



General Certificate of Secondary Education

French 4655 *Specification*

46553 Speaking (Controlled Assessment)

Report on the Examination *2010 examination - June series*

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Tasks/Administration

A wide variety of tasks were offered, some based on traditional topics but others on less obvious themes. Centres are reminded that each centre has a Controlled Assessment Adviser who will be able to advise and comment on centre-devised tasks and any other issues not covered in the FAQ document relating to Controlled Assessment on AQA's website. Centres can use the mfl@aqa.org.uk mailbox for the details of their adviser to be sent.

The task type appeared to have little effect on the performance of the students although personal information, whether about the students or in their role as a celebrity, was generally given to the highest standard. Some centres were very efficient, enclosing tasks sheets with a variety of unexpected questions to be asked, whereas others had to be prompted to send the relevant information. In a very small number of cases, the former specification based on a presentation with added questions was followed.

Many centres opted to expand the task by the judicious use of sub-divisions which allowed students to perform well and at their optimum level. However, in some cases there were many bullet points which were not all covered, resulting in a reduction to the maximum Communication mark which could be awarded (see published mark scheme).

The last bullet point on the task sheet is an exclamation mark and this signifies that the teacher will ask a question for which the student has not been able to prepare an answer. There are several things that the teacher should bear in mind when deciding on the unpredictable questions for a task. There should be a minimum of 4-6 unpredictable questions from which the teacher will choose one at random for each of the students. In order for the student to accomplish the unpredictable bullet point, he/she must answer the question by using a verb. It is preferable to ask a question that will be easily understood by the student, but will also give scope for the more able to expand their reply.

Centre Declaration Forms were often correctly enclosed with samples but occasionally had to be requested. Similarly, where Task Planning Forms had been used by students, they were generally enclosed but sometimes had to be requested. In several cases, conjugated verbs were included on the Task Planning Forms which caused a reduction in marks when the work was moderated. Centres seemed to have few problems sending in mark sheets and correct samples.

Recordings

The quality and media used varied tremendously. Many centres used sound files on memory sticks or CDs and quality was often very good, although in some cases candidates were not identified and the whole centre was recorded as one single sound file which rendered finding specific candidates for moderation very difficult indeed.

Some CDs would not play on computers or CD players and in some cases sound quality was poor or very low. Where an external microphone is used, it is essential that both the teacher and candidate can be heard clearly.

Timings

There were few problems with students exceeding the 6 minute time allowance, although a high proportion of students did not manage to get to 4 minutes, even when teachers tried to extend conversations by asking additional questions. Very occasionally long pauses existed which served to lengthen the time of the assessment, but also to depress marks awarded in several categories.

Student performance and assessment

Most recordings appeared to have been learnt by students and there was often a marked difference in the performance of students in the unpredictable part of the test.

Many teachers used follow up questions to try to elicit further information, opinions or justifications from students with varying degrees of success.

Assessment by centres varied enormously, but in general marks awarded were slightly generous in all categories, although Communication and Range and Accuracy of Language were usually more generously awarded than the rest. Some centres appeared to think that the use of two tenses gave students an automatic right to very high marks, which is not the case. Discrepancies were sometimes made worse by the acceptance of conjugated verbs on the Task Planning Form and in a few instances information given beyond the 6 minute cut off point seemed to have been credited.

Task Planning Form

As stated elsewhere in this report, there were some forms which contained conjugated verbs. If this has been noted on the centre's feedback form, this must be addressed in future series. However, there were a number of cases where excessive use of symbols made the form very difficult to interpret and there were some obvious cases where a code had been formulated, which is not acceptable.

The 40 word maximum was almost always adhered to and caused no significant problems.

Terminology – a glossary

Task Sheet	The sheet containing the bullet points in English which forms the task.
Unpredictable Question	The last question asked by the teacher, which the student has not prepared in advance. Shown as ! on the Task Sheet.
Task Planning Form	Downloadable from the AQA website, this is the form that a student uses as a prompt during the task. It is not compulsory.
Centre Mark Form	There are 2 of these, one for the recorded task and another for the unrecorded task. There are 3 copies, white, yellow and pink. Before May 7 in the year of entry, the marks for all students are entered on the form. The white copy goes to AQA and the other two go to the centre's moderator, who will then select a sample.
Recorded Task	The recording of this task is sent to the moderator. Only one task is sent for moderation.
Unrecorded Task	This is the second task (which may in fact have been recorded) but only the marks for this task are sent to the moderator, not the recording.
Candidate Record Form	This form is available on the AQA website and must be filled in for all students. It includes the breakdown of marks for the recorded and unrecorded tasks.
Centre Declaration Sheet	This is also available on the AQA website and is a declaration by the centre that the work is that of the students and has been carried out in line with the regulations.

The moderation process – a quick guide

1. Before 7 May, complete the Centre Mark Forms (SR for recorded task and SU for unrecorded task) and send the appropriate copies of both forms to AQA (top copy) and to your moderator (pink and yellow copies).
2. Receive the Centre Mark Form from your moderator highlighting the students whose recorded tasks are needed for the moderation sample, indicated by the letter S alongside the candidate name.

If your centre has 20 candidates or fewer, you should send the recorded tasks of all candidates to the moderator with the pink and yellow copies of the Centre Mark Forms. **The top copy should be sent to AQA.**

3. Send to the moderator the following:
 - Centre Mark Form (pink and yellow copies)
 - A recording of the Recorded Task for all students in the sample
 - A completed and signed Candidate Record Form for all candidates in the sample
 - The Centre Declaration Sheet (signed)
 - The Task Sheet for all tasks used by any candidate in the sample
 - A copy of the unpredictable questions for all tasks used in the sample
 - The Task Planning Form for each candidate (if used)

Please ensure that the recordings are clearly labelled (see Instructions for the June 2011 AQA Examinations – New GCSE Specification)

Extract from the published mark scheme

Marking Issues

1. Timings

Timing begins as soon as the teacher asks the first question relating to the first bullet point. From that point, the task should last between 4 and 6 minutes.

If the task lasts for less than 4 minutes (even 3' 59"), a student cannot get full marks for Communication. It would still be possible to achieve a mark of 9 for Communication. There is no impact on the other assessment criteria. If the task lasts for over 6 minutes, marking stops at 6 minutes.

2. Coverage of bullet points

In order to be able to score full marks for Communication, students must be able to give information on all bullet points on the task sheet. If there are any sub-divisions within the bullet points, these are **not** compulsory.

If one or more bullet points are not covered by the student, for any reason*, this will affect the **maximum** mark available for Communication, as follows:

Total number of bullet points in task	Number of bullet points <u>not</u> covered	Maximum mark for Communication
2-3 + ! task	1	7
2-3 + ! task	2	5
4 + ! task	1	8
4 + ! task	2	7
4 + ! task	3	5
5 or more + ! task	1	9
5 or more + ! task	2	8
5 or more + ! task	3	7
5 or more + ! task	4+	5

*The reasons for a bullet point not being covered are:

- i) The teacher fails to ask anything about that bullet point within the allotted 6 minutes.
- ii) The bullet point is mentioned by the teacher, but the student cannot answer.
- iii) The student gives an answer, but it is unintelligible or not relevant to the bullet point.

3. The unpredictable question

In order to accomplish the unpredictable bullet point, the student must answer the question by using a verb. If that is not the case, then the bullet point is not covered and the table above must be used in order to arrive at a mark for Communication.

If a student has developed fully answers to the main bullet points and gives a short answer, including any part of a verb (eg present participle, infinitive) to the unpredictable question, he/she will still have access to full marks for Communication provided the response is complete.

If a teacher asks more than one unpredictable question, the first one that is asked is the one that is considered when deciding whether it has been answered appropriately, using

a verb. Any other unpredictable questions, (eg to make the task last at least 4 minutes) are taken into account when awarding an overall mark.

Once the candidate gives an incorrect answer (either target language or English/any language other than the one being tested) then no credit is given for further attempts.

If the candidate gives a partially correct answer in the target language and the teacher asks more questions to elicit further information so that the bullet point is fully covered, such information is marked.

If a candidate says, in the target language, 'I don't understand' or 'please repeat' (or equivalents) then this counts as a request for clarification and the teacher is allowed to repeat or rephrase. This does not count as an answer. (If this were said by the candidate in English/any language other than the one being tested, then it would be an incorrect answer and no more rephrasing would be allowed).

If the candidate says, either in the target language or in English/any language other than the one being tested, 'I don't know' (or equivalents) then this counts as an incorrect answer and no more rephrasing is allowed.

If the candidate says nothing in response to a question then the teacher can repeat or rephrase until the candidate does respond (or until the 6 minutes are up).

4. The criteria for assessment

All of the criteria should be considered when deciding on a mark, but the following guidelines may prove particularly useful.

(a) Communication

Must the teacher ask extra questions for the candidate to gain the highest marks for Communication?

No. If the candidate develops fully his/her answers to each bullet point there will be no need for extra questions to allow the candidate access to the highest marks for Communication.

Can students get a high mark in a Speaking task even if there is little interaction with the teacher?

Yes. Interaction and fluency are a global concept. Students can have access to full marks with minimal teacher input as long as they have provided full and developed responses. This is still true even if there is little interaction with the teacher.

If a student answers a bullet point eliciting reference to future events by using a present tense verb, will he/she be penalised under Communication?

No, not if the response successfully communicates what the bullet point required. However if aiming for a high mark for Range and Accuracy, the student must make sure he/she uses at least two different tenses over the task as a whole.

What do moderators do if it is clear that the wording is identical to model answers in a text book or to the wording of the tasks of other candidates at the same centre?

Such work is referred to the AQA Irregularities and Malpractice department.

Communication Criteria

9-10 marks

- Students can speak with confidence and narrate events where appropriate. In order to do this, they will have to develop their answers well.
- They will have to offer ideas / opinions / points of view (minimum 2) and be able to explain them.

7-8 marks

- The answers will be regularly developed, even though some of them may not be. However, for the award of a mark in this band, most answers will show some development.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2).

5-6 marks

- There will still be evidence of an ability to develop some answers.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2).

3-4 marks

- Few responses are developed, but for some questions you can expect replies to go beyond the minimal, even if this is in the form of lists or very simple sentences.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2).

1-2 marks

- Very few appropriate responses are developed, but therefore there has to be evidence of development, however basic, in at least one reply.

0 marks

- No relevant information is communicated, but a student could still give some very minimal replies and still score 0 if there was no development at all.

(b) Range and Accuracy of Language

- The immediate future (eg *je vais aller*) counts as future tense. A present tense verb with a future time marker does not (eg *demain je vais au cinéma*).
- The present subjunctive does not count as a separate tense from the present indicative.
- A construction using the present tense to refer to the past (eg *je joue du piano depuis 2 ans* or *je viens d'avoir 16 ans*) counts as the present tense.

9-10 marks

- A variety of **tenses** must be used. This means two or more. The tenses could come from the same time frame (for example the perfect and the imperfect) but a greater range of tenses will add to the complexity of the language used and most students getting marks in this band will probably use three or more tenses, unless the nature of the task does not allow it.
- There will be complex structures, as appropriate to GCSE level. Subjunctive phrases or similar grammatical structures are not a requirement. Complexity will often be achieved by variety of expression, for instance use of *commencer à* or *decider de* instead of just using the verb concerned.

- There needs to be a wide range of vocabulary. This means that students will not be too repetitive in the words they use.
- Errors usually appear in complex structures, or they may be minor errors, for instance of gender, which do not appear too often.

7-8 marks

- Two or more tenses must be used.
- Some complex structures will be used, but the note about what constitutes complexity for the 9-10 band will apply here.
- There must be a range of vocabulary, so students in this band will again be trying to avoid repetition of the more common words.
- Errors occur, but the message is clear, so that the type of mistake made will not prevent communication.

5-6 marks

- There is no need for students to use more than one tense to be awarded a mark in this band.
- Sentences are generally simple but occasionally more complex. There will be more repetition of simple constructions here, but sometimes a more unusual structure will be used.
- Errors are quite frequent, but the language used is **more accurate than inaccurate**.

3-4 marks

- The sentences are short and simple and probably there will be quite a lot of repetition of the more common verbs, such as *aimer, être, avoir*.
- The vocabulary is very limited, so there will probably be quite a lot of repetition of the same words.
- Errors are very frequent and it will be more inaccurate than accurate, or there will be relatively little said, so the lack of evidence means it cannot go into a higher band.

1-2 marks

- There are only isolated words of vocabulary with the occasional short phrase. It may well be that there is quite a lot of silence.
- Errors often impede communication, or there is very little evidence to enable an opinion to be formed.

(c) Pronunciation and Intonation

5 marks

- Consistently good accent and intonation are required. 'Accent' means 'pronunciation'.

4 marks

- Generally good. It may be that problems arise mainly with the sounds that students traditionally find more difficult, such as nasal vowels in words like 'intention' or the 'r' sound in French.

3 marks

- Generally accurate, but there is some inconsistency. As well as the more common mispronunciations, there may be problems with vowel sounds and anglicised words.

2 marks

- What is said is understandable, although comprehension is sometimes delayed. On occasion it is necessary to listen very carefully to what is being said in order to get the intended meaning. Such things as pronouncing 'qu' as 'kw'.

1 mark

- What is said is barely understandable and comprehension is difficult. There may well be very little evidence, because not much is said by the student.

(d) Interaction and Fluency

5 marks

- The student responds readily, without significant pause before answering the questions.
- There is initiative, as the student is able to fully develop answers to the questions.
- The conversation is sustained at a reasonable speed, but clearly not at native speaker pace.

4 marks

- The student will again have to answer without hesitation.
- The replies will go beyond the minimum, although there will not be as much development as in the top band.
- There is some flow of language, even if from time to time there is some pausing for thought.

3 marks

- There are ready responses, where the student can answer reasonably promptly most of the time.
- There is little if any initiative, so the student may not develop answers to any great extent.
- There is an ability to sustain a conversation, so that any hesitation does not break up the interchange of information too much.

2 marks

- There is some reaction to the teacher's questions, but the student is sometimes hesitant. In practice, there will be more sections of the test where the student is thinking what to say or can't answer.
- There is little natural flow.

1 mark

- There is little reaction to what the teacher asks and the student is so hesitant that the conversation becomes disjointed. There will in all probability be lots of silence during the task.

(e) Limiting marks

- It is not possible to go more than one **band** higher than the band in which the Communication mark was given when awarding marks in the other categories. For instance, if 5 is awarded for Communication, the highest mark that can be awarded for Range and Accuracy is 8, and for Pronunciation and Intonation and Interaction and Fluency the maximum mark would be 4.

- It is possible to give marks in lower bands for Range and Accuracy, Pronunciation and Intonation and Interaction and Fluency than the band in which the mark for Communication was given.
- If one mark or more is awarded for Communication, at least one mark must be given in all other categories.
- If 0 is awarded for Communication, 0 must be given for all other categories.

Annual Teacher Support Meetings

Centres are reminded that language-specific Teacher Standardisation Meetings will be held in Autumn 2010. These half-day meetings are provided to assist teachers in the application of the assessment criteria and are free of charge. Further details can be obtained from the Events page of the AQA website (www.aqa.org.uk) in due course.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.