

## FAQs

### WJEC GCSE FRENCH

#### CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT WRITING - UNIT 4

1. During the 2 weeks before completion of a caw task can help be sought outside the classroom?

Yes. The terms of preparation are set out under "Writing Task Taking" in the Specification.

2. Can writing about a subject form part of formative assessment before the two-week period before the task is given out?

Yes. There is no limit on the teacher input before the task is given to pupils. After the task has been given a teacher may not mark or correct work but may give "advice on the language" and draw attention to mistakes.

3. Does a candidate have to indicate *bullets* for the bullet points on the prompt sheet?

No. The format is not important.

4. Can the candidates' notes include pictures, concept webs and other non-verbal help?

No, the "crib-sheet" must contain up to 40 *words* only.

5. When will the additional titles be ready?

The additional titles are now on the website. Please note that the titles previously published are still available for centres to use in any year providing they have not already been used twice.

6. How much "change" is expected in caw questions every two years?

Any alternative question will be accepted after 2 years as long as the wording is not identical to the previous question.

7. Are candidates disadvantaged if they have only 45 minutes to complete an assessment?

No. The maximum allowed is 60 minutes and the 100 or 200 word count suggested should be within the capability of every candidate. Appropriate arrangements will need to be made for candidates who qualify for "extra time".

8. Do schools need to check their caw titles with WJEC?

No. The onus is on the teacher to choose appropriate titles.

9. Can pupils access on-line dictionaries when completing the task?

No. This facility should be disabled, along with grammar- and spell-checkers.

10. What happens if a pupil is absent when the caw is set?

The pupil can sit the task anytime within the 2-week limit. Once that period has passed another task will have to be chosen. However, there may be situations or events e.g. irregular timetables or acts of God that prevent whole classes from taking the task strictly within the 14-day period in which case they should take it on the first available opportunity after the 14-day limit. If in doubt please contact WJEC directly.

11. Is the word count important?

Yes because a candidate aspiring to C – A\* grades should write at least 200 words for each piece and for G – D at least 100. It is highly unlikely that communication marks of 7 – 10 would be awarded for an answer of less than 200 words as it should contain detailed information and points of view that are both developed and justified. Candidates must also ensure that they stay within the upper word limit of 330 words [2012] and 300 words [2013] for each piece as straying beyond would indicate that they have not written their answers "in an organised fashion" – a criterion for 9/10 marks for Communication.

12. How many titles will be provided by WJEC for the caw taskbank?

Six titles and their variations (12 in total) were provided for the initial two-year period of 2011 – 12 and an additional 14 are now available on the website for immediate use.

13. How will the titles of the caw tasks be communicated to WJEC?

Each piece of work submitted will be accompanied by a *pro forma* on which the title of the task will be recorded. The same title must also appear on the candidate's script.

14. In which language will the prompts of the tasks be written?

The prompts for the task must be written in Welsh or English though the title may be written in the language of the examination.

15. Can a whole class do the same task?

Cooperation in preparing the task is encouraged but candidates must provide an individual response.

16. Will there be a link in the markscheme between the marks awarded for Communication and those of Quality of Language (Accuracy and Range)?

Not explicitly as answers should be marked separately on the basis of the three criteria but in practice it is unlikely that high marks will be awarded for Accuracy and Range where low marks have been given for Communication as a good Quality of Language is essential to expressing information "clearly and in detail" (Communication Criteria for 9/10 marks).

17. Will the caw tasks be returned to school?

Not unless the school requests them for review at a later date through the usual post-results service for which there will be a charge.

18. Can a mixed-ability class be given a differentiated task?

Yes. Differentiation of caw is by outcome. Tasks should be designed to give candidates the opportunity to gain the highest marks. If not then the marks awarded are likely to be confined to the lowest bands.

19. Can candidates use their 40-word allowance to write words such as "JSAACAMA" as a prompt?

No. "JSAACAMA" as "Je suis allée au cinéma avec mes amis" is a code not a word.

20. How can teachers decide which are the two "best" pieces of work if they are not marking the caw?

In practice teachers will want to assess the quality of the answers to the tasks (if more than two are attempted) before submitting them to WJEC. If any annotation is made it *must* be on a photocopy of the original work. *No annotation* must appear on work sent to WJEC for marking. Although teachers may have "marked" the work before submitting it the marks awarded by WJEC examiners will be considered final unless a centre wishes to appeal for a remark of scripts.

21. How detailed can the prompts be in the tasks?

There is no restriction on the number of prompts which may be included in the task. Teachers who devise their own tasks may write prompts which make it clear to candidates what they have to do.

22. What if candidates use only one tense in their answer?

There is no requirement for candidates to use a variety of tenses at either F or C grade but it is good practice to encourage candidates to use two tenses in order to access the highest marks for Accuracy and Range.

23. After 2 years' use of new titles in 2013 – 14 can teachers revert to using the questions from 2011 – 12?

Yes but remember that any questions not already used twice by centres are available for use *at any time*.

24. How will teachers know if the two "best" pieces of work will be graded as C or above?

Since the first awards in 2011 teachers have had an idea of where the marks to grades boundaries will occur in each subsequent year.

25. Can centres send work to the Chief Examiner to comment on before submission for awarding?

No. The exemplar material provides sufficient guidance to teachers to "mark" the work prior to deciding which are the two best pieces of work.

26. Will work be credited if it falls outside the word limits?

In 2012 no work will be credited after 330 words. In 2013 no work will be credited after 300 words. Please note that this is a change to previous advice based on the experience of the 2011 exam and brings this FAQ in line with the Specification. It is possible for a candidate to obtain an A\* by writing no more than 300 words.

27. Does a candidate's crib-sheet have to be submitted with the answer even if it has been forgotten [and not used] on the day of the task?

Yes. Teachers should submit a crib-sheet for every candidate and write "not used" for those who did not use it.

28. My students find the tasks on the website too easy. What should I do?

The tasks for controlled assessment writing on the website are for illustrative purposes only. *Any* question can be set as a task as long as it gives students an opportunity to obtain the highest marks for Communication, Accuracy and Range.

29. My students find the tasks on the website too hard. What should I do?

The tasks for controlled assessment writing on the website are for illustrative purposes only. Any question can be set as a task as long as it gives students an opportunity to obtain the highest marks for Communication, Accuracy and Range.

30. Do words crossed out on the crib-sheet count towards the 40 allowed?

Yes.

31. Can candidates use different coloured pens when preparing their crib-sheet?

Yes.

32. What is "adventurous" language (required for 5 marks at Range and Accuracy)?

"Adventurous" language is anything which is denoted as "R" i.e. for receptive use only, in the Specification but which is used productively.

33. As "Healthy Living" appears as a topic in both Personal and Social Life and The Wider World can it be used for both writing tasks?

34. Can candidates' controlled assessments be used outside of school e.g. for cluster moderation.

No. Work should be shared amongst teachers in a school in order to establish a standard for moderation across teaching groups but otherwise the work should remain under lock and key. Neither candidates nor teachers outside the school should have access to completed controlled assessment. Should teachers wish to use the completed work for formative assessment then a photocopy may be made of the original but that copy must also remain in the classroom.

35. Can a candidate simply copy out the 40 words from the crib sheet where they constitute an accurate and coherent answer and still gain credit for it?

Yes, though marks for Communication will necessarily be low and consequently for Accuracy and Range also.

## CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT SPEAKING - UNIT 2

1. Can the candidates bring in pictures – possibly on PowerPoint - for their presentation?  
Yes.
2. Can the candidate bring in a poster with words?  
Yes, as long as it respects the word limit.
3. Can the two parts of the test be recorded at different times?  
Yes.
4. Can candidates be recorded at the end of the course as at present?  
Yes as long as the correct conditions for assessment are observed. In this circumstance please note that there will be no requirement to have a "holding room" as at present.
5. When will the concept webs be available?  
Concept webs have been available on the WJEC website since September 2009 and additional examples were provided in October 2011. Please note, however, that a Concept web is only one way of preparing for the Structured Conversation.
6. Will recordings on cassette be accepted?  
No, only digital formats will be accepted.
7. Will a DVD be provided to guide teachers?  
Yes. The DVD was distributed at the Teachers' Professional Meetings (CPD) in November/December 2009.
8. Why does the WJEC allow 30 words of prompts for Speaking but 40 for Writing?  
This was a QCA decision.

9. How many questions do teachers have to ask candidates to reach each level?

There is no definitive answer but weaker candidates may need more individual questions to elicit the range of responses required for certain levels.

10. Can candidates prepare the questions for the Structured Conversation during the 2 weeks?

Yes but they should not be rehearsed to the extent that the candidate knows the order in which the questions will be asked. There needs to be an element of unpredictability in the test.

11. Does every candidate have to do a different presentation?

No. Candidates are actually encouraged to cooperate on topics but their responses must be individual for assessment purposes.

12. Will WJEC tell Headteachers or Exam officers how much extra work this system of recording and sampling will be?

No, it is not in the remit of WJEC. It is up to department heads to negotiate any time they feel necessary to fulfil their duties.

13. How can we alleviate the logistical problems of the recording and sampling?

Further guidance is available in the JCQ booklet *Instructions for conducting controlled assessments; Instructions for conducting coursework* [2010]. Re-recording candidates specifically for the purposes of moderation is not permitted.

14. Will there still be "special circumstances"?

There should be no need of special circumstances as teachers have the whole of Years 10 and 11 to record candidates.

15. How many words may be written in the "brief headings" for the Structured Discussion?

30.

16. Is there a limit to the marks available for material which is obviously pre-learnt and rehearsed?

Yes, spontaneity and interaction is required for 3 – 10 marks in the Structured Conversation.

17. Do teachers have to use the concept webs provided by the WJEC?
- No but whoever designs one must ensure that it provides direction to both candidate and teacher regarding the coverage expected of a topic.
18. Can teachers point to sections of the Concept Web during the Conversation?
- Yes. The themes may be addressed in any order.
19. Can a Concept Web be used for practice in class before the 2-week preparation period?
- Yes but the Concept Web used in the actual test must not be identical.
20. Is it permissible to interrupt candidates if they "dry up" before the 2-minute lower limit of the Presentation is reached?
- Yes but the candidate will receive no more than 3 marks for Delivery of Presentation and the 3 – 4 minute Discussion should begin at that point.
21. Is a candidate assessed only once? If not does the candidate have to use different Concept Webs and Presentations for each assessment?
- Candidates may be assessed on any number of occasions but the Concept Webs and Presentations must be different on each occasion.
22. Are there any topics that are *prima facie* unsuitable for the Presentation?
- This is left to the discretion of teacher and candidate though there are general guidelines – available from the Centre Exams Officer - which govern all material submitted for assessment.
23. Does the degree of coverage of the content of the Concept Web matter?
- No. The Markscheme for Communication and Content does not refer to coverage but candidates may find that they penalise themselves in terms of Range of Language.
24. Can the recording of the controlled assessment speaking be stopped and re-started?
- The recording should only be stopped in emergencies.
25. Do words crossed out on the crib-sheet count towards the 40 allowed?
- Yes.

26. Can candidates use different coloured pens when preparing their crib-sheet?

Yes.

27. As "Healthy Living" appears as a topic in both Personal and Social Life and The Wider World can it be used for both tasks?

28. Can I practise doing both a Structured Conversation and a Presentation and Discussion in the classroom on the same Context?

Yes but only one of these tasks may be submitted to WJEC moderation.

29. I have a candidate whose first language is Chinese. Can the Concept Web – the task – be in a language other than English or Welsh?

Yes, the Concept Web may be in any language which is the candidate's mother tongue as long as the teacher can also understand that language, otherwise the candidate may gain an unfair advantage. The 30 words to help the candidate complete the assessment must be in the target language.

30. Can the Concept Web bubbles be numbered?

Yes.

31. How should I label my audio files?

Each audio track should be labelled as follows:

**for Structured Discussion** - centre number\_candidate  
number\_SD\_candidate name

**for Presentation and Discussion** - centre number\_candidate  
number\_PD\_candidate name

Please remember to use a 4-digit candidate number e.g.

12345\_0001\_SD\_david\_thomas. Please label the CD or USB stick appropriately and include as much detail as possible on the CD inlay or a separate sheet of paper.

32. Does it matter if I exceed the times recommended for recording?

Yes. The test will be deemed to have started after the candidate's details have been recorded on the track. **No credit will be given** for any material which then exceeds the time limits of: Structured Conversation 5 minutes; Presentation 3 minutes; Discussion 4 minutes.

### **LISTENING – UNIT 1 AND READING – UNIT 3**

1. Will the FT questions still target only words in the Minimum Core Vocabulary?

Yes.

2. Will recordings of the Specimen Listening papers be made available?

Yes. The CDs were sent to schools in the Autumn Term 2009.

3. Will the recordings of the Specimen Listening papers be available for downloading?

Yes.

4. With no or fewer pictures in the Listening papers there may be more for candidates themselves to read. Will the questions still be read out?

Yes.

## GENERIC QUESTIONS

1. Do candidates have to sit the same tier if they re-sit units 1 and/or 3?

No.

2. Can candidates use the same topics for their Speaking Presentation as their Writing Tasks?

Yes.

3. Are there any amendments to the printed Specifications and Specimen Assessment Materials?

Yes. The current versions on the WJEC website are correct. Please note, however, that in the Specification section 3.1 Speaking Unit 2 should state that the Presentation should last 2-3 (not 1-3) minutes [see also Section 5 Speaking – Task setting]. The Specification section 5 Speaking - Task taking - paragraph 2 should be deleted and paragraph 8 should begin "The assessments may" (not "will"). The Specification section 5 Writing Task marking paragraph one should read "...each candidate" (not "candidates"). In the Specimen Assessment Materials the Higher Tier Listening Exam targets grades D – A\* (not C – G) and the Foundation Tier Reading Exam is 35 (not 30) minutes long.

4. Can topics be chosen for writing and speaking which are not included in the "broad contexts" in Specification section 2 Content?

The contexts range from "self" to "life of young people today" and "life in the countries and communities where the language is spoken" so any topic is suitable provided it complies with the general guidelines for material submitted for assessment (available from the Centre Exams Officer).

5. Do classroom posters have to be covered up when pupils are completing their controlled assessments?

The JCQ document *Instructions for conducting controlled assessments; Instructions for conducting coursework* [2010] states "...teachers **must** ensure that any display material in the teaching environment which might provide assistance is removed or covered" [p4 4.1.2].