

# How can parents/carers help support students in French? (Year 10-11 GCSE)

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## **French GCSE (Year 10-11)**

As a school and as a Department we are committed to ensuring that your son/daughter achieves his/her full potential in their GCSE examinations.

I would like to take this opportunity to give you more information about the French GCSE course.

The subject is examined in two tiers (Foundation and Higher) for all skills. The final GCSE grade awarded is upon the tier entry. GCSE grades from 9-1 will be awarded (up to grade 5 for Foundation and up to grade 9 for Higher).

### **Writing examination in June of Year 11 (25% of total mark)**

Students complete written tasks for a variety of purposes and in a range of contexts, including translations into French. Students are required to produce written texts of varying lengths to express facts, ideas and opinions. There will be some choice of questions. The paper will also feature a translation from English into French. The use of dictionaries is not permitted.

### **Speaking examination in April/May of Year 11 (25% of total mark)**

Students are asked to complete a variety of tasks on different topics that they will have studied during the course of Year 10 and 11.

Students will be assessed through three tasks: a read aloud task, a role play, a picture task followed by a conversation. Students at either tier will be permitted 15 minutes preparation time to consider the questions and stimulus for the read aloud, the role play and the picture provided.

### **Listening and Reading examinations in June of Year 11 (each 25% of total mark)**

Listening and Reading are examined at the end of the GCSE course, when students have had the opportunity to develop their listening and reading skills, using a range of reading and listening material. They will also be asked to complete a translation task into English. Home learning and revision clearly play an important part towards their performance. It is absolutely essential, therefore, that your son/daughter is completing all homework and revision for French in order to do well in the forthcoming examinations. Weekly assignments on [www.languagenut.com](http://www.languagenut.com) to practise listening and reading tasks will be regularly set as homework.

Revision guides are available on Amazon for further exam practice:

- Pearson Edexcel GCSE French translation and grammar workbook
- Pearson Edexcel GCSE French revision guide
- Pearson Edexcel GCSE French revision workbook

## **Building independence to improve performance at GCSE**

At home, your son/daughter should be doing a number of the following activities to ensure success in French and these may also be set as homework by his/her language teacher:

- Completing the revision tasks on [www.languagenut.com](http://www.languagenut.com)
- Improving answers to their speaking questions on a variety of topics: this should be completed by February half-term of Year 11 in view of the speaking exam which will take place immediately after the Easter holiday.
- Practising memorising answers to their speaking questions on a variety of topics.
- Learning vocabulary words every week to maximise their performance in their listening and reading exams in May/June of Year 11
- Making notes from booklets on vocabulary, grammar structures, and revision tips, signed by parent/carer to show that your son/daughter is building a revision folder at home.
- Using the Edexcel GCSE French 9-1 revision guide and/or revision workbook, available on Amazon to make notes on the key vocabulary and grammar structures and to practise essential listening and reading skills.
- Working through a variety of exam papers that are available on Google Classroom.
- Using websites such as BBC Bitesize, Memrise, [www.s-cool.co.uk](http://www.s-cool.co.uk) to gain extra information on vocabulary, questions and answers in the target language.
- Make mindmaps with vocabulary from Module 1 to 8 using the Knowledge Organisers.
- Practise vocabulary on Quizlet and Memrise platforms  
<https://quizlet.com/565287317/edexcel-gcse-french-module-7-flash-cards/>
- Complete past papers available on Google Classroom.
- Little and often (Vocabulary revision must be happening every day for 5-10 minutes max)
- Attend the French booster classes each week
- Download the RadiosFrance app on your phone and listen to French radio regularly (on the way to school for example).

If students do not practise memorising their speaking questions and writing modelled answers regularly, and if they have not practised the essential skills of listening and reading for their final examination, then it is clearly more difficult to achieve a good grade overall.

## Top tips for the listening exam

### Before the exam

1. Build up your personal vocabulary - learn a small number of new words every day. Practise on [www.languagenut.com](http://www.languagenut.com)
2. Make sure you are familiar with the different types of task you may be asked to do.
3. Be careful! Sometimes there will be words on the tape, or words and pictures in the question that could distract you from the right answer!
4. Ask your teacher for recordings to take home. In the exam you will only hear each item or part of an item twice, but by listening to recordings at home beforehand, you'll build your confidence and train your ear (Go to Google Classroom)
5. If you read through the transcript **before** you listen to the tape, it could help your confidence when you realise how much you understand (Go to Google Classroom)
6. Try not to write when the tape is playing - it is hard to write and listen at the same time - trust your short-term memory!
7. If you are entered for the Higher tier, take every opportunity to listen to longer passages. Focus on the feelings, opinions and attitudes of the speakers.
8. Before you go into the exam, ask your teacher to offer the class a 'warm up' listening session of about 20 minutes - or just listen to a tape of your own.

### During the exam

1. You are usually given 5 minutes to read through the paper before the tape starts. Use this to your advantage by looking right through the paper to see what kind of tasks there are.
2. Look closely! Should you listen for precise information (like train arrival and departure times)? Or should you be listening to the whole passage, in order to draw a conclusion (for example, name the girl who has the best relationship with her parents)?
3. As you read the question, try to predict the sort of information that may be in the passage. It will help focus your mind.
4. Look at the title of the question or section very carefully. Make sure you understand **how** to give your answer. If there is an example, look closely at the answer given - it will show you whether you need to write a single letter, a single word, or more than one word.
5. Have a good look at any illustrations. They could give important clues as to what is coming.
6. Remember, you are **not** expected to understand **every** word - there is probably a lot of 'redundant' language you don't need. Be positive. Concentrate on what you do understand. Sometimes the passage can be difficult, but the questions are easy.
7. Use your knowledge of grammar. For example, it may be important to know whether someone is talking about the past, the present, or the future.
8. Use your knowledge of the countries. For example, if you hear someone was on holiday in Paris, it is unlikely they spent time on the beach.
9. Don't just listen to the words. The tone of someone's voice may also be helpful - for example in telling you if they are making a statement or asking a question.

## Top tips for the reading exam

### Before the exam

1. Build up your personal vocabulary by learning a small number of new words every day.
2. Get plenty of regular practice. Use past papers (Go to Google Classroom). Use BBC Bitesize - both the Revision Bites and the Test Bites. Use [Languagenut.com](http://Languagenut.com)
3. Make sure you are familiar with different types of task, for example, multiple choice, filling in a grid, matching, gap filling, answering in the target language, and answering in English.
4. Go over some questions with a friend. It will give you a chance to look at someone else's exam technique. You might learn from each other.
5. Try to find opportunities to read French for pleasure without the pressure of questions and time limits, for instance magazines, language CDs with song lyrics, comics. This will help you build up your vocabulary. (Go online for language magazines or songs). Use [Lyricstraining.com](http://Lyricstraining.com)
6. Make sure you know how to use your dictionary to look up any words you don't know, and make a note of them so you can revise them before the exam. Look at the Revision Bite on **Using a dictionary** for more hints. [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com) is also an excellent online dictionary. Do NOT use Google Translate!

### During the exam

1. Don't panic! You are not expected to understand every word of the text.
2. Take a positive approach to your reading. Concentrate on what you do understand, not on the difficult words and phrases.
3. Have a good look at the title of the text as well as any illustrations. They may give you some important clues.
4. Read the whole text before attempting to answer any questions. It is usually better to read the text twice at a brisk pace, than to struggle along once, slowly.
5. Be clear as to exactly what each question wants. For example, should you be picking out precise details (for example, the date of someone's birthday) or should you be reading the whole passage in order to draw some broad conclusions (for example, a comparison of two people's attitudes to television)?
6. Can you guess the meaning of a difficult word in a sentence if you understand what all the other words mean?
7. Can you find similarities with English words? (eg **pharmacie** = chemist's / pharmacy)
8. Can you find links with other words in the language? (eg **une maison** = a house : **une maisonnette** = a small house)
9. Are you aware of language patterns? (eg 're' in front of a word often means again: **recommencer** = to start again)
10. Use your knowledge of grammar. For example, if you can identify a plural, a verb tense, an adjective, an adverb or preposition, you will be in a better position to make an intelligent guess at a meaning.
11. Use your knowledge of the countries. For example, knowing about the French educational system could be very useful if you are working on a text about school.
12. Don't spend too long on a difficult item. Come back to it later.

## Web sites for students to explore...

- [www.languagenut.com](http://www.languagenut.com)
- [www.bcbitesize.com](http://www.bcbitesize.com)
- [www.memrise.com](http://www.memrise.com)
- <http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/eng/vtc-home/vtc-ks3-home.htm>
- <http://www.learnanytime.co.uk/index.htm#>
- <http://worldlanguages.pppst.com>
- <http://www.mflresources.org.uk/#frppt>
- <http://www.languagesresources.co.uk/index.htm>
- <http://www.mflresources.org.uk/>
- [http://www.asisehace.net/?page\\_id=26](http://www.asisehace.net/?page_id=26)
- <http://www.didcotgirls.oxon.sch.uk/depts/mfl/exercises/exercisesindex.htm>
- <http://www.languagesonline.org.uk/>
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/11\\_16/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/11_16/index.shtml)
- <http://www.linguacentral.co.uk/>
- <http://www.wildfrench.co.uk/>
- <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/mfle/c4modernlanguages/#>
- <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/mfle/c4modernlanguages/#>
- <http://www.ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk/Curriculum/modlang/index.htm> (click on: language resources)
- <http://www.prescot-school.knowsley.sch.uk/prescot-language/mfl-site/french.htm>