

A level French Specification: AS level clarification

AS 1 Speaking

Q1 Presentation

- Will I have to give my presentation on an AS theme or can it be on any topic I am interested in?

Your AS Presentation must be based on an AS level theme related to an aspect of a French-speaking country/community.

- What do candidates write into the 'Areas of Interest' section of the Summary Sheet?

Candidates are to give a presentation based on an A level theme related to an aspect of a French-speaking country/community so in the 'Area of Interest' section of the Summary Sheet, they should write in their selected AS theme and topic – refer to Section 3.1 of the Specification.

- What do candidates write into the 'Title' section of the Summary Sheet?

Candidates should write in the title they are giving their Presentation. This will be based on the AS theme and topic.

- What do candidates write into the 'headings' section of the Summary Sheet?

Candidates should list up to five headings detailing the main thematic structure/sequence of the Presentation they have prepared.

- Can I use my Preparation Sheet during the Speaking presentation?

Yes, you will have a copy of your Preparation Sheet during the presentation, which you can refer to.

- Can I use one of the other AS set texts or films for my AS presentation?

No, you must not use any of the other AS set texts or films as these have been prescribed for AS 3 and there must be no duplication of material across AS 1, AS 3, A2 1 and A2 3. However, you may reference a film/text which is not on the prescribed list, provided it is relevant.

- Can I make comparisons between the French-speaking country and my own country in my presentation?

You may make some comparisons, if these are appropriate and relevant, but be aware that the presentation is to be based on an AS level theme related to an aspect of the French-speaking country/community and not your own country/community. The aspect of the French-speaking country/community must be your main focus.

- Do I need to refer to/reference where my research information came from?

It is not essential to reference your information but it may be a natural part of your presentation.

- If I use artefacts or a PowerPoint presentation will I get extra marks?

No, you can only use the wording from your Preparation Sheet in the PowerPoint presentation and the examination focuses solely on verbal communication and linguistic competence. The presentation is assessed according to the AO4 criterion. There are no extra marks for use of artefacts or PowerPoint technology.

- Can I use more than three minutes for my presentation?
No, after three minutes the Visiting Examiner will indicate to you to conclude your presentation and will then move you on to your conversation. In relation to your preparations, be aware of the various timing requirements.
- Will I be asked questions on my presentation once I have finished speaking?
No.
- What AOs will I be marked on in my presentation?
The AS presentation is marked according to the AO4 criterion. This is detailed in the Specification and also in the Mark Scheme in the SAMs.
- Can I use my Preparation sheet with my 60 words during the whole examination?
Yes. The Specification states: ‘Students will have a copy of their Preparation Sheet during the examination.’ [Section 3.1] The Specification does not restrict its use to just the Presentation – it states ‘during the examination’ – so you can have access to the 60 word sheet for the duration of the examination.

Q2 Conversation

- Will the Visiting Examiner open the conversation by asking me what I want to talk about?
No, the Visiting Examiner will open the conversation with a general question to lead you into the AS themes. You will have the opportunity to converse in French about aspects of the AS themes which can lead to other areas of personal or special interest. You should be prepared to initiate, lead and develop the conversation in order to engage in a natural interaction with the Visiting Examiner.
- For the conversation, will I need to prepare information on both AS themes and every single topic?
The conversation at AS is a general conversation relating to the AS themes, not an in-depth questioning of every theme and topic. It is okay to say you have no special interest in a particular topic within a theme and then you and/or the Visiting Examiner can move on. You should endeavour to lead the conversation, as appropriate, and demonstrate general knowledge and understanding of the topic areas you explore with the Visiting Examiner. You should give your views and make judgements where appropriate. Refer to the Mark Scheme. The conversation is marked according to AO1 and AO3.
- Will the conversation be based on one single topic?

No, the conversation will be based on more than one topic. The number of topics will vary and that is not a guide to your performance in the examination.

- For the conversation, can I talk about an A2 topic?
Yes, but only if it is relevant, is of particular interest to you and comes naturally into the course of the conversation, for example, you may wish to talk about your part-time job as part of your after-school activities.

AS 2 Section A: Listening

Q1 Questions and answers in French.

- Will I get marks if I answer Question 1 in English?
No, there are no marks for answers in the incorrect language.
- Will I have to answer in full sentences?
Where the question requires full sentences, then you should respond in full sentences. Where the question requires selected words or phrases, then you should respond with the selected words or phrases.
- Can I use selected words and phrases from the stimulus recording?
Yes, you can use selected words and phrases from the stimulus passage provided they answer the question appropriately.
- If I add in extra material or information, will I be penalised?
Extra material or information will not be penalised, provided it does not affect the meaning of the answer.
- If I make a repeated mistake, will I be penalised repeatedly for this?
No, repeated mistakes will not be penalised.

Q2 Questions and answers in English

- Will I get marks if I answer Question 2 in French?
No, there are no marks for answers in the incorrect language.
- Will I have to answer in full sentences?
Where the question requires full sentences, then you should respond in full sentences. Where the question requires selected words or phrases, then you should respond with selected words or phrases.
- If I add in extra material or information, will I be penalised?
Extra material or information will not be penalised, provided it does not affect the meaning of the answer.
- If I make a repeated mistake, will I be penalised repeatedly for this?
No, repeated mistakes will not be penalised.

AS 2 Section B: Reading

Q1 Reading comprehension

- Can I use phrases from the stimulus passage?
Yes, you may use phrases from the stimulus provided they answer the question appropriately.
- Does the number of lines indicate the length of answer required?
Not necessarily. There is a set number of lines for various types of questions. Ensure that you answer the question. Check the number of marks available for each question, as indicated on the question paper.
- If I add in extra material or information, will I be penalised?
Extra material or information will not be penalised, provided it does not affect the meaning of the answer.

Q2 Translation

- Is Quality of Written Communication [QWC] assessed in the Translation question?
Yes, refer to the SAMs Question Paper and Mark Scheme for details.
- Should my translation be written in good English?
Yes, refer to the Mark Scheme for more details. There is a clear reference to 'spelling, punctuation and grammar' in the Mark Scheme.
- Will I be penalised if the quality of my English is not suitable?
Yes, Quality of Written Communication [QWC] is assessed in the translation as you are responding in English. The Translation is marked according to AO2. Refer to the SAMs Question Paper and Mark Scheme for more details. There is a clear reference to register, idiom, spelling, punctuation, grammar and meaning.

AS 2 Section C: Use of Language

Q1 - 5

- Will the grammar and structures/lexical questions in this section vary from year to year?
Yes, the lexical and grammatical topics will vary from year to year. Refer to the Specification which details that Use of Language will consist of a series of grammatical and lexical exercises. Appendix 5 in the Specification provides the AS grammar and structures list. There are also study resources examples on the CCEA Subject microsite.
- Will there be questions on vocabulary as well as grammar?
Possibly, as this is a Use of Language section consisting of lexical and grammatical questions. There are study resources, including examples of lexical exercises, on the CCEA Subject microsite.
- Will receptive knowledge be used for the questions?
No, this section is a test of your productive language skills in vocabulary and grammar.

AS 3 Extended Writing

- Is there a word limit or word count for the AS 3 extended writing response?
No, there is no word count or word limit. Refer to the Mark Scheme to familiarise yourself with the requirements of this unit.
- Do I write my extended writing response in the present tense?
Yes, it will be acceptable to write your response using the present tense, At AS level, you are asked to describe, to narrate, to demonstrate understanding, to demonstrate knowledge and to include views, arguments and insights. The literary present tense is generally used to discuss works of fiction or films however you may use other tenses if you feel they are appropriate.
- Can I write a detailed introduction to start my Extended Writing essay?
Your introduction should be short. You will not gain marks for writing a lot of detail about the author/text/background. The task is to respond to the bullet points which are provided.
- Do I have to include all of the bullet points in my response?
Yes, the rubrics direct you to ‘mention the following points’ in your response. The bullet points have been provided as support and they should be used as a framework for the construction of your response. While the bullet points form the basis of the extended writing response, additional material, provided it is relevant, may be included. Refer to the Mark Scheme and the sample Indicative Content in the Mark Scheme for further information.
- Do I have to include quotations from the text?
Quotations would be desirable but they are not essential. If you decide to include quotations, they should be accurate and relevant.
- If I do not use quotations, will I lose marks?
Quotations would be desirable but they are not essential. The focus is to answer the question set by using the bullet points as a framework and a support structure to provide your response. You will not lose marks if there are no quotations but refer to the Mark Scheme for more information on what is required in your answer as you will need to illustrate your response with specific references to the film/text. Material included in your answer should relate appropriately to the task.
- Can I refer to scenes from the film in my response?
Yes, references to scenes from the film will illustrate your answer and will demonstrate knowledge.
- Do I have to include my own opinions?
Yes, the Mark Scheme requires you to demonstrate knowledge of the film/text, to focus appropriately on key aspects of the question and to include views, arguments and insights.
- Will I have to include critical analysis in my AS extended response?

At AS level, the response is mostly narrative and descriptive. At A2 level, the response is analytical and evaluative. That is the main difference between AS and A2 Extended Writing. Refer to the Mark Scheme. The Extended Writing is marked according to AO2, AO4 and AO3.

- Will I have to add a conclusion?
Your conclusion should be short and should not repeat information you have already offered. You will not gain marks for writing a lot of detail which repeats the information given in the main body of your response. The task is to respond to the bullet points which are provided.

A level French Specification: A2 level clarification

A2 1 Speaking

Q1

- Do I have to base my individual research project on an aspect of the French-speaking country/community or can it be on any topic I am interested in?
No, you must base your project on one of the options specified in the Specification [Appendix 3].

*At A2 you should introduce and discuss your individual research project which **must** be based on either:*

- *a cultural aspect of a French-speaking country/community; or*
 - *a historical period from the twentieth century of a French-speaking country/community; or*
 - *a region of a French-speaking country/community.*
- Can I use one of the AS films or texts for my A2 research project?
*No, the Specification (Section 3.4) states that ‘Students **must not** choose a topic for their introduction [and discussion] that relates to the AS 1 topic [or the set works studied for AS 3 and A2 3].’ This has to be authenticated on the Summary Sheet. However, you may reference a film/text which is not on the prescribed list, provided it relates to your chosen option.*
 - Can I use one of my A2 texts for my A2 research project?
*No, the Specification (Section 3.4) states that ‘Students **must not** choose a topic for their introduction [and discussion] that relates to the AS 1 topic [or the set works studied for AS 3 and A2 3].’ This has to be authenticated on the Summary Sheet. However, you may reference a text which is not on the prescribed list, provided it relates to your chosen option.*
 - Can I make comparisons between the French-speaking country and my own country in my research project?
You may make some comparisons, if these are appropriate and relevant, but be aware that the research project is to be based one of the three prescribed options of the French-speaking country/community and not your own country/community. Your chosen option must be your main focus.
 - Will I be able to use artefacts for my introduction/discussion?
Yes, the Specification states ‘Students may support their introduction and discussion with artefacts’.
 - If I use artefacts, will I get extra marks?
No, the examination focuses solely on verbal communication and linguistic competence. Candidates are only marked on their verbal communication and linguistic competence. The Introduction/Discussion is assessed according to AO4 and AO3. There are no extra marks for use of artefacts.

- Can I refer to ideas or aspects from the AS level films or texts/A level texts if they are relevant to my topic?
*There must be no overlap. The Specification 3.4 states that ‘Students **must not** choose a topic for their introduction [and discussion] that relates to the AS 1 topic [or the set works studied for AS 3 and A2 3].’ This has to be authenticated on the Summary Sheet.*

Introduction [1 minute]

- Can I go over one minute if I do not get my introduction finished in time?
No, after one minute the Visiting Examiner will indicate to you to conclude your introduction and will then move you on to your discussion. In relation to your preparations, be aware of the various timing requirements. In order to avoid going over the one minute you should practice your introduction to ensure you meet the prescribed time limit.

Discussion [5 minutes]

- How will the discussion be opened by the Visiting examiner?
The Visiting Examiner will open the discussion with a general question to provide you with the opportunity for you to initiate, lead and develop the discussion, with a natural interaction, based on your individual research project. The opening question will be based on the information provided in your introduction and/or the headings on your Summary Sheet.
- Will all of my five headings be covered in the discussion?
Not necessarily. You should not expect one question on each of the five headings on your Summary Sheet. Depending on how the discussion progresses, all five headings may not necessarily be covered within the time. This is not an indication of how you have performed.
- If all five headings are not covered, will I lose marks?
No, the Visiting Examiner will assess your discussion according to AO4 and AO3.
- Do I need to refer to/reference where my research information came from?
Possibly, as you may be asked about your sources, if relevant, in the course of the discussion.
- Can I go over the five minutes if I want to discuss more about my research project?
No, the Visiting Examiner will bring your discussion to a close after five minutes and move you on to the conversation.

Q2 Conversation [9 minutes]

- Will the Visiting Examiner open the conversation by asking me what I want to talk about?
No, the Visiting Examiner will open the conversation with a general question to lead you into the A level themes. You will have the opportunity to converse in French about aspects of the A level themes which can lead to other areas of personal or special interest. You should be prepared to initiate, lead and

develop the conversation in order to engage in a natural interaction with the Visiting Examiner.

- Will I need to prepare information on all themes and every single topic for the conversation?

The conversation at A2 level is a general conversation relating to the A level themes [and may incorporate AS themes, where appropriate], not an in-depth questioning of every theme and topic. It is okay to say you have no special interest in a particular topic within a theme and then you and/or the Visiting Examiner can move on. You should endeavour to initiate, lead and develop the conversation, as appropriate, and demonstrate general knowledge and understanding of the topic areas you explore with the Visiting Examiner. You should give your views and make judgements where appropriate. Refer to the Mark Scheme. The Conversation is marked according to AO1 and AO3.

A2 2 Section A: Listening

Q1 Questions and answers in French.

- Will I get marks if I answer Question 1 in English?
No, there are no marks for answers in the incorrect language.
- Will I have to answer in full sentences?
Where the question requires full sentences, then you should respond in full sentences. Where the question requires selected words or phrases, then you should respond with selected words or phrases.
- Can I use selected words and phrases from the stimulus passage?
Yes, you can use selected words and phrases from the stimulus passage provided they answer the question appropriately.
- If I add in extra material or information, will I be penalised?
Extra material or information will not be penalised, provided it does not affect the meaning of the answer.
- If I make a repeated mistake will I be penalised repeatedly for this?
No, repeated mistakes will not be penalised.

Q2 Questions and answers in English

- Will I get marks if I answer Question 2 in French?
No, there are no marks for answers in the incorrect language.
- Will I have to answer in full sentences?
Where the question requires full sentences, then you should respond in full sentences. Where the question requires selected words or phrases, then you should respond with selected words or phrases.
- If I add in extra material or information, will I be penalised?
Extra material or information will not be penalised, provided it does not affect the meaning of the answer.

- If I make a repeated mistake will I be penalised repeatedly for this?
No, repeated mistakes will not be penalised.

A2 2 Reading: Section B

Q1 Gap-filling

- Can I use the same word twice?
No, each word can only be used once.
- Will I lose marks if I misspell the word?
Minor spelling mistakes will not be penalised provided they do not affect the meaning of the answer.

Q2 Reading Comprehension

- Will I get marks if I answer Question 2 in English?
No, there are no marks for answers in the incorrect language.
- Can I use phrases from the stimulus passage?
Yes, you may use phrases from the stimulus provided they answer the question appropriately.
- Do the number of lines indicate the length of answer required?
Not necessarily, there is a set number of lines for various types of questions. Ensure that you answer the question. Check the number of marks available for each question, as indicated on the question paper.
- If I add in extra material or information, will I be penalised?
Extra material or information will not be penalised, provided it does not affect the meaning of the answer.

Q3 Summary

- Do I write my answer in full sentences?
Yes, Quality of Written Communication [QWC] is assessed in this question. Refer to the mark scheme.
- Will I be penalised if I go over the set word count?
The word count is set at 100 words, however you will not be penalised for responses which fall within a tolerance of 10%: between 90 and 110 words. Refer to the Mark Scheme which states [in Bands 4 and 5] 'within tolerance of the word limit'.
- Will I be penalised if I am under the set word count?
The word count is set at 100 words, however you will not be penalised for responses which fall within a tolerance of 10%: between 90 and 110 words. Refer to the Mark Scheme which states [in Bands 4 and 5] 'within tolerance of the word limit'.

- Should I structure my response in paragraphs relating to the stimulus material?
Yes, that would help you to plan and structure your response and to ensure that your response is not imbalanced. The Summary is marked according to AO2. Refer to the Mark Scheme for details.

Q4 Translation

- Should I write on alternate lines in my response?
This is not essential but it may help you to draft your response by giving you more space in case you need to make amendments/alterations/changes to your text.
- Can I use rephrasing or paraphrasing in my translation?
Whilst alternative translations may be possible, and will be credited, your translation should be an accurate rendering of the original text.
- Will I lose mark if I repeat the same mistake?
No, repeated mistakes will not be penalised.

A2 3 Extended Writing

- Is there a word limit or word count for the A2 3 extended writing response?
No, there is no word count or word limit. Refer to the Mark Scheme to familiarise yourself with the requirements of this unit.
- Do I write my extended writing response in the present tense?
Yes, it will be acceptable to write your response using the present tense, At A2 level, you are asked to express information, facts and ideas, to develop arguments, present views, opinions and justifications, to analyse and to evaluate. The literary present tense is generally used to discuss works of fiction or films however you may use other tenses if you feel they are appropriate.
- Can I write a detailed introduction to start off my extended writing essay?
Your introduction should be short. You will not gain marks for writing a lot of detail about the author/text/background. The task is to respond to the question set.
- Do I have to include quotations from the text?
Quotations would be desirable but they are not essential. If you decide to include quotations, they should be accurate and relevant.
- If I do not use quotations, will I lose marks?
Quotations would be desirable but they are not essential. You will not lose marks if there are no quotations but refer to the Mark Scheme for more information on what is required in your answer as you will need to illustrate your response with specific references to the text.

- Do I have to include my own opinions?
Yes, the Mark Scheme requires you to demonstrate knowledge of the text, to focus appropriately on key aspects of the question and to include views, arguments and insights.
- Will I have to include critical analysis in my A2 extended response?
At A2 level, the response is analytical and evaluative. It requires analysis, detailed knowledge, views, arguments and insights. That is the main difference between AS and A2 Extended Writing. Refer to the Mark Scheme. The Extended Writing is marked according to AO2, AO4 and AO3.
- Will I have to add a conclusion?
Your conclusion should be short and should not repeat information you have already offered. You will not gain marks for writing a lot of detail which repeats the information given in the main body of your response.