) and 1(b) will both be taken from the same topic eg Extra-curricular activities.

Question 2 will ask you to write single sentences in French and is the common question with the Higher Tier paper.

Question 3 will be a translation exercise. You will translate 5 short sentences from English into French, worth two marks each.

Question 4 is worth 30 marks. In question 4, you must write a structured piece of extended writing in French. There will be five bullet points and you should aim to write 80-100 words in total for this question – ie each paragraph should contain approximately 16 – 20 words. Three paragraphs will be in the present tense, one will be in a past time frame and one will be in a future or conditional time frame. You must answer all five of the bullet points.

### Higher Tier

The Higher Writing examination lasts **1 hour 15 minutes**. All the rubrics and questions will be in English.

Higher Tier Writing has four questions – questions 1 to 3 are worth 10 marks each.

Question 1 will ask you to write single sentences in French and is the common question with the Foundation Tier paper.

Question 2 will ask you to write single sentences in French.

Question 3 will be a translation exercise. You will translate 5 short sentences from English into French, worth two marks each.

Question 4 is worth 30 marks. In question 4, you must write a structured piece of extended writing in French. There will be five bullet points and you should aim to write 130-150 words in total for this question – ie each paragraph should contain approximately 26 – 30 words. Three paragraphs will be in the present tense, one will be in a past time frame and one will be in a future or conditional time frame. You must answer all five of the bullet points.

Attempt all the questions and do not leave any blank spaces.

Always read the questions carefully and at least twice and ensure you understand what you are expected to answer.

Underline or highlight important words in the instructions (Why, Where, When, Describe, etc).

For extended writing questions, plan your work carefully in bullet points with the ideas and vocabulary you want to include. Organise your answer by developing each point in a different paragraph and avoid repetition.

Also ensure there is a balance in the information you write for each bullet point.

Take punctuation into account, as it may change the meaning of a sentence.

Avoid writing irrelevant material. You will not get any extra points for it and will be more prone to make mistakes.

Answer the questions in the specified language. In the exam, marks will not be awarded for answers in the wrong language.

Check the CCEA mark schemes which can be found in the SAMs to be aware of the distribution of marks for each question.

## Practice

Develop a good knowledge of vocabulary and structures related to the topics on the Specification and focus on the spelling and the grammar you need to use.

For each sub-topic, make lists of vocabulary, practise some translation from English into French of sentences related to the topics and write out answers to possible questions, not forgetting to prepare some paragraphs in a past or a future time frame. Write out well-developed paragraphs

to possible questions. Think of ways to improve your answers – eg. by including adjectives, using conjunctions, connectives, time phrases, negatives etc. Try to include opinions and justifications in your paragraphs, where appropriate. Try to add some more complex grammatical structures, including idiomatic language, where appropriate.

Where possible, look at sample answers for ideas, to see how different tenses have been used and to identify opinions and justifications.

Use every opportunity in class to improve your writing skills by increasing the length of your answers from a few sentences to longer paragraphs.

Practise using the questions in the writing section of the CCEA SAMs.

A good grasp of grammatical structures, especially an ability to confidently manipulate verbs in a range of tenses, will help you produce writing of a high standard.

If you have access to a textbook, complete as many writing activities as possible from it.

Take into account any feedback from your teacher to identify areas for improvement.

Always ask for help when you need it!

## Revision

Writing in French is a skill which you should practise regularly in class and at home. Remember that in the extended writing question, you want to display a good knowledge of the subject matter being tested and of the key vocabulary associated with it and to use a comprehensive range of language structures appropriate to the task. You need to demonstrate the ability to write with a good deal of competence, accuracy and fluency.

Think about your learning style (ie. do you learn by writing and repeating or by listening to yourself?). Do you prefer using mind-maps/word clouds etc?

Organise your resources. Keep your folder or notebook in good order, dividing material into topic areas and ensure that all questions and answers within each topic are filed together. Keep all electronic work backed up and remember to create folders for each topic area.

Read exemplar materials on the CCEA website.

Read over pieces of work which your teacher has corrected for you and make a note of your common mistakes. Learn how to eliminate them. You can also use a corrected piece of work to highlight complex phrases.

Practise a variety of different topic-based scenarios (lists/phrases/ short sentences/ translations from English into French/ extended writing exercises).

Be familiar with the spelling of topic-based vocabulary and structures related to the French Specification topics.

Revise key verbs related to the Specification topics and use them in different tenses.

Revise general vocabulary which will fit across a number of different topics – eg. opinions, justifications, adjectives, time phrases, comparisons etc.

Try out websites and language games sites to help you revise.

Due to the unique nature of language-learning, all skills are inter-connected so any material that you prepare for writing will help with listening or speaking or reading or translating.

