Modern Foreign Languages GCSE Subject Content

2015 and 2021 comparison (table)

The purpose of this task is to pinpoint some of the main differences and elements of continuity between the current (2015) GCSE Subject Content and the proposed Subject Content. You can choose whether to complete the analysis of both documents concurrently or sequentially. The document is editable! Add or substitute any headings. Allow 45-60 minutes for this task. Aim to draw out the implications for GCSE teaching and assessment(s) and teaching.

Headings	Similarities and differences	
	2015	2021
Subject aims	• develop ability and ambition to communicate in speech and writing • expand students' horizons • encourage them to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries • develop new ways of seeing the world • provide a strong foundation for further study	• develop ability and ambition to communicate in speech and writing • expand students' horizons • encourage them to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries • develop new ways of seeing the world • provide a strong foundation for further study
Emphasis on L, S, R, W	weighting not explicitly stated but all four areas are included	broadly equal emphasis (in course design and teaching)
Contexts for teaching	• a specified number of broad themes (Identity and culture, local, national, international and global areas of interest, current and future study and employment) • authentic material addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes • recognise and respond to key information, important themes and ideas in more extended spoken text, including authentic sources • Awarding organisations may however use any flexibility to increase depth, breadth or context within the specified topics or to consolidate teaching of the subject content.	• Language teaching rooted in the contexts where the language is spoken • Themes and topics: Because vocabulary specified in this content is informed by the frequency of occurrence in the language it will be well suited to communication about a wide range of common themes and topics, and for different purposes

Connection to KS2/3	• GCSE specifications in MFL will take account of the national curriculum programmes of study for key stages 2 and 3. They will build on the foundations of grammar, vocabulary and linguistic competence envisaged by the programmes of study for key stages 2 and 3, increasing the level of linguistic and cognitive demand. •	• GCSE specifications in MFL will take account of the national curriculum programmes of study for key stages 2 and 3. They will build on the foundations of grammar, vocabulary and linguistic competence envisaged by the programmes of study for key stages 2 and 3, increasing the level of linguistic and cognitive demand. • Because no vocabulary is specified for KS2 or KS3, the vocabulary list proposed for GCSE must be comprehensive and should make no specific assumptions about vocabulary previously taught. •
Approach to describing how knowledge will be used (skills? other ways of describing knowledge use?)	Listed in terms of: • Listening • Speaking • Reading • Writing • Though vocabulary and grammar emerge as significant foci for study, across the four 'skill' areas	Listed in terms of: • Vocabulary (then specified in some detail) • Grammar (as specified in the grammar appendices) • Sound-symbol correspondences (as specified in the appendices) • Though it is clear that this knowledge will be put to use receptively and productively, in spoken and written forms, for a range of audiences and purposes, in different genres and in formal and informal contexts…, having regard to the likely experiences of a wide social range.
Approach to describing vocabulary content	• general (e.g., students will enrich their vocabulary in order for them to increase their independent use and understanding of extended language in a wide range of contexts	• specific (e.g., Learn, and be able to recall readily and use, the range of vocabulary required for the level at which they are studying. The parameters for specifying the vocabulary to be learnt are set out in paragraphs 13-21 of this document. • 1,200 items Foundation, 1,700 items Higher • comprehensive (no assumptions about KS2/3 vocabulary) • tests will contain these words

		• 90% words will be from the most frequent 2000 •
Approach to describing grammar content	• GCSE students will be expected to develop and use their knowledge and understanding of grammar progressively throughout their course. The grammar requirements for GCSE are set out in two tiers: foundation and higher. Students will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding of grammar, appropriate to the language studied and to the relevant tier of entry, drawing on the relevant lists. (See grammar appendices for more detail)	• Learn and be able to use the grammar specified to understand and produce meaning accurately, in oral and written modalities, and to speak with increasing fluency. The grammar to be learnt in each language is set out in annexes 1-3 of this document. (See grammar appendices for more detail)
Approach to describing basic literary (sound-symbol knowledge)	• no reference to phonics or sounds of the language • reference to pronunciation and intonation, as follows: use accurate pronunciation and intonation such as to be understood by a native speaker	• Know and be able to apply the principles by which spelling represents sounds in standard or widely used forms of the language, and use clear and comprehensible pronunciation when speaking the language. • The specific sound-spelling links are listed in an appendix: The list which follows specifies key differences in sound-spelling correspondences between French and English which pupils will need to learn at GCSE to be able to read and transcribe with sufficient accuracy at this level.
Types of assessment task	• listening (near normal speed) • reading (deduce and infer from unknown language) • writing / speaking in sentences and paragraphs	• listening (at a moderate pace) • reading (language from the specified list) • writing / speaking in words and sentences (paragraphs)
Unknown language	• yes	• yes (up to 2% in higher reading texts, glossed)
Rubrics and language of questions	• overarching rubrics can be in English • 20% listening questions in TL • 30% reading questions in TL • questions set in language of the responses (RP prompts in TL)	• rubrics in English • all comprehension questions in English • other questions, as appropriate in either English or TL, so that the question meanings are clear
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