

Frequently Asked Questions

OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE French H075 Unit F701: Speaking
OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE German H076 Unit F711: Speaking
OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE Spanish H077 Unit F721: Speaking

GENERAL

1. Is training available for teachers who are new to this specification?

Yes, training courses are held each academic year during the Autumn and early Spring. For full details, see the OCR website: http://www.ocr.org.uk/training/alevel_inset_training.html
If you have missed the relevant course, the document “Instructions for internally conducted oral examinations” gives a wealth of information. Follow the link below and search under “Key Documents”:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/asa_levelqceforfirstteachingin2008/french/documents.html

2. Can we still mark our oral exams and send them for moderation?

No, with the new specification there are three component options:

Option A / Component 01: Centres record speaking tests in digital (mp3) format and send **via internet** to OCR Repository.

Option B / Component 02: Centres record speaking tests onto CD and send **by post** to OCR.

Option C / Component 03: Examination conducted and assessed by a visiting examiner provided by OCR where candidature is 20 or more at both provisional and final entry stages. (Centres in close proximity may join together for this purpose.)

ROLE-PLAY

1. Are there major changes from the role-play task in the Legacy specification?

In general, the task is very similar to the role-play task in the Legacy specification. The new role-play task is worth 30 marks – 50% of the unit.

Each new role-play task has two extension points at the end of the task.

TOPIC DISCUSSION

1. Are candidates allowed to choose anything they like to talk about for the topic discussion?

No, the overarching principle is that the topic chosen must relate to one of the AS topics or sub-topics as detailed in Section 2.1.2 of the specification.

2. Are candidates allowed to talk about a literary text?

Yes – they can choose any literary text and should link their discussion of it to an AS topic or sub-topic (as detailed in Section 2.1.2 of the specification). They should avoid giving a general description of the plot (“telling the story”) and should concentrate on issues arising from the text that link to the AS topics or sub-topics.

3. Can candidates choose a film or a play?

Yes – and any film or play studied has to be in the target language. The discussion should be a critique, focusing on the analysis and evaluation of the impact of the film or play linking it to the AS topics or sub-topics, rather than “telling the story”.

4. Some of my candidates want to talk about a “famous personality” from the Target Language country. Is this acceptable?

Yes, provided that the **personality** is related to the AS topics or sub-topics. Very often a **personality** will belong to the “leisure and entertainment” business – e.g. sport, film, theatre – and would be suitable for the topic discussion. Remember, however, that candidates will need to develop a range of ideas and justify points of view, so talking about a personality is more than describing the person.

5. Could a candidate talk about “Life in the GDR before re-unification / Franco’s Spain / France under Occupation” for example?

Any topics relating to history / political changes / heritage are part of the A2 “Culture” sub-topic (Specification Section 2.2.2). As a general principle, anything which could be discussed at A2 level should be left until Year 13.

In Year 12, candidates should keep the topic chosen as straightforward as possible and show a personal response to the topic in their discussion.

6. How specific do candidates have to be as regards the Target Language country if they have chosen a topic such as “obesity”, “influences of the media” or “communication technology” for example?

The specification states that topics have to be approached within the context of a TL country / countries. Candidates are expected to have researched within this context. Even if the general views they express could equally apply to other countries, they will be expected to be able to quote examples and produce evidence to support their points of view that originate from the TL country. For example, if talking about the growing issue of obesity, a French candidate could quote action taken by the French government to combat this problem, what is done in French schools, the national day against obesity etc.

7. Will candidates lose marks if they don’t relate their topic to the TL country / countries?

Yes – a lack of specificity will be reflected in the mark awarded under Grid D: superficiality, relevance, ability to justify points of view.

8. Am I right in thinking that the discussion part of the exam does not include a presentation any more?

Yes, this is correct. There should be considerable interchange between the examiner and the candidate during the discussion and the candidate should engage the examiner in spontaneous conversation.

9. We note that candidates will be allowed to bring in one A4 page of notes for the oral examination. Could you please clarify if this is typed or handwritten – roughly how many words would be acceptable? Also, will OCR require centres to send them these notes?

Candidates' notes may be handwritten or typed – in a normal size font (e.g. Times New Roman 12), with normal page set-up and margins on one side of A4 paper. Candidates need to be made aware that these should be notes for reference only. Reading from prepared notes would be reflected in the mark awarded under Grid E: fluency, spontaneity, responsiveness. Centres will be required to keep these notes until after the publication of results – they will not usually be sent to the awarding body.