

GCSE 9-1 FRENCH Edexcel

Criteria for Dictation, Speaking and Writing

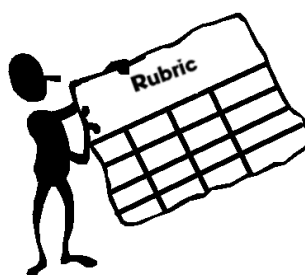
adapted for formative purposes

Foundation Tier

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Updated 7/12/25

Disclaimer: Descriptors drawn largely from official criteria. Please check the source before using!
[Edexcel specification \(Issue 2 July 25\)](#)



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Purpose:

- To help teachers and pupils to familiarise themselves with criteria used in national examinations
- To provide a framework for giving feedback to learners in an efficient and effective way (reducing the need for teachers to write long sentences about 'how to improve'). Teachers tick/code. Pupils can see what they have to do to improve by reading the grid
- It is **not** the purpose of these criteria to give any 'level' or 'grade', although if individual columns are awarded points which can be weighted / added up, this could help to rank a class or year group.

The specification containing precise criteria is here:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/french-2024.html>

Listening: Dictation - Foundation

[SCC]: Sound Symbol Correspondence [10]

Students will be rewarded for each individual word spelled appropriately and which demonstrates knowledge and understanding of Sound Symbol Correspondences (SSCs). The number of rewardable words will then be given a mark on a sliding scale of 1 to 10 as shown in the grid below.

Transcription [SSC]

AO3	No. of rewardable words / 20	%
10	19-20	95
9	17-18	85
8	15-16	75
7	13-14	65
6	11-12	55
5	9-10	45
4	7-8	35
3	5-6	25
2	3-4	15
1	1-2	5
0	0	0

- 3 categories of rewardable words.
- 2 Categories of non-rewardable words.

REWARDABLE

1. Words spelled exactly as in the transcript score a point each.

2. In acknowledgement that many grammatical/morphological differences cannot be heard when spoken, spellings with **grammatical/morphological inaccuracies**, that do not change the pronunciation of the words, are rewarded. Examples of **grammatically based spelling inaccuracies** that will be rewarded:

- deux maison instead of deux maisons
- je veut instead of je veux

3. In acknowledgement that some SSCs have the same sound but different spellings, any spellings that do not change the pronunciation of the word and where the word is still recognisable, are rewarded. Examples of **sound spellings** that will be rewarded:

1. double consonants: addore instead of adore, fammille instead of famille, nourriture instead of nouriture
2. extra letter: soeure instead of soeur
3. accents: peches instead of pêche

NON-REWARDABLE words encompass the following categories:

4. Mis-spellings due to incorrect application of Sound symbol correspondences, even if the word looks recognisable, eg *violin* instead of *violon*. If in doubt, examiners should read the words the students have written out loud to themselves, using the correct SSC for the written symbols, to ensure that the spelling produces the correct sound.

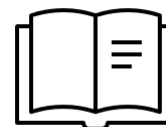
5. Mis-spellings which are written phonetically, and which may contain appropriate Sound symbol correspondences, but which are so inaccurate that the words are unrecognisable if seen on their own in isolation, outside the context of the sentence, eg, *seur* (**soeur**) outside the sentence *Ma **seur** chante bien*; *gatto* in the sentence, *Le **gatto** (**gâteau**) au chocolat est bon*. If in doubt, examiners should write the word out separately and ask themselves if they would understand the word if written in isolation.

Reading – Foundation

AO2	Meaning transferred	Errors
9–10	The meaning of the original language is appropriately transferred.	Any errors do not detract from the overall clarity of the message
6–8	The meaning of the original language is mostly transferred appropriately	 Occasional errors affect the clarity of the message, e.g. incorrect words, omitted words, inexact syntax.
3-5	The meaning of parts of the original language is appropriately transferred	 Some errors prevent the message being conveyed, e.g. some use of incorrect words, omitted phrases, incorrect tenses.
1-2	Only isolated words or phrases are appropriately transferred;....	 There are frequent errors and omissions that prevent the message being conveyed, e.g. frequent use of incorrect words, omitted phrases, incorrect tenses.
0	No rewardable communication.	

Speaking: Read aloud – Foundation

(Total: 12 marks)



Task: Read aloud a minimum of 35 words

1) Read aloud text – Foundation

(8 marks)

Language Knowledge and understanding

AO3	Clarity of pronunciation	Impact on message
7-8	Pronunciation is generally clear and comprehensible ;	 lapses in SSCs have little or no impact on the message.
5-6	Pronunciation is sometimes clear and comprehensible;	 lapses in SSCs occasionally makes the message unclear/difficult to understand immediately.
3-4	Pronunciation is occasionally clear and comprehensible;	 lapses in SSCs sometimes cause the message to break down.
1-2	Pronunciation is limited in clarity;....	lapses in SSCs often cause the message to break down.
0	No rewardable material.	

Guidance on application of read-aloud mark grid

The read aloud will be marked holistically, taking into account the whole text that is read out. Students will not be assessed on the quality of their French accent. Anglicised accents will not impact on success as long as pronunciation is clear and comprehensible and SSCs are accurate.

When assessing the read aloud, examiners should initially not look at the text when they are listening, but should assess the pronunciation based on how much they can understand of what the student says. Examiners should then check the text for any areas of uncertainty.

2) Read aloud questions - Foundation

(4 marks)

Task: Answer 2 questions –

R]: Response to spoken language

Use the grid below to tally response, then use this to inform the response mark below.

AO1		Q1	Q2
2	Response fully communicated.		
1	Response partially communicated, some ambiguity.		
0	No rewardable communication.		
TOTAL/4:			



Speaking: Role Play - Foundation

(10 marks)

Task:

Pupil conveys 5 messages. 4 statements, 1 question

[R]: Response to spoken language

5 messages - 2 marks for each message

(10 marks)

AO1						
		Statement	Statement	Statement	Statement	? Question
2	Response fully communicated.					
1	Response partially communicated, some ambiguity.					
0	No rewardable communication.					

There is one mark grid to be applied to this task. The mark grid is applied once to each individual response to the prompts.

There is a maximum of 2 marks for each of the five prompts on the role-play cards. Students are awarded for an appropriate and clearly communicated response to the teacher's question.

Where the response is not relevant or appropriate to the question asked, a mark of 0 should be awarded.

Examiners must use the specific Guidance on application of the mark grid, exemplification of live assessments issued at standardisation and their professional judgement before deciding on a mark.

Speaking: Picture Task - Foundation

(28 Marks in total)

1) Picture task: picture description

(8 marks)

Task: Response to the stimulus people – location - activity

(1) [R] Response to stimulus

(4 marks)

AO2	[A]: Addressed	[D]: Development	[CO]: Comprehensibility
4	Two or more bullet points addressed.	Ideas are generally developed, to describe different, relevant aspects of the picture.-	-Response is generally comprehensible; some messages may be unclear.
3	Two or more bullet points addressed	Some development of ideas to describe different, relevant aspects of the picture.-	-Response is comprehensible in some parts; the message may occasionally break down.
2	One or more bullet point(s) addressed.	Occasional , brief development of ideas to describe different, relevant aspects of the picture.-	- Some parts of the response are comprehensible; the message sometimes breaks down.
1	One or more bullet point(s) addressed.	Little or no development of ideas to describe different, relevant aspects of the picture.-	- Limited parts of the response are comprehensible; the message often breaks down.
0	No rewardable material.		

(2) [L]Linguistic knowledge and accuracy

(4 marks)

AO3	[V+S]: Variety of Vocabulary + Structures	[A]: Accuracy
4	Some variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures.	Generally accurate use of language; some minor errors, there may be an occasional major error.
3	Occasional variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures	Some accurate language; errors occur, some of them major
2	Limited variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures.	Limited accuracy in the language; frequent errors both major and minor.
1	Minimal variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures; likely to use individual words and/or phrases in isolation.	Minimal accuracy in the language; errors throughout , most of them major.
0	No rewardable material.	

Addressed (Bullet points): the mark grids for AO2 indicate the minimum number of bullet points in the task that **must** be addressed before a student may be placed in any particular band. A bullet point in a task will be considered addressed if there is evidence of a response to it. There is no requirement for equal development of the bullet points.

Before awarding a mark, examiners should consider coverage of the task bullet points alongside the other assessment criteria in the band, as a best fit in a lower band may be more appropriate. For example, a student who addresses two or more task bullet points in the picture task will not automatically be placed in one of the top two bands; they may be placed in one of the bottom two bands if they do not meet the other requirements for development of ideas and comprehensibility. Candidates may address the task bullet points in any order.

2) Picture task compulsory questions - Foundation

(4 marks)

2 questions -

[R] Response to spoken language

Use the grid below to tally response, then use this to inform the total.

Use the grid below to tally response, then use this to inform the response mark below.

AO1		Q1	Q2
2	Response fully communicated.		
1	Response partially communicated, some ambiguity.		
0	No rewardable communication.		
TOTAL/4:			

Students will answer two short questions related to the picture. The mark grid is applied once to each response. There is a maximum of 2 marks for each answer. Students are awarded for an appropriate and clearly communicated response to the teacher's question. Where the response is not relevant or appropriate to the question asked, a mark of 0 should be awarded.

3) Picture Task Unprepared Conversation - Foundation

(16 marks)

[R]: Response to spoken language

(12 marks)

AO1	[R] Relevant response	[D]: Development	[C]: Comprehensible
10-12	Gives some relevant responses to questions.	Develops ideas with some extended sequences of speech.	Response is generally comprehensible; some messages may be unclear.
7-9	Gives occasional relevant responses to questions.	Develops ideas with occasionally extended sequences of speech.	Response is comprehensible comprehensible ; the message may occasionally break down..
4-6	Gives limited relevant responses to questions; there may be times when the speaker is unable to respond.	Development of ideas is limited ; brief responses which the speaker may not be able to sustain.	Limited parts of the response are comprehensible; the message sometimes breaks down.
1-3	Gives minimal relevant responses to questions; often not able to respond/relies on rehearsed language that is irrelevant to the question.	Little or no development of ideas; very brief responses, which the speaker can often not sustain.	Isolated parts of the response are comprehensible; the message frequently breaks down.
0	No rewardable material.		

[L]: Linguistic knowledge and accuracy

(4 marks)

AO3	[V+S]: Variety of Vocabulary + structures / Complexity	[T] Timeframes	[A]: Accuracy , minor/major errors
4	Some variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures occasional use of complex language.	Generally successful use of three timeframes	Generally accurate use of language; some minor errors, there may be an occasional major error.
3	Occasional variety of vocabulary and straightforward grammatical structures..	Some successful use of at least two timeframes, occasional slip in more complex constructions.	Some clear and accurate use of language; some major and minor errors.
2	Limited variety of vocabulary and straightforward grammatical structures, likely to be repetitive.	Limited success with different timeframes.	Limited accuracy with language; many major and minor errors.
1	Minimal variety of vocabulary, likely to use individual words and/or phrases in isolation.	Minimal success with different timeframes.	Minimal accuracy in the language; errors throughout, both major and minor.
	No rewardable material		

Writing: 4 sentences – Foundation Question 1

(8 marks)

Task: For this question, students are expected to produce four short sentences describing the picture. The mark grid is applied once to each individual sentence. There is a maximum of 2 marks for each sentence. Students are awarded marks for clear communication and relevance in relation to the picture

Response to stimulus

AO2		SENTENCE 1 ✓	SENTENCE 2 ✓	SENTENCE 3 ✓	SENTENCE 4 ✓
2	Relevant information clearly communicated in a sentence or clause.				
1	Relevant information partially communicated in a sentence or clause.				
0	No rewardable material.				

Total:

Writing: Response to 5 bullet points – Foundation Question 2

14 marks.

Task: 5 items to communicate - approx. 50 words

[R]: Response to stimulus
(9 marks)

AO2	[A] Addressed	[D] Development	[Co] Comprehensible
7-9	All three bullet points addressed	Some development of ideas	Most of the response is comprehensible; some messages may be unclear.
4-6	Two or more bullet points addressed	Limited development of ideas	Some parts of the response are comprehensible; the message sometimes breaks down.
1-3	One or more bullet point addressed	Little or no development of ideas	Few parts of the response are comprehensible; the message often breaks down.
0	No rewardable material.		

[L]: Linguistic knowledge and accuracy
(5 marks)

AO3	[VV]: Variety of Vocabulary and phrases	[VS] Variety + Complexity of grammatical structures	[A]: Accuracy minor/major errors
5	Some variety of vocabulary and phrases	Simple grammatical structures with some variety, some linking of sentences with conjunctions	Some accurate language, mostly minor errors.
3-4	Limited variety of vocabulary and phrases	Simple grammatical structures with limited attempt at variety, limited linking of sentences with conjunctions	Limited accurate language; errors occur, some of which may be major.
1-2	Minimal variety of vocabulary and/or phrases in isolation	Minimal use of simple grammatical structures, likely to be repetitive	Minimal accuracy in the language, frequent errors both major and minor
0	No rewardable material.		

Writing: Response to 4 bullet points Foundation Overlap Question 3

(18 marks)

Task: 80-90 words response to 4 bullet points.

[R]: Response to stimulus

(13 marks)

AO2	[A] Addressed	[D]: Development	[Cl]: Comprehensible
11-13	All four bullet points addressed	Frequent development of ideas	Response is comprehensible; an occasional message may be unclear.
8-10	Three or more bullet points addressed	Some development of ideas	Response is generally comprehensible; some messages may be unclear/difficult to understand immediately.
5-7	Two or more bullet points addressed.	Occasional , brief development of ideas	Some parts of response are comprehensible; the message sometimes breaks down.
1-4	One or more bullet point addressed	Little or no extra detail added to ideas	Limited parts of response are comprehensible; the message often breaks down.
0	No rewardable material.		

[L]: Linguistic knowledge and accuracy

(5 marks)

AO3	[V]: Vocabulary + Structures – Extension + complexity	[T]: Timeframes	[A]: Accuracy
5	Some variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures; some extended sentences; occasional complex language	Generally successful use of three timeframes	Any errors are mainly minor] but some major errors may occur, particularly in complex structures and sentences.
3-4	Occasional variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures; occasionally extended sentences.	Some successful use of at least two timeframes	Errors are mainly minor but some major errors may occur.
1-2	Limited variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures; short, simple sentences	Limited success with timeframes.	Limited accuracy in the language; frequent errors both major and minor.
0	No rewardable material.		

Writing: Translation – Foundation Question 4

(10 marks)

Task: Translate minimum 35 words

[R]: Response to stimulus

(6 marks)

A02	Transfer of Meaning	Clarity/completion
5-6	The meaning of the original language is appropriately transferred; ...	... only the occasional message may be unclear or incomplete.
3-4	The meaning of some parts of the original language is appropriately transferred;	...the message sometimes breaks down or is incomplete.
1-2	The meaning of limited parts of the original language is appropriately transferred; ...	... messages are frequently unclear and/or incomplete.
0	No rewardable material.	

[L]: Linguistic Knowledge and accuracy

(4 marks)

A03	Vocabulary and grammatical accuracy	Type of error (minor/major)
4	Vocabulary and grammatical structures are generally accurate; ...	 some minor errors, there may be an occasional major error.
3	Vocabulary and grammatical structures are sometimes accurate;	 errors include some major errors.
2	Vocabulary and grammatical structures are limited in accuracy; ...	 frequent errors occur, both major and minor.
1	Minimal instances of accurate vocabulary and grammatical structures; ...	... errors throughout , most of them major.
0	No rewardable material	

Speaking Additional guidance

Interaction between AO1/AO2 and AO3 marks (Picture task with conversation only)

- The response to spoken language (AO1) and response to stimulus marks (AO2) do not limit the mark for linguistic knowledge and accuracy (AO3), except where a student produces a response that is wholly irrelevant to the task set. In this circumstance, 0 marks for both (AO1)/(AO2) and (AO3) will be awarded.
- Linguistic and grammatical errors are accounted for in the AO3 grid and should therefore be disregarded when applying the AO2 grid.

Errors (AO3 grids: Picture task with conversation only)

A *minor error* - inaccurate but does not prevent meaning, i.e. the message may take time to understand but is still understood (see tables below).

A *major error* - inaccurate and prevents meaning, i.e. the message cannot be understood (see tables below).

Minor errors – inaccurate but do not prevent meaning

Adjective agreement	La mer est vert. Mon frère est intelligente.
Gender	Dans le ville il y a un piscine.
Contractions	Ma maison est près de le parc.
Word order (incorrect)	Je n'ai mangé pas à midi.
Mother-tongue interference	Mon père est un professeur. C'est mon anniversaire, je suis 16 ans.
Relative pronouns	Mon frère, que aime le foot, joue tous les samedis.
Vocabulary	Mon équipe a joué très mauvais. Mon ami est dans France.
Constructions	En France il y a chaud en été.

Major errors – inaccurate and prevent meaning

Incorrect verb formation	Est-ce que nous allez au cinéma ce soir? J'alle au marché. Je recève des cadeaux.
Tenses (incorrect)	Demain il est allé au collège en bus.
Vocabulary	Ma mère est courante.
Use of infinitive instead of conjugated verb	Lucie avoir un accident de voiture.
Mismatch of subject and reflexive pronoun	Je veux s'amuser.
Mother-tongue interference	Mon père travaille dans un office.

NB: these are examples only and do not constitute a finite list. Some errors may fall into more than one category.

Glossary of terms

AO2 grid (Picture description task only)

Addressed (*Bullet points*): the mark grids for AO2 indicate the minimum number of bullet points in the task that must be addressed before a student may be placed in any particular band. A bullet point in a task will be considered addressed if there is evidence of a response to it. There is no requirement for equal development of the bullet points.

Before awarding a mark, examiners should consider coverage of the task bullet points alongside the other assessment criteria in the band, as a best fit in a lower band may be more appropriate. For example, a student who addresses two or more task bullet points in the picture task will not automatically be placed in one of the top two bands; they may be placed in one of the bottom two bands if they do not meet the other requirements for development of ideas and comprehensibility. Candidates may address the task bullet points in any order.

AO1 and AO2 grids (Picture task and conversation)

Development refers to additional detail, reasoning, justification and/or elaboration on key points.

Comprehensible relates to how easy it is to understand the main points and ideas of the response as a whole. Linguistic and grammatical errors are accounted for in the AO3 grid and should therefore be disregarded when applying the AO2 grid.

AO3 grids (Picture task and conversation)

Complex language includes features such as:

- longer sentences with coordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, or), subordinating conjunctions (e.g. because, when)
- other complex structures such as relative and infinitive clauses
- varied use of pronouns
- multiple conjugated verbs in one sentence or clause
- use of grammatical structures and word order that is very different to English in form and/or function.

Variety refers to the range of vocabulary and grammatical structures listed in the specification for each tier.

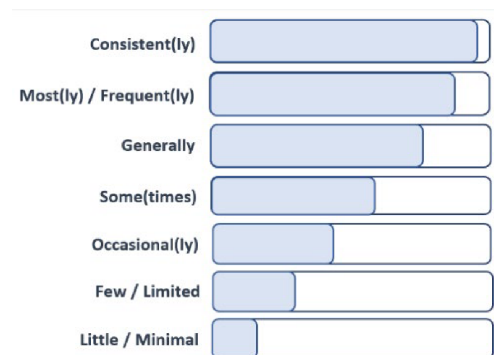
Any grammatical structures or vocabulary used which is outside of these lists is rewarded with equal (but not extra) credit.

If the response is in the top band for variety but in the bottom band for accuracy, then a mark in the middle band is likely to be the most appropriate. Equally, if the response is in the top band for accuracy but in the bottom band for variety, then a mark in the middle band is likely to be the most appropriate.

Timeframes refers to expressions of past, present and future. Various tenses can be used to express a timeframe. For example, the present tense in the following sentence is used to express a future timeframe: 'I'm seeing my friends next week.' In the following sentence a future tense is used to express a future timeframe: "I will go to the cinema".

Differentiation terms within the mark scheme (AO1, AO2 and AO3 grids: all questions)

As guidance, the illustration gives an indication of the relative relationship of terms used in the mark grids. Note: The illustration should be referred to in conjunction with individual mark grids as each term does not necessarily equate to high or low marks. For example, although "frequent development..." equates to higher marks "frequent errors..." would conversely equate to lower marks.



Microsoft Copilot's interpretation!

- Consistently - 100%
- Frequently - 85%
- Generally - 70%
- Sometimes - 55%
- Occasionally - 40%
- Few/limited - 25%
- Little/minimal - 10%

Writing Additional guidance

Additional guidance

Interaction between AO2 and AO3 marks (all questions)

- The response to stimulus mark (AO2) does not limit the mark for linguistic knowledge and accuracy (AO3), except where a student produces a response that is wholly irrelevant to the task set. In this circumstance, 0 marks for both (AO2) and (AO3) will be awarded.
- Linguistic and grammatical errors are accounted for in the AO3 grid and should therefore be disregarded when applying the AO2 grid.

Errors (AO3 grids: all questions)

A minor error - inaccurate but does not prevent meaning, i.e. the message may take time to understand but is still understood (see tables below).

A major error - inaccurate and prevents meaning, i.e. the message cannot be understood (see tables below).

Minor errors – inaccurate but do not prevent meaning

Adjective agreement	La mer est vert. Mon frère est intelligente.
Spelling (slight)	J'aime le frommage.
Gender	Dans le ville il y a un piscine.
Accents	Mon anniversaire est le deux fevrier.
Contractions	Ma maison est près de le parc.
Word order (incorrect)	Je n'ai mangé pas à midi.
Mother-tongue interference	Mon père est un professeur. C'est mon anniversaire, je suis 16 ans.
Relative pronouns	Mon frère, que aime le foot, joue tous les samedis.
Vocabulary	Mon équipe a joué très mauvais. Mon ami est dans France.
Constructions	En France il y a chaud en été.
Missing/incorrect accents	Mon anniversaire est le deux fevrier/février

Major errors – inaccurate and prevent meaning

Incorrect verb formation	Est-ce que nous allez au cinéma ce soir? J'alle au marché. Je recève des cadeaux
Spelling (misleading)	J'aime la nation et le tennis.
Tenses (incorrect)	Demain il est allé au collège en bus.
Vocabulary	Ma mère est courante.
Use of infinitive instead of conjugated verb	Lucie avoir un accident de voiture.
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Glossary of terms (questions 2 and 3)

AO2 grids

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Development refers to an additional clause or sentence that elaborates or provides additional detail to the response to a task bullet point. There is no requirement for equal development of the task bullet points.

Comprehensible relates to how easy it is to understand the main points and ideas of the response when read as a whole. Linguistic and grammatical errors are accounted for in the AO3 grid and should therefore be disregarded when applying the AO2 grid.

AO3 grids

Complex language includes features such as:

- longer sentences with coordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, or), subordinating conjunctions (e.g. because, when)
- other complex structures such as relative and infinitive clauses
- varied use of pronouns
- multiple conjugated verbs in one sentence or clause
- use of grammatical structures and word order that is very different to English in form and/or function.

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Differentiation terms within the mark scheme

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