

Entry Level

Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in Modern Foreign Languages

French (8924)/German (8926)/Spanish (8928)

Summer 2005

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Examiners' Report

Edexcel Entry Level Certificate
French (8924)/German (8926)/Spanish (8928)



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Entry Level Certificate in Modern Foreign Languages French (8924) Examiners' Report - June 2005

Centres are now familiar with the administration of Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in French 8924 and seem to find the moderation system, which is a very similar procedure to GCSE, easier to administer as moderators receive fewer queries each year.

Unfortunately as in past years a minority of centres, and not only those new to this specification, did experience some real administrative difficulties as regards what, when and where to send the work and the OPTEMS. Edexcel does send full instructions to centres and the requirements are also clearly explained in the file of tasks. Teachers responsible for teaching and administering French 8924 are advised to ask their examination officer for a copy of the instructions well in advance of the deadline as a careful reading of these can save the school time.

It was clear this year that some centres waited to find out which candidates' work was to be included in the sample before filing and recording the work. This would seem to have resulted in inaccuracies, especially where the candidates themselves had filled in the record sheets. This is a practice not to be recommended because, as the work is often carried out over a period of time these sheets soon become tattered. Some centres did not realise that a coursework record sheet should also be completed and sent with the coursework. It is helpful if these can be filed with the candidate's work and not sent separately.

For a minority of centres there was some uncertainty over what to send. For those candidates asterisked on the Optems all assessment tasks, including recordings of the speaking tests for that centre, should be sent as well as the coursework together with the relevant record sheets to the designated moderator. The work of the remaining candidates should be retained by the centre in case a further sample is required for moderation, as did happen on several occasions this year.

Individual teachers in a centre should not send their work separately. This practice would suggest a lack of standardisation. All the work for a centre should be dispatched to the moderator at the same time; although it is appreciated that large centres may need to send more than one package. It is suggested that work is removed from hardback folder prior to posting. Each candidate's work should be firmly secured e.g. with a treasury tag. The majority of centres did manage to meet the deadlines.

Moderators are always grateful for the careful record-keeping and packing undertaken by teachers for this specification, but there are still a few centres who are not filling in the levels for the tasks completed on the record sheets. The specification clearly states the number of tasks required to reach the various levels. It is certainly not necessary to total up a candidate's marks for all the assignments. An increasing number of centres claimed levels for which insufficient tasks and/or coursework had been completed. This results in extra administration for centres as moderators are instructed to send for further samples of work.

There were some Optems that were completed incorrectly or not signed and in some cases the top copy was sent to the Moderator instead of to Edexcel. The green copy should be retained by the centre.

The nature of tasks undertaken for coursework was fairly predictable e.g. tourist brochures, school timetables, family trees but did still allow for more creative open-ended work. Many candidates took full advantage of this and made excellent use of their ICT and artistic skills and were a pleasure to view and to read.

Unfortunately a number of centres failed to ensure that a sufficient number of words were used or relied too heavily on repetition e.g. il y a and c'est. This would hardly seem to be in the spirit of the specification. It is important for teachers to note that a minimum of thirty words in the target language should be used in each piece of coursework although candidates do not have to use sentences or phrases.

MFL Teachers' co-operation is sought in order to ensure that the requirements of coursework are not abused. As so often happens, accuracy of language was sometimes sacrificed in the quest for advanced ICT perfection. Fortunately this involved relatively minor points which did not impede communication. Many candidates get pleasure from the freedom of choice offered in coursework. Perhaps those centres whose coursework consisted solely of written work lacked a dimension; although it is appreciated that the timetable may limit the time available.

It is expected that teachers will have checked and marked the coursework before entering it on the coursework record sheet and sending it to the moderator. Centres were generally careful to demonstrate a broad coverage of the five National Curriculum Areas of Experience and the four language skills. This is an aspect of the specification which has greatly improved over the years. As candidates may revisit a task if they are unsuccessful at the first attempt there is little point in sending these unsuccessful attempts in the folders. In a few cases it was a pleasure to award a higher level than that originally awarded by the teacher.

More centres are now entering candidates at the end of Year 9 or 10. Certification provides proof of study and may well present an opportunity for further study later in life. Although the tasks are National Curriculum Level 3 they are suitable for practice for the less able students taking GCSE. Coursework tasks can be used as preparation for both the speaking and writing papers.

In conclusion as practising teachers ourselves we recognise that for many candidates the folders we see represent real achievement and that certification is very important. At the same time we do not underestimate the help and encouragement that these students have received from their teachers. Moderators do appreciate the time taken by the majority of centres to administer ELC French correctly and hope that the comments above facilitate the work next year.

Entry Level Certificate in Modern Foreign Languages German (8926) Examiners' Report - June 2005

Ten centres submitted work for moderation and all three Levels available were awarded. The samples of five centres can be described as generally well presented, making the moderator's task straightforward.

In two centres, however, there were serious differences in the interpretation of the syllabus criteria, with one teacher understanding the requirements correctly and another needing to have several candidates re-graded or no award given. This highlights the need for rigorous internal moderation so that all teachers in a centre are applying the criteria as necessary. It would be unfair to penalise candidates unduly for minor shortcomings in administration by staff. It is of course better that this does not have to be brought into play and this can be done by ensuring each candidate has at least the minimum number of tasks completed for the Level and for each skill, ideally one or two more than the minimum so that even a few problems do not result in falling seriously below the required totals.

There were some very good examples of coursework, both using handwritten and ICT. On occasions, however, marking was over-generous, with the awarding of two points, when one would be more appropriate - for work with many errors and not always hitting the target minimum number of words.

The standard of the taped recordings was generally good to very good with just a small number being unclear. It is most helpful when the task about to be attempted is announced on the tape.

Although many centres mastered most of the administration, there were some aspects which gave cause for concern:

OPTEMS forms

- leading zeroes not filled in
- wrong copy sent to moderator
- if an asterisked candidate is withdrawn, the work of another candidate should be sent
- if the selected sample does not cover all levels awarded, extra samples should be included

Candidate Record Sheets

- tasks sometimes recorded in the wrong skill
- tasks sometimes recorded twice, perhaps in more than one skill
- task B18 (a & b) is to be recorded as only one task, not two
- tasks recorded as successfully completed when evidence does not support this
- no signature

Coursework Record Sheet

- sometimes no sheet completed
- no signature

In conclusion, the certificate continued to provide the opportunity to produce work that is meaningful and rewarding. The hard work of teachers who help candidates to achieve this is acknowledged and applauded. It is hoped that the comments above will help all involved to administer the syllabus more easily and effectively in the next session.

Entry Level Certificate in Modern Foreign Languages Spanish (8928) Examiners' Report - June 2005

It was very pleasing to see that the number of centres entering candidates for accreditation this year had been maintained from 2003. The course continues to offer candidates plenty of opportunities to succeed in their study of Spanish at Entry Level.

The work of candidates from 13 centres was moderated this year. The moderator agreed the marks from 11 of these centres. Where adjustments were made, it was due to candidates not having completed the required number of tasks or not having submitted the correct number of pieces of coursework to claim an award at a particular level. The requirements for each of the different levels are as follows:

Level 1	40 assessment tasks + 1 coursework task.
Level 2	50 assessment tasks (20 to be at level 2 or 3) + 2 coursework tasks.
Level 3	50 assessment tasks (20 to be at level 3) + 3 coursework tasks.

This year awards were claimed at all levels.

The use of ICT for coursework production is very encouraging and there were some excellent examples produced and presented for moderation. Some coursework tasks submitted consisted of extended writing tasks, which were of an excellent standard.

Some administrative issues came to light during the moderation period, which are worth mentioning here:

Date for submission - Please ensure that the samples of student work reach the moderator by the specified date. Any late submissions affect the moderation process and could lead to a delay in candidates receiving their results.

Optems - Centres should write the number 1, 2 or 3 (according to the level claimed) in the blank space alongside each candidate's name and the appropriate box, 1, 2 or 3 should also be shaded.

Record Sheet - This is a vital document and should be checked carefully prior to submitting centre marks. Some centres are still using an out of date record sheet that does not have a column indicating the level of each task. This is a useful check for centres and the moderator to ensure that a candidate has completed enough tasks in each skill to claim an award at a particular level. It is also important to tick against each task that has been successfully completed.

Task Evidence - It is important that all tasks that appear on the record sheet are actually submitted for moderation and that they have been marked using the current markscheme.

Tapes - Some tapes submitted were of very poor recording quality. It is important that the candidate's name and the centre number are given at the beginning of the tasks and also that each task is identified (e.g. - B3). Each candidate should provide tape-recorded evidence of having completed three speaking tasks. If sending a composite tape for moderation, please send only the recordings of the candidates requested in the sample.

Coursework - Please remember that to claim level 1, one piece of coursework must be submitted, 2 pieces for level 2 and 3 pieces for level 3. A correctly completed cover sheet must accompany the coursework.

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