

Example GCSE Word Lists

What is this resource and what is it for?

The [GCSE Subject Content for French, German, and Spanish](#) sets out parameters for the creation of lists of words on which students can be assessed (see also Annexes B, C, D, and E). These NCELP resources provide *examples* of such word lists, following the Subject Content parameters, for Foundation and Higher Tiers. These word lists can inform the creation of other word lists, which in turn could inform assessments and teaching materials. *Note: The Awarding Organisations' word lists are likely to differ from these illustrative lists.*

Why is this resource important?

Vocabulary list creation entails at least three major decisions: how many words to include, which words to include, and how to list them.

In terms of *how many* words: these lists follow the GCSE Subject Content specification of 1,250 items at Foundation and 1,750 at Higher. Those decisions were informed by: estimations of how many words can be reliably learnt in an average of 450 hours instruction in KS3 and 4; research about receptive vocabulary knowledge in year 11 (David, 2008; Milton, 2006); length of previous Awarding Organisations' lists; the number of words used in exams to date.

In terms of *which* words: these lists follow the GCSE Subject Content by being informed by frequency of use in the language (i.e., usefulness across contexts), relevance to the learners, and alignment between vocabulary and other language-related content (grammar and sounds of the language).

In terms of how to list the words, these lists follow Annex E in the Subject Content.

How was this resource made?

To create these word lists, NCELP drew on three other NCELP resources: [Highly Frequent Regular Word Families](#); [Thematic Categories](#); and [Derivational Morphology](#).

The lists contain the appropriate number of lexical items that are:

- *required* by the Subject Content grammar annexes (R),
- *optional*, selected by NCELP, and *within* the most frequent 2,000 words (O),
- *optional*, selected by NCELP, and *beyond* the most frequent 2,000 words ($\leq 15\%$ of total) (O>),
- *multiword units* (MWU; 30 items),
- *geographical and cultural words* (C; 20 items).

Each list was created by two or three NCELP language specialists, who collaborated across languages to ensure parity where appropriate. Each list was checked by a native speaker.

The lists provide information, in sortable columns, about: word frequency, part of speech, L2 headword, English equivalent(s), tier (F or H). They also provide information about multiple meanings, gender, and how many different corpora the word appears in.

Words are listed according to a version of level two of Bauer & Nation's (1993) seven levels of affixes. At level two, the dictionary form of the word is listed and, for our lists, knowledge is

assumed of inflected (and, for Reading only, derived) forms as laid out in Annex B of the Subject Content.

References

- Bauer, L., & Nation, P. (1993). Word families. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 6(4), 253-279.
- David, A. (2008). Vocabulary breadth in French L2 learners. *Language Learning Journal*, 36(2), 167-180.
- Milton, J. (2006). Language lite? Learning French vocabulary in school. *Journal of French Language Studies*, 16(2), 187-205.