

## KS3 curriculum analysis and development towards the new GCSE

**The new GCSE (French, German, Spanish) is for first teaching from September 2024, with first examinations in summer 2026. The first cohort to take the new exam will be the students starting Y9 in September 2023.**

The new GCSE subject content for French, German, and Spanish sets out that students learn and can readily use the **key vocabulary** (1250 (F) / 1750 (H) lexical items, of which 85% (of 1200/1700) are from the 2000 most common words, and 15% may be of any frequency, plus 30 multiword phrases and 20 cultural items), the **grammar**, and the **phonics** (as specified in the grammar annex) so that they can understand **and** produce meaning, write with increasing accuracy and speak with increasing fluency. In light of these requirements, languages teachers are currently engaged in reviewing their KS3 curriculum.

This document sets out some questions to help departments review their current provision. This session sets out the main principles for designing a successful curriculum for Modern Languages at Key Stage 3 and 4.

### Questions to guide KS3 curriculum analysis

As you analyse your existing curriculum content, consider the following questions (and, if helpful, make use of the checklist below to record responses):

#### Checklist: Phonics questions

	Questions to consider	Yes / No / N/A	Additional Responses
<b>1. CONTENT</b>	Are all the sounds of the language listed in the new GCSE taught and practised at KS3 i.e., the sound-symbol correspondences (SSC), liaison (for French), word stress (for French, German, Spanish)?		

<b>2. SEQUENCING</b>	What determines the order in which the SSC are taught and practised (e.g., their frequency, importance for meaning, difference to English SSC, difficulty of pronunciation)?		
<b>3. REVISITING</b>	Phonics knowledge is fragile and prone to decay. Are the SSC regularly revisited and practised over extended periods of time?		
<b>4. PROGRESSION</b>	Do the opportunities for practice set out in the SOW lead to progression over time? E.g., recognition <input type="checkbox"/> production; individual SSC <input type="checkbox"/> contrasting pairs of SSC <input type="checkbox"/> larger sets of SSC.		
<b>5. PRACTICE</b>	Do students practise with a range of activities e.g., bimodal input (i.e., tracking sound and writing simultaneously), transcription, and read aloud?		
<b>6. ASSESSMENT</b>	How well do you know how students are doing? Are phonics assessed at KS3? How, and how often?		
<b>7. KS2-3 PLANNING</b>	Is there anything (more) that could be done pre-transition to lighten the phonics learning load at KS3? i.e., some or all of the SSC could be taught and practised from Y3 – Y6.		

### Checklist: Vocabulary questions

Focus Point	Questions	Responses
<b>1. LOAD</b>	What is the overall vocabulary load of the SOW? (i.e., what is the expected average rate of word learning per week?	
	Do we expect students to learn <i>all</i> the words we have on the SOW? If not, how are we signposting on our SOW which words are for active learning and retention, and which might be learnt incidentally and will not be explicitly taught or tested later?	
	Is the 'load' right? I.e. about an average 10 words per week (about 4-5 per lesson/hour).	
	What is the rationale for spending lesson time on words that we do not expect them to learn and retain? Are these extra words really needed, or do they put unnecessary pressure on precious curriculum time? Could some of these words be 'personalised' vocabulary, i.e., useful for individual students rather than whole classes?	
<b>2. VARIETY</b>	Do the vocabulary 'sets' we teach consist of mixed word classes (e.g., a set of 10 words might have some nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, conjunctions—or at least, more than one word class—such that students can understand and create new sentences with the words from the outset)?	

<p><b>3. USEFULNESS</b></p>	<p>Are the vocabulary sets informed by 'frequency' (i.e., how often the words are used by speakers of the language)? Are the vast majority of the words high frequency and, therefore, useful in many contexts? Are lower frequency words chosen with clear reasons?</p>	
	<p><b>Note:</b> as part of answering this question, departments may find it helpful to compare their KS3 vocabulary lists to an example GCSE list (i.e., a word list that follows the parameters for the new GCSE).</p>	
<p><b>4. GRAMMAR</b></p>	<p>Do the vocabulary choices support grammar teaching, so as to avoid complex rules and exceptions in the earliest stages? For example, all the French colours are ideally not taught at the same time because 4-5 different agreement rules would be required; to support the initial learning of gender and articles, Spanish nouns with regular endings (-o for masc., -a for fem.) would be selected.</p>	
<p><b>5. VERBS</b></p>	<p>Are there enough verbs on the SOW and are they the most useful i.e., most frequent verbs?</p>	
<p><b>6. KS2-3 PLANNING</b></p>	<p>Is there anything (more) that could be done pre-transition to lighten the vocabulary learning load at KS3? E.g., around 500 words could be taught over the 4 x years of KS2 at an average rate of 3.2 words per week. Ideally, these words would be high frequency and would overlap with words on the new GCSE.</p>	

## Checklist: Grammar

Focus Point	Question	Yes, No, N/A	Additional Responses
<b>1. CHOICE</b>	Is the grammar chosen the most useful, and is it overtly mapped to grammar in the new GCSE?		
<b>2. PRESENTATION</b>	Is new grammar presented clearly and briefly, without too much presented at once?		
<b>3. SEQUENCING</b>	Is the grammar sequenced in a principled way (e.g., with the most frequent and/or the most regular and widely generalisable patterns and functions taught first, and other, less frequent or less generalizable, less prototypical variations taught later)? Is there an awareness of cross-linguistic (L1-L2) complexities when sequencing and teaching the grammar?		
	Does the SOW make explicit when grammar features will be revisited? And will these revisits use <i>different vocabulary</i> to 'host' the same grammar, in <i>different contexts</i> (e.g., themes), and contrast the meaning (or function) of the grammar with <i>different grammatical patterns</i> (e.g., past tense		

	contrasted with present then later with future; 1 <sup>st</sup> person contrasted with 3 <sup>rd</sup> person then later with 2 <sup>nd</sup> person)?		
<b>4. COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION OF THE MEANING (FUNCTION) OF THE GRAMMAR</b>	Do the activities help students to process the <i>meaning</i> (function) and <i>form</i> (sounds and spelling) of new grammar? Is this first done thoroughly <i>receptively</i> i.e., in structured listening and reading activities? Are these followed by production practice, in more structured activities first, gradually moving to freer activities in which students need to actively decide which grammar to use?		

### An example of curriculum analysis informed by the questions in the checklist

The analysis below was undertaken to probe the compatibility of pursuing a **language-led approach at KS3** (i.e., where sequencing is informed first and foremost by linguistic factors (such as frequency, difficulty) whilst continuing to follow a course that is predominantly **topic-driven**, whether it be a published KS3 course, or a school-created curriculum.

With the aim of providing clear, explicit examples, just *one module of one popular Y7 French textbook (Dynamo 1\*)* is analysed here, though it is important to note that the findings are likely to apply to any KS3 course that organises its teaching primarily in traditional topic units.

Any instances where the course content is felt not to support a language-led approach give rise to suggestions for ways in which the teaching material could be adapted, supplemented, or omitted to produce a closer fit. At the end of the document some general conclusions are drawn to give further guidance on KS3 curriculum design going forward.

### Analysis of Y7 French textbook<sup>1</sup> – Module 1

\*Bell, C., & Ramage, G. (2018). *Dynamo 1*. Pearson.

\*\*Lonsdale, D., & Le Bras, Y. (2009). *A Frequency Dictionary of French. Core Vocabulary for Learners*. New York: Routledge.

SSC = sound symbol correspondence

Textbook page reference	Phonics	Vocabulary [frequency ranking according to Lonsdale & LeBras, 2009**]	Grammar	Notes	Suggestions for adaption
pp.6-7		<p>months, days, alphabet letters, notes on the five written symbols</p> <p><i>lundi</i> [1091 <i>mardi</i> [1044] <i>mercredi</i> [1168] <i>jeudi</i> [1112] <i>vendredi</i> [1086] <i>samedi</i> [1355] <i>dimanche</i> [1235]</p>		<p>assumes prior knowledge of these, so attempts a quick re-visit</p>	<p>Omit this double page, then:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do phonics ahead of alphabet and leave alphabet till end of this module, as the alphabet (i.e., the names of the letters) in French does very little to support (and possibly harms) learning to read and spell.</li> <li>2. use days of the week for SSC teaching / revisiting, particularly if believed they were taught at KS2.</li> </ol> <p>Note: not months as there are so many SSC exceptions – months come in later</p>
p.8	<p>é / l / u / ç / eu / th / e / qu / r / gn / en / in / un / au / eau / oi</p>			<p>Choice and order of phonics in the course could be better – a particular problem is</p>	<p>This is a lot of SSC to present all at once, and systematic re-visiting later will certainly be necessary for all of these. However, it may be useful to do a burst of phonics at the start and then re-visit to practise.</p> <p>Suggested action: Review the selection of</p>

	Read aloud task with French names			<p><i>professeur</i> which isn't the [eu] SSC, as in <i>deux</i>.</p> <p>There's no reference to Silent Final Consonant (SFC) yet.</p>	<p>SSC in view of the most frequent and most problematic SSC. Then plan in systematic revisiting of all SSC (1-2 per week) to fit with vocabulary/grammar content after that, where possible.</p>
p.9		<p>Numbers 1-21 Asking and giving name and how you are</p>	<p>There is no explicit pattern taught here and the explanation of <i>comment</i> chunks is potentially confusing:</p> <p><i>Comment... ?</i> □ <i>How...?</i> <i>Comment ça va ?</i> □ How are you? It can also mean 'What..?'</p>	<p>These chunks give mixed messages about how the language works. Could the time at the very start of the course be more productively spent?</p> <p>If numbers are going to be done here, explicit attention needs giving to the phonics exceptions – 5,6,7,8,10...</p>	<p>There is a lot of content presented here without much opportunity to consolidate it. Use the context of students' name learning to introduce more straightforward question word <i>où</i> and part of the verb <i>être</i>, i.e. <i>est</i> (is), as anticipation of its imminent, explicit teaching. Consider whether the usefulness / rapport-building aspect of <i>ça va</i> and the more straightforward structure justifies its teaching – if so, teach that here, using the opportunity to practise useful SSC – e.g. SFC on <i>Salut !</i> And <i>pas mal</i> with names that rhyme with these key SSC will make this more memorable.</p> <p>Many numbers above 12 are relatively low frequency (though of course numbers like 20, 30, 100, are key). Perhaps the patterns 13-19 could be reserved for later.</p>

			<p><i>Comment t'appelles-tu ?</i> □ What is your name? (literally: How are you called?)</p>	<p>There are also a lot of numbers (21 new words). Is enough practice given in oral and written forms, for both comprehension and production?</p>	
p.10	S as silent on the end of most words.	brothers and sisters	<p><i>avoir</i> 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> persons singular</p>	<p>Gender and indefinite articles are presented here like this:</p> <p>In French there are two words for 'a' (the indefinite article).  masc. noun □ <b>un</b> <i>frère</i>  fem. noun □ <b>une</b> <i>sœur</i></p> <p><i>Je n'ai pas de</i> is presented as a chunk.  <i>Je suis (fils unique)</i> is also presented as a</p>	<p>Would it be better to allow some additional time at this point to introduce the concept of grammatical gender, with 'objects' rather than persons, so that students start to see this as a grammatical (rather than biological) concept?</p> <p>It would be possible to add in a lesson with <i>avoir</i> and different nouns before this one. This doesn't solve the difficulty of the <i>je n'ai pas de</i> or <i>je suis</i> chunks, though, which could be left until later.</p> <p>However, if the previous suggestions have been implemented it would also be possible to have introduced <i>je suis</i> vs <i>il/elle est</i> in the lesson on names - this could easily have been done in the context of classroom language with the simplest adjective ending rule introduced initially (<i>présent/présente</i>, when taking the register) which</p>

				chunk and there is no reference to <i>suis</i> belonging to <i>être</i>	can then be followed up at the first revisit of <i>être</i> + adjective agreement.
p.11	Alphabet practice brought back here	asking and giving age	<i>avoir</i> meaning 'be' with age – attention is drawn to the non-literal meaning	The reading task on this page has examples of <i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> in 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> persons singular, but no active processing (i.e., attention to their meaning) of these verb forms is required from the task. The writing that follows invites students to adapt those model texts, leading them to use <i>and il/elle est</i> without having explicitly learnt the meanings of <i>je suis</i> or <i>il/elle est</i> . Students	Teaching age is a non-typical use of the verb <i>avoir</i> and can send confusing messages about 'I have' and 'I am', which can stubbornly resist correction. However, if teachers are wedded to the notion of teaching age, then they would do well to spend this lesson teaching it – contrasting the forms of <i>avoir</i> (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> persons), and perhaps also revisiting the prototypical use of <i>avoir</i> (potentially using this as a source of contrast), so that at the very least, the grammar feature ( <i>j'ai</i> ) achieves more salience than currently. The reading and writing tasks are problematic and could be omitted to make room for the listening/reading processing tasks, to focus students' attention on the actual sounds and meanings of specific parts of the verb. If some parts of <i>être</i> ( <i>est, suis</i> ) have previously been introduced and practised, then perhaps there is scope for some contrastive work of 'be/have' ( <i>je suis</i> + adjective versus <i>j'ai</i> + noun; <i>il est</i> + adjective versus <i>il a</i> + noun). It seems clear that 'age' would be better left till later, in

				<p>have to pretend to be a celebrity . There is one example of <i>je suis un</i> + job and another of <i>je suis</i> + job without the indefinite article. Which should they follow? There is no guidance given.</p>	<p>favour of much more thorough practice of <i>avoir/être</i> first, with their more prototypical meanings.</p>
p.12	<p>Students are invited to try to pronounce the new words, then listen and check.</p>	<p>classroom vocabulary – <i>tableau, poster, prof, écran, ordinateur, porte, fenêtre, tablette, tables, chaises, élèves</i></p>	<p>Here the concept of grammatical gender is introduced with indefinite articles, both singular and plural. We haven't yet explicitly presented how to pluralise nouns.</p>	<p>Certain nouns are just presented in the plural form, so learners can't easily see the system for pluralising nouns.</p> <p>The listening exercise focuses on processing the vocabulary (all nouns), not on the new structure <i>il y a</i>.</p>	<p><i>C'est</i> hasn't yet been explicitly introduced in the course but is being used on the pages. If <i>être</i> has been given a more thorough treatment to this point, then it would be good to revisit it with any nouns that were taught as part of the <i>avoir</i> + indefinite article work, previously. This will make it possible to contrast <i>c'est</i> with <i>il y a</i> as these two structures can be confused by students.</p> <p>Phonics - it's early days. Perhaps it would be good to explicitly tie up SSC source words with new vocabulary items, to help students make the sound-symbol connection.</p>

					<p>Here some listening and reading sentence level tasks could be inserted to focus on recognising the meaning and form of <i>il y a</i> and how it differs from <i>c'est</i>.</p> <p><i>Il y a</i> and <i>Il a</i> also make a very useful contrast to compel students to process the meaning/form difference between these superficially similar structures.</p>
p.13	<p>phonetic transcription/ approximation for <i>qu'est-ce que</i> and <i>qu'est-ce qu'il y a</i> is given ☐ 'keskuh' and 'keskeel-ee-ya'</p>	<p><i>C'est</i> + adjectives <i>sympa / génial / moderne triste / nul / démodé</i></p> <p>adverbs: <i>au fond / à gauche / à droite / au centre</i></p>	<p>Here a table lays out definite and indefinite articles. No L or R input practice is done on these but students are invited to adapt the text, and make use of both definite and indefinite articles.</p>	<p>Adjectives used with avoidance of need to agree.</p> <p>This double page spread has 21 new vocabulary items on it, not including <i>il y a</i> or <i>c'est</i>.</p> <p>The text includes some HF language, which hasn't been explicitly introduced: <i>et, aussi, voici, ma,</i></p>	<p>It seems a lot of content to cover both the definite and indefinite article systems in one lesson. The context of describing classrooms is a good one and could usefully be repurposed to focus more cleanly on the new grammar features and a small set of high frequency (HF) vocabulary.</p> <p>Is the amount, pace, and sequencing right, though? indefinite ☐ definite active productive use within one double-page spread? Two lessons? singular and plural of both, <i>le, la, l' and les</i>.</p> <p>Some of the vocabulary seems really useful and high frequency e.g. the positioning adverbs. Could pupils have more of chance to consolidate some knowledge,</p>

				<p><i>le, l', la, blanc</i> (used post-nominally), <i>dans, sur, le mur, nous, les.</i></p>	<p>with just singular indefinite articles, initially in these two lessons, perhaps?</p> <p>There is too much covered in these two pages and some focus is required to give sufficient practice for both comprehension and production, in speech and writing. The complex question words are overwhelming at this point and could be usefully deferred to later, once simpler SSC and more transparent question words have been taught and practised.</p>
p.14	<p>[en], [an] and [on] are referred to as 'nasal' sounds, though it doesn't say that [en] and [an] are the same. Different SFC are on display – <i>le sport / les jeux</i> but these aren't mentioned,</p>	<p><i>et, mais, aussi</i> introduced and these nouns:  <i>le sport / le foot / les pizza / les serpents / la danse / la musique / les glaces / les jeux video / le vélo / les vacances / le college / le poisson / les BD, les</i></p>	<p>Using 'aimer' in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and the definite article</p> <p>adverb placement – example only with <i>aussi</i> given – no attempt to relate to other adverbs</p>	<p><i>n'aime pas</i> is used here. There is a brief note saying:  To make a sentence negative, use <b><i>ne..pas</i></b> or <b><i>n'..pas</i></b> to make a 'sandwich' around the verb. <i>Elle n'aime pas le poisson.</i> She doesn't like fish.</p> <p>The listening task on this page is</p>	<p>With the plural nouns, how would students know if masculine or feminine? Would they be able to say 'I have a video game' instead of 'I like the video games'? One suggestion would be to add in some practice tasks to focus on the gender of these new nouns, here. Such a task would enable a revisit of AVOIR and indefinite articles, too.</p> <p>There's also a need to consider whether it's still too early to bring in definite articles or whether it would be better to continue longer with indefinite articles. To help learners see how the language works, it would be useful to combine these with a few high frequency –er verbs in the present</p>

	nor is the exception 'foot'.	<i>mangas / le cinema / les araignées</i>	and show a general rule.	about understanding the nouns and whether it's "like / not like". But there is no focus on connecting the correct article to the noun or on varying the verb between the <i>ne</i> and <i>pas</i> to illustrate the grammar point.	<p>(just 1<sup>st</sup> person, or perhaps 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons singular) before introducing <i>aimer</i> + definite articles', so learners can chop up and use, for example, <i>je regarde / il regarde (un film), je mange / il mange (un fruit), j'achète / il achète (un vélo), j'écoute / il écoute (une chanson)</i>.</p> <p><i>J'aime</i> is a chunk that is often confused with <i>J'ai</i>. When <i>j'aime</i> is introduced, consider revisiting <i>j'ai, j'écoute, j'achète, j'adore</i> to reinforce the elision of 'e' in writing and speech, and to help break up the chunk <i>j + aime</i>.</p> <p>It feels like the grammar feature 'adverb position' has more importance than the one-off example sentence with <i>aussi</i> gives it. How will students remember this? Which other adverbs would fit the context and provide further exemplification of the rule? <i>Surtout / souvent</i> etc... For students to fully grasp that this is a pattern, it is probably better to save this until later.</p>
p.15			Using closed (Yes/No) raised intonation questions in	It feels like this is the best place to start with question-forming (apart from	<p>Has there been enough practice of the affirmative before introducing the negative?</p> <p>It feels like probably not (it's been put in</p>

			<p>subject-verb (SV) order</p>	<p>simple word for word equivalents like 'Where is XXX' or 'When is yyy'?</p> <p>Because the context is <i>aimer</i>, the negative structure is also introduced here, still as an unanalysed chunk.</p> <p>Students are asked to translate into English. There's no explicit guidance drawing their attention to the fact that French uses the definite article after <i>aimer</i> but English doesn't after 'like'. They'll</p>	<p>twice already, but slipped in a bit quickly, as an unanalysed chunk). What could we do to approach this more clearly?</p> <p>If the context is likes/dislikes we could just use <i>aimer / adorer / détester</i> in affirmative structure to 'ring in the changes' for the verb. In addition, adding just two more regular verbs – <i>regarder</i> and <i>écouter</i> – really helps learners to see that this pattern allows them to create many sentences, and that the pattern works for contexts beyond giving opinions.</p> <p>Whilst it might seem unnatural to avoid using a negative structure here, it's no less strange than other elements of what is presented here, such as the repetition of the noun to avoid using a direct object pronoun. Do you like dance? No, I don't like dance.</p> <p>Include some explicit reference to differences in definite article use (e.g., 'I like pizza' versus 'I like <u>the</u> pizza' in French) and practise this knowledge.</p>
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				probably get it right when translating this way round (French to English), but they won't be well-placed to remember the use of definite articles when they go from English to French.	
p.16	no SSC highlighted here – it would be a great opportunity to have practised SFC (with –d, -t, -s-p-z – inc. the adverbs), as well as the SSC [an] in <i>amusant</i> , <i>arrogant</i> , <i>grand</i> ,	<i>amusant</i> [4695] / <i>arrogant</i> [>5000] / <i>bavard</i> [>5000] / <i>fort</i> [107] / <i>grand</i> [59] / <i>intelligent</i> [2509] / <i>méchant</i> [3184]/ <i>patient</i> [1569]/ <i>petit</i> [138] / <i>timide</i> [3835]	adjective agreement (verb complement only) formal introduction of <i>être</i> (1-3 persons singular) and how to make it negative.	All of these adjectives make the most common adjective agreement change (+-e for feminine) and significantly, you also hear the difference. <i>Timide</i> is introduced as the only exception, as it already has an	This page could be used as is, assuming that other aspects of the language have been covered (e.g., relevant parts of <i>être</i> to ensure they can create and manipulate sentences – not just the isolated adjectives). It would be useful to add in short L/R/S/W tasks that focus on recognising and then producing the correct adjective form. For example, letting students hear <i>amusante</i> and then selecting if a female or a male is being described – this helps establish the form-meaning connection before production. If an additional lesson were added in here, that would be easy to include.

	<i>méchant</i> , and also the [en] in <i>patient</i> .	<i>assez</i> [321] / <i>trop</i> [195] / <i>très</i> [66] / <i>un</i> <i>peu</i> [1/91]		–e, although this rule isn't given (i.e. if adjective ends in –e, then it's the same for m/f). Even though a couple are low frequency, these are generally cognates and so the selection is well-chosen to support the grammar feature.	Recall that cognates are often easy to understand in the written form – <i>amusant</i> , <i>arrogant</i> – but when spoken these are not at all obvious. Small sound differences can really make a difference to comprehension (here, the 'ant' in French versus the 'ant' in English). So, teaching the SSC is really important to help cognate awareness – if they connect French sound 'ant' to the written letters 'ant' then the cognate-ness becomes clear as pupils 'see' the written word in their mind's eye.
p.17	Reading text on this page could be used for good 'read aloud' to practise sound-spellin g connections	Some cognates are introduced into the R text ( <i>soldat</i> , <i>princesse</i> , <i>journaliste</i> , <i>aventure</i> , <i>personage</i> )		The L/R tasks on this page are holistic but could be done by students, if all the suggestions for adaptation have been carried out. The writing task might need adapting but much of it could be retained as a	

				mini assessment of what they can do after their learning to this point.	
p.18	Several sounds in these verbs are worth focusing on: [an] [ou] [er/é] [g] (hard/soft) [gn] [ch] This isn't done in the book but could easily be added, and would build on the previous SSC recently revised in the adjective cognates.	<i>chanter</i> [1820], <i>danser</i> [2934], <i>retrouver</i> [244], <i>bloguer</i> [>5000] <i>surfer</i> [>5000] <i>tchatter</i> [>5000] <i>rigoler</i> [4994] <i>étudier</i> [960] <i>nager</i> [>5000] <i>jouer</i> [219] <i>gagner</i> [258]	infinitives and regular –er verbs  This page gives a brief explanation of what an infinitive is.	Title of unit is <i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais</i> but students are not required to use this structure.	The infinitive explanation could be made a little clearer and then some further work done to contrast infinitive and 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, thus emphasising the component parts ( <i>je, il/elle</i> ). In this work, some further HF –er verbs could be added in, in the next lesson perhaps to avoid loading too much new vocabulary and so leaving time for consolidation in particular those which students and teachers can use in classroom instructions ( <i>regarder, écouter</i> [perhaps introduced earlier, as above], <i>parler, demander, répéter, réviser</i> , but also additional, identified HF –ER verbs. There is space within this same lesson to do this.
p.19	A really useful time to focus on all the	<i>bavarder</i> [>5000] <i>bosses</i>	Possessive adjectives <i>mon, ma,</i>	Continuation of use of infinitive only.	Some time could be spent in this lesson contrasting infinitive and 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> person

	sounds that make [é] sound. We have <i>la rentrée</i> as vocabulary, and lots of verbs, also <i>et.</i>	[>5000] écouter [429]	<i>mes</i> are introduced here.	Possessives are only used incidentally and don't feature as an explicit focus for comprehension in any of the tasks.	<p>singular – there is a fair amount of space in here, which is good.</p> <p>It might be preferable to ignore the introduction of <i>mon, ma, mes</i> here, lest it get lost, and focus instead on verb morphology. <i>Mon, ma, mes</i> in French is particularly complex- gender and number agreement. And when thinking about the wider system, they agree with the possessed thing (not the possessor, as in English, his, her). When they are introduced, pupils will benefit from input-based recognition practice (e.g. hearing 'mon' and deciding which object—out of two or three—is the one being talked about).</p> <p>It feels like there is time in these two lessons to work with a variety of –er verbs in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular. The use of raised intonation questions in SV order could also usefully be recapped here.</p>
p.20	[qu] [r] [é] [an] [on] [in] (nasal sounds) reminders about these but there is	Recap numbers 1-31 i.e., <i>premier</i> [56] <i>un</i> [3] <i>deux</i> [41] <i>trois</i> [115] <i>quatre</i> [253]	giving dates asking and answering questions about yourself	This is the most problematic page so far. Until now, students might have been taught explicitly how to form	<p>My instinct for this point in the SOW is to decide how valid some of these questions are if formulated with raised intonation (+interrogative at the end), e.g.</p> <p><i>Tu as quel âge ?</i> (Uses a non-typical use of <i>quel</i> and as such can send confusing</p>

<p>no reminder that despite SFC, months have exceptions – <i>mars, août</i>.</p> <p>This would combine well with a revision of days of the week, and numbers (which also have exceptions to SFC rule)</p>	<p><i>cina</i> [288] <i>six</i> [450] <i>sept</i> [905] <i>huit</i> [877] <i>neuf</i> [787] <i>dix</i> [372] <i>onze</i> [2447] <i>douze</i> [1664] <i>treize</i> [3245] <i>quatorze</i> [3359] <i>quinze</i> [1472] <i>seize</i> [3285] <i>dix-sept</i> [3812] <i>dix-huit</i> [3592] <i>dix-neuf</i> [4851] <i>vingt</i> [1273] <i>trente</i> [1646]</p>	<p>Note: the questions are chunks – a variety of different syntax and formation, and use question words in non-typical ways.</p> <p><i>Comment t'appelles-tu ?</i></p> <p><i>Comment ça va ?</i></p> <p><i>Tu es comment ?</i> (all three of these use different syntax!)</p> <p><i>Quel âge as-tu ?</i></p> <p><i>C'est quand, ton anniversaire ?</i></p>	<p>raised intonation questions and practised those. This leaves them able to say:</p> <p><i>Tu aimes le sport ?</i></p> <p><i>Tu nages ?</i></p> <p>They have also (potentially) been taught <i>Où est.. ?</i> where the word order is identical to English.</p> <p>They have not yet practised VSO questions, so <i>As-tu</i> is just known at chunk level, and the same for all the other questions, of which there is a wide range of types.</p>	<p>messages about the meaning of <i>quel</i>.)</p> <p><i>Tu es comment ?</i> (uses a new function of 'comment' for English speakers - what is x like? (versus the more direct equivalent of 'how')</p> <p><i>Tu as des frères ou soeurs ?</i></p> <p>There are perhaps two options here: EITHER 1) use this opportunity to introduce inversion (Verb Subject) questions but introduce this idea with a lot of different verbs that students have already encountered. So, they see <i>as-tu, regardes-tu, écoutes-tu, aimes-tu, joues-tu</i> .... It would also be useful to contrast with non-question word orders with flat intonation, <i>tu regardes, tu écoutes</i>, so learners connect the inverted word order to the question function (e.g., they hear <i>regardes-tu</i>, with flat intonation such as a robot or an app might use, and have to decide whether they were asked a question or not).</p> <p>OR 2) introduce two or three question words, in SV word order sentences (only with their typical meanings (<i>quand</i> = when;</p>
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			<p><i>Tu aimes le sport ?</i>  <i>As-tu des frères et soeurs ?</i></p>		<p><i>comment</i> = how; and revise <i>où</i> from the first lessons). Then, after those meanings have been firmly established in speech and writing, then add in a couple of functional or uses that have more complex relations with English).</p> <p><i>Quel</i> is more complex as it has both 'which' and 'what' equivalents in English and has agreement rules attached to it, so could be reserved until later.</p> <p>This might now be a good time to introduce the alphabet – there has been time to do quite a lot of work on phonics (SSC). If schools want to do the Spelling Bee then they won't be able to leave the alphabet later than this. It is important to highlight some of the differences between the "names of the individual letters" versus the sounds they can make when combined with other letters. There could be a risk of confusion – potentially undoing some groundwork made, at a sensitive stage of learning phonics - but if kept clearly separate, this potential for confusion could be reduced.</p>
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p.21				<p>This page requires students to prepare a presentation about themselves (written format to be presented orally)</p>	<p>There would still be the opportunity for students to be writing about what they know, which would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saying things they have (inc. brothers and sisters and object possessions, e.g., computer).</li> <li>• Saying what they are like (character) and what any brothers and sisters are like.</li> <li>• Saying their age and age of brothers and sisters but only if that has been retained and, most critically, the more typical use of <i>avoir</i> [have] is firmly established.</li> <li>• Saying what they and others do (using 1st and 3rd persons singular) using frequent regular verbs and asking others if they do things.</li> <li>• Saying what they like + definite articles (but only if use of definite articles has been retained)</li> <li>• Using a couple of question words (if that route was chosen above)</li> </ul>
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## General conclusions

Overall and over time, a language-led approach (i.e., an approach in which the language selection and sequencing decisions are informed first and foremost by the features of the language rather than by the topic) is compatible with ensuring that students can also operate within specific topics. However, a curriculum cannot have two drivers. One must take precedence when language and topic goals diverge.

If topics drive curriculum choices, undesirable difficulty is written in (and to get around this, students are often presented with and must learn language that is in unanalysed chunks). This is problematic because the high frequency words that make up most of the new (and, in fact, the current) GCSE content will not appear solely (if ever) in the same pre-packaged collocations. Students have to learn individual words well, and know the grammar needed to combine them successfully for independent communication.

At the same time, a curriculum organised in topics cannot provide students with sufficient revisiting to secure learning. If the SOW were to include the required number of revisiting slots, students would end up repeating the same topics every month, every term. This would be repetitive and isn't therefore written into KS3 courses but, as a consequence, students often have insufficient encounters with the vocabulary to be able to use it securely in comprehension *and* production. They just don't remember the words well enough for long enough.

In contrast, a language-driven curriculum, in the earliest stages (KS2/Y7), presents language in broader contexts (e.g., talking about my possessions) as opposed to traditional topics (e.g., talking about my pets). However, over time, going into Y8 and Y9, as vocabulary and grammar repertoires grow, it becomes easier to integrate language and topics/themes. You can see plenty of examples of this in the LDP SOW and resources (e.g., German Y8 Term 1.1 Week 1 starts with holidays). The LDP SOW are fully worked, *editable* examples of KS3 language-driven curricula.

There are plenty of reasons for wanting to teach in topics. Some of these are:

- a. It makes sense for there to be a context or theme for our lessons. Topics lend a perceived content coherence to a SOW (e.g., over half-term modules – *Myself and others*, *Free time*, etc.).
- b. Topics lead you to a familiar 'communicative' outcome after, say, a half-term – e.g. write a paragraph about free time.
- c. Topics reflect (a notion of) what (it is deemed that) students want to talk about. They are therefore part of what many may perceive as 'interesting, engaging content'.
- d. Topics reflect the GCSE content, so have exam relevance. The vocabulary they contain is (or so we believed) a match for vocabulary they will need to succeed in the exams. However, analyses of the listening and reading components of GCSEs (AQA and Edexcel) show that on average, only 51% of words on the current awarding organisation vocabulary lists have ever been used in 4 years'

exams (3 live series plus Sample Assessment Material). Many of the words *actually* used in the exams are high frequency words that are not on the current AO lists (see Marsden, Dudley, & Hawkes, under revision).

e. We have done this for a very long time and change is difficult.

There are additional reasons for wanting to use a published textbook:

a. Money is invested to buy them.

b. The amount of time that is needed to produce material to work outside of a textbook (particularly to achieve coherent curriculum across a whole dept) makes the textbook an obvious choice (a necessity, even) for some departments.

c. Some teachers really like the books themselves.

d. Some teachers say that students like having a textbook to refer to (that is, where schools are still able to provide them for their students).

However, the [new GCSE Subject Content](#) (i.e., the new GCSE curriculum) sets out a wordlist of mostly high frequency words, rather than determined by topics. Broad themes will be selected by the AOs to suggest connections to the words and rich contexts for teaching them, but it is a given that *most (or all) of these words will be present in multiple themes*, as that is the nature of high frequency words. High frequency words are polyamorous; the company they keep multifarious, their collocations manifold. In addition, many high frequency words have multiple meanings (they are polysemous).

Given this significant change of driver at GCSE – from topic to language – it is unlikely to be helpful to continue to organise our KS2 and KS3 curricula in the same way as we have always done, particularly at the earliest stages.

### **Next steps for SOW development**

Using the answers to the KS3 curriculum questions above as a springboard, teachers can plan the changes they want to make. Changes don't have to be implemented all at once. There are some quick wins. Some or all of the following steps may be useful:

1. Focus on phonics

- Add the sound-symbol correspondences to SOW and ensure they appear multiple times (the SSC are listed in the GCSE French, German and Spanish subject content).
- Gather ideas and resources for practising them (one useful source of ideas is the LDP Phonics collection. You may find it helpful to use the Phonics tracking tab (scroll along to the right) within the LDP KS3 French, German, Spanish SOW. All resources linked to each SSC are hyperlinked from [here](#)).

## 2. Consider high frequency vocabulary

- Identify a core, majority high frequency, vocabulary set for each week of learning of, on average 10 words, which has mixed word class composition. To inform the choice of high frequency words, you could refer to the [LDP GCSE example lists](#).
- Make these the words that are set for pre-/post-lesson learning – preferably adding them to an online learning app so that all teachers and students in one school (or MAT) have them available, and can see students' progress in practising them.
- Add a column to the SOW and after 3 weeks (i.e., in week 4) copy and paste week 1's core words, and after 9 weeks, (i.e., in week 10) paste them again. After 10 weeks that means that there will be 20 words to revisit each week, along with 10 new words. Ideally students should have these available on an online app to revisit before the lesson. Although some (most) of these words will be useable within the week's lesson content (i.e., the new vocabulary and the grammar being taught), they won't all necessarily be so, therefore a short activity at the start of lesson 1 and perhaps again at the end of lesson 2 that week could revise the words and help the teacher keep track of the learning homework. There are several examples of formats/templates that work well for these short activities in the [LDP resources for Y7 Term 1](#).
- Analyse existing SOW for the number and types of verbs presented. Where there are gaps – i.e.. some of the most common verbs are omitted, consider adding those at useful points to increase the number of verbs that students know (i.e., lexically – the meaning of the verb; this is different to being able to manipulate it for different persons, number, and tenses). There are [lists of high frequency verbs on the LDP resource portal](#).

## 3. Teach grammar for creative manipulation

- Consider using very short explicit explanations of each grammar feature or sub-feature (as a leveller, before beginning the practice)

- Make the grammar feature task essential in L, S, R and W tasks (for ideas about how to do this, look at any of the KS3 LDP resources – it will be especially useful to take a look at how to do this in L and R activities, as with most L and R, there is in fact little need to pay any attention to grammar, so these activities have to be specially created)
- Build sentences from memory from the outset □ desirable difficulty
- Analyse existing SOW following the analysis model above, highlighting key areas where the suggested progression in the course is tangential to sequenced grammar progression or could even be misleading or harmful for learners trying to work out a language system, and noting suggestions about what might (eventually) be done.

#### 4. Develop unscripted speaking opportunities

Instead of rewarding rehearsed answers to sets of themed conversation questions, the new GCSE will require students to speak in unrehearsed situations, composing sentences themselves from familiar, (mainly) individual words that they know. They will be able to complete all tasks using words from the word list (but if they have learnt other words and use them successfully they will receive equal credit for them). The context for speaking will be largely unprepared (but with short preparation time to rehearse (with inner voice) the read aloud text, to look at the picture(s) stimulus and make some notes, and to prepare their responses to the role play prompts). Two unprepared interactions are included, one about the visual stimulus and one following the read aloud.

This means that quite a lot of the speaking will be about interaction – students will need to understand what is being said to them, and then use “clear, comprehensible speech” (as per the new GCSE Subject Content) when they talk.

We should anticipate more thoughtful communication than is required currently; so, spoken production is likely to be somewhat slower, likely to contain more errors than the delivery of memorised material does and we should expect the mark schemes to reflect this. There shouldn't be a way to know the questions in advance, so these tests should come closer to a 'real' interaction in terms of the skills and knowledge needed. The following steps may therefore be useful to consider for learners at KS2 and KS3:

- Make use of information gap tasks that compel one student to *listen and understand* whilst the other speaks (e.g., the listener has to complete grids or make selections to show that they have understood, and to force the speaker to use the right words and grammar to communicate the intended meaning) – see the [LDP Production tasks collection](#) for some examples.
- Plan for incremental speaking development from structured to freer tasks

- Include speaking activities without reliance on written prompts as this helps students to learn the language and retain it
  - Anticipate greater tolerance of spoken errors at GCSE than currently to reward more independent production
  - Alter existing KS3 tasks and assessments to change them from pre-learnt conversation answers to unscripted tasks
  - Engage students in independent sentence-building rather than using sentence builders
5. Develop knowledge of word patterns and cognate recognition
- Look up the [GCSE word patterns resources](#) on the LDP portal
  - Check own existing KS3 word list for any words that are examples of these patterns – consider adding in valuable activities to introduce and practise word pattern knowledge
6. Consider joining up the KS2 and KS3 curricula
- Audit your current KS2 curriculum against the three pillars, using a GCSE example list of vocabulary, the list of sound-symbol correspondences, and the grammar annexes from the new GCSE content
  - Consider curriculum changes to ensure optimal progression and retention of high-frequency language that will enable pupils to progress to KS3 with secure knowledge that they need for secondary school.
  - Work together cross-phase to plan (or at least to share detailed KS2 and KS3 curriculum plans).