

ISEB
Independent Schools
Examinations Board

DISCOVER NEW CE TWILIGHT CPD SESSIONS

**MFL SPECIFICATIONS
WILL LAW**

THURSDAY 20TH MAY | 17:00 BST

ISEB 13+ MFL

WILL LAW

Thursday 20th May 2021





What's new in the MFL specifications and assessments?

Languages - a skill for life!

Some background information

The French and Spanish syllabuses were updated in 2017, for first examination in 2019; the German syllabus was last updated in 2013.

In response to requests from teachers, the three languages have been brought into line in terms of content and format of assessment, with some minor variations to take into account the length of time a language may have been studied.

Check all specifications carefully for changes to the core content and grammar requirements, at Level 1 (French & Spanish) especially.

In all languages, there will be some changes to the way candidates' skills are assessed from autumn 2022 onwards.



Aims of all MFL specifications

The value of the foundations laid in pupils' prep school years cannot be underestimated

Aim to:

- instil a **sense of adventure** when learning about countries/communities where the language is spoken
- nurture curiosity, build **confidence** and **enthusiasm**
- make language learning **fun**
 - a wealth of technology-based resources to support teaching in the classroom
- build **solid foundations** and **transferable skills**
 - keep the grammar and topic content manageable and appropriate for the pupils' ability
- lay the foundations for pupils to be **independent language learners**:
 - explore grammar patterns and look for similarities with other languages
 - develop strategies for coping in unfamiliar situations
- build **spontaneity** through regular interaction in the language being studied.



Do less, but do it well!

At Level 1, build **solid foundations**:

- a range of common vocabulary
- key basic grammar structures
- simple/common verbs in the present/near future tenses

At Level 2, build **solid foundations**, as above, and then **extend** with:

- a wider range of grammar structures and vocabulary
- the introduction of simple/common past tense verbs, whether for active use (French) or receptive use only (German & Spanish)

How those foundations will be built on in the Senior School years

Sample topics

Relationships with family and friends
Marriage/partnership
Social media (advantages/disadvantages)
Mobile technology
Campaigns and good causes
Charity/voluntary work
Poverty/homelessness
The environment
Education post-16
Jobs, career choices and ambitions

Sample grammar

Verb tenses

- conditional
- future
- imperfect/imperfect continuous
- passive voice
- perfect infinitive
- pluperfect
- present participle/gerund
- subjunctive mood

Pronouns

- direct and indirect object
- position and order of object pronouns
- possessive pronouns

For all MFL specifications

The focus of the subject content is now on *two distinct themes*:

- *social* interaction with young and adult native speakers on a variety of everyday topics
- more *formal* interaction with native speakers to achieve different kinds of transactions/functions

Both themes should be studied in the context of the countries and communities where the language is spoken, so that pupils can experience the language in context, whilst also broadening their cultural awareness and empathy.



For all MFL specifications

There are no plans to introduce **minimum core vocabulary lists**:

- language is constantly changing and lists quickly become dated
- pages of vocabulary can be overwhelming and sap the enthusiasm of pupils, especially at this age
- better to 'chunk' vocabulary into more manageable portions, as provided by coursebooks
- more effective and enjoyable vocabulary-learning tools available today
- even with a vocabulary list, there would still be a need to understand and respond to some unfamiliar vocabulary, so strategies for coping with this would be more useful

In all languages and levels, some unfamiliar language may be used in the assessments, but any which is key to a task will be glossed.

Assessing what pupils know, understand and can do

To give them a real sense of
achievement at the end of the
CE course.



Assessment

Closer alignment of assessment tasks across the 3 languages

- Level 1: more accessible but with a degree of challenge towards the end (French & Spanish only)
- Level 2: increased challenge and rigour for more able candidates

Senior Schools still need to be able to differentiate between candidates at both levels.

First updated papers available in Autumn 2022 (French & Spanish only)

'Mock' papers in Spring 2023 (French & Spanish only)

The 'real thing' in Summer 2023



Changes - Reading tests

A wider variety of question types will be used, as detailed in the specification:

- gap filling
- multiple choice
- true/false
- table/grid completion
- putting symbols on a map/plan
- matching ...
 - headings to texts
 - pictures to descriptions
 - two halves of a sentence
 - questions and answers
 - people and opinions
- correcting a passage with mistakes highlighted
- choosing a number of correct answers
- answering questions in English

Changes - Reading tests

Some tasks will continue to be based on **other countries/communities** where the language is spoken, but the topics will be broadly familiar:

- daily life
- local/national cuisine
- traditions, customs and festivals
- places of interest (towns, regions, iconic sights etc.)



Changes - Listening tests

A wider variety of question types will be used, as indicated for the Reading tests.

There may be changes to the delivery of some recordings:

- You will hear each recording twice.
- You will hear all of the recording(s) once, then it/they will be repeated.



Changes - Writing tasks (Level 1)

Section 1: list of 6 items of vocabulary

Section 2: grammar sentences with a choice of 3 possible answers, based on any aspect of Level 1 grammar, including:

- articles
- adjectives
- prepositions
- verbs (including verbs + infinitive)

Section 3: a sentence of 5-10 words based on a picture

Section 4: 5 short sentences on one topic out of a choice of two



Changes - Writing tasks (Level 2)

Section 1

A **sentence translation** task

- with the masculine singular form of adjectives, the gender of nouns and the infinitive of verbs provided.
- candidates will need to add extra words as necessary, and make sure that the word order is correct (French only).

Section 2

- an **email** of between 80 and 120 words, covering 4 out of 5 prescribed bullet points (opportunity for more able candidates to show what they can do)

- new rubrics:

(You may use only the present tense if you wish, but you will need to show knowledge of [other tenses according to the language] in order to access the top marks, and you will be credited for the accurate use of a wide variety of vocabulary and grammar.)

- clear **guidance** where different tenses can be used
- e.g. next weekend (French & Spanish) ... last summer (French only)



Changes - Writing tasks

Section 1

- a **sentence translation** task
 - with the gender of nouns, and the infinitive of one verb given in each sentence. Any verbs which are separable are shown with a slash (e.g. auf/stehen)
 - candidates will need to add extra words as necessary, and make sure that the word order is correct

Section 2

- an **email** of between 80 and 120 words, covering 4 out of 5 prescribed bullet points (opportunity for more able candidates to show what they can do)
 - new rubrics:

(You may use only the present tense if you wish, but you will need to show knowledge of past, present and future tenses in order to access the top marks, and you will be credited for the accurate use of a wide variety of vocabulary and grammar.)

- candidates can **choose** when/where to use different tenses



Changes - Speaking tests (Level 1)

A new test of 3 parts:

- Part 1: Role play
- Part 2: Text-based task
- Part 3: Spontaneous discussion of at least one of the topics listed under Theme A: Socialising

Slightly longer time per test (was 4 minutes, now approximately 5).

During the 10-minute preparation period, candidates still have access to a dictionary but may now make notes that they refer to during Parts 1 & 2 of the test.

The tests will continue to be recorded.



Part 1: Role Play - Level 1 (9 marks)

Rationale behind the change

- a more natural language activity than learning a presentation
- a useful and practical skill for future use
- a Level 1 role play has regularly been requested by MFL teachers
- a Level 1 role play provides better preparation for Foundation GCSE.

During the Level 1 role play, candidates will be required to **listen to and answer a simple question**:

- the teacher/examiner gives candidate two options to choose between:
 - Est-ce que vous voulez un pull blanc ou un pull rouge ?
- a short response is acceptable:
 - (un pull) rouge



Part 1: Role Play - Level 1

Should last approximately 1-2 minutes.

Role plays will be of a transactional or social nature.

The role plays have been designed to be accessible to Level 1 candidates – no more than **a few simple words** will be required.

Apart from prescribed verb forms such as 'I would like', candidates' responses will be in the **present tense**, but may also require the use of **two verbs together**:

- e.g. I like to play tennis

Marks will be awarded for completion of tasks (6 marks) and quality of language (3 marks).



Changes - Speaking tests (Level 2)

Still 3 parts to the test:

- Part 1: Role play
- Part 2: Text-based task
- Part 3: Spontaneous discussion of at least one of the topics listed under Theme A: Socialising.
N.B. In German, candidates will no longer be given the title of the topic at the beginning of the preparation period.

Slightly longer time per test (was 6 minutes, now approximately 8).

In the 10-minute preparation period, candidates may now make notes that they refer to during Parts 1 & 2 of the test.



Part 1: Role Play - Level 2 (9 marks)

No change to the Level 2 role play, although occasional vocabulary may be more challenging (remember, candidates have access to a dictionary).

Candidates will still be required to respond, unprepared, to an examiner's question.



Part 2: Text-based task - Teacher/Examiner (8 marks)

Levels 1 & 2

Introduction and all questions provided on the Examiner copy.

Compulsory **first** question (will always be based on the first piece of information).

Then any **four** of the remaining questions.

On va parler de tes vacances maintenant

- Où passes-tu normalement les vacances ?
- Pourquoi est-ce que tu vas en Espagne ?
- Combien de temps passes-tu en Espagne ?
- Tu voyages comment à Malaga ?
- Où loges-tu normalement ?
- Qu'est-ce que tu aimes faire en vacances ?
- Quelles activités n'aimes-tu pas faire ?

HOLIDAYS

Normally: **Malaga, south of Spain**

Why: **sunny and hot; delicious food**

How long: **2 weeks, July**

Travel: **aeroplane, faster**

Stay: **grandparents' house, near the beach**

Like: **swimming in the sea; eating in Spanish restaurants**

Do not like: **visiting museums, boring**



Part 2: Text-based task - Teacher/Examiner

Levels 1 & 2

To help candidates, ask questions in the order given, unless you are confident they can cope with 'jumping around'.

- Level 1 - one piece of information will not be used
- Level 2 - two pieces of information will not be used

No supplementary questions should be asked.

Activity marked out of 8, for communication only.



Part 2: Text-based task - Candidate

Levels 1 & 2

Based on interaction of a more social nature – talking with young and adult native speakers about ... holidays, school, where they live etc.

Candidates may make notes for this task during the preparation period.

However, it is not intended to be a straight translation activity.

Encourage the use of **verbs in responses**, except where a more natural response would not include one:

- For how long? – For three days

Different tenses may be used but are not required.



Part 2: Text-based task - Candidate

Levels 1 & 2

For access to the top marks, candidates are required to add in additional details and/or opinions, in the form of:

- opinions
- description (adjectives)
- times, days, months etc.
- where, who with, when, how, why ...
- frequency (sometimes, always)
- more precise locations (the south of Spain)

Mark (overall Communication impression)

7-8	Very good: all, or virtually all, of the responses are full, include a conjugated verb and are delivered clearly and confidently; the information is communicated successfully, and some additional details and/or opinions are offered.
5-6	Good: a mixture of short and longer responses, most of which contain a conjugated verb and are delivered clearly; the information is communicated successfully, and at least one additional detail and/or opinion is offered.

But be mindful of time limitations – discourage excessively long responses!



Part 3: Open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion (8 marks)

Levels 1 & 2

A discussion of any/all of the topics listed in the specification, which should not overlap with the topics covered in Sections 1 and 2.

With Level 1 candidates (French & Spanish only), it may be necessary to **cover several topics superficially**, using closed questions tailored to the ability of the candidate.

At Level 2, teacher/examiners should attempt to ask questions of a more open nature, or a series of related questions to follow up on what has been said, in order to **explore one/two topics in greater depth**.



Part 3: Open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion

Levels 2

At Level 2, some possible ways to **trigger** the open conversation might include:

- Parlons un peu maintenant de **ta famille** – il y a combien de personnes dans ta famille?
- On va parler de **tes passe-temps préférés** maintenant – qu'est-ce que tu aimes faire quand tu as du temps libre?
- Parle-moi un peu de **ton école** – comment s'appelle ton école?

Give candidates the freedom to answer the initial question and then to **develop the conversation in their own way**



Part 3: Open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion

Level 2

Ask follow-up questions, where possible ...

- to discourage pre-learnt responses verging on a monologue, which will limit the marks available
- to create opportunities for them to use different tenses (perhaps with some key time prompts – l'été **prochain**, le week-end **dernier** ...)

Don't be afraid to change the topic if the candidate 'dries up'.



Part 3: Open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion

Levels 1 & 2

Changes to the **descriptors** in the mark scheme:

- the teacher/examiner gives an **overall impression** mark (out of 8) for spontaneity, quality of response, quality of language and range of tenses used.
- candidates may use only the present tense if they wish, but would need to show a knowledge of other tenses in order to access the top marks.
- overuse of pre-learnt responses and excessively long responses which risk turning the dialogue into a monologue are likely to limit the marks available.



Approaching the first year of the new specification

Laying solid foundations

General ideas

Make language-learning fun, both through your teaching in the classroom and through the many technology-based resources available for use outside of the classroom.

Encourage a sense of adventure when learning about language and the countries/communities where that language is spoken.

Develop linguistic curiosity by looking at language in the broader sense, drawing comparisons with pupils' own or other languages.

Encourage pupils to become 'Grammar Detectives', so that they start to think like a linguist:

- can they think of any words in English which are similar to the vocabulary they are learning?
- can they tease out grammar patterns for themselves before you teach them?

Start to introduce some strategies for coping with unfamiliar language:

- do they need to know every word to understand the main gist of a passage?

Build simple dictionary skills

Encourage sensible use of a dictionary:

- to enable pupils to become more independent language learners
- practise drills (Gianfranco Conti) to build solid skills and then introduce unfamiliar vocabulary, so that pupils learn to use the dictionary sensibly:
 - I would like a hat
 - I would like a scarf
 - I would like some apples
 - I would like some stamps
- for the speaking test, build up the skill of just writing down key words, not whole sentences
- sensitively draw attention to the potential pitfalls of using a dictionary!



Build general language skills

Introduce different reading skills:

- how to skim an exercise, to check what is required
- how to scan an activity, looking for key words
- how to approach different comprehension tasks, such as matching activities
- how to cope when more careful reading is required and the language is more challenging

Demonstrate how pupils can develop simple sentences to show what they can do:

- Voy a la ciudad.
- El sábado voy a la ciudad.
- El sábado voy a la ciudad con mis amigos.
- El sábado voy a la ciudad con mis amigos a ver una película.
- El sábado voy a la ciudad con mis amigos a ver una película de aventuras en el cine.



Build grammar skills

When teaching grammar, don't go too far, too fast and leave gaps in pupils' understanding – **do less, but do it well!**

Focus grammar activities on key patterns rather than try to cover everything.
For example:

- in French (Level 2) and German, some **key past tense verbs** are required, but consider in which sections these are actively required and focus on the verbs which it would be most useful for pupils to know at this level.
- with Level 1 candidates, explore different approaches to grammar acquisition – e.g. flash-card techniques with verbs, so that *je vais/ich gehe/voy* etc. become more instinctive to them.

Use correct grammar terminology, but be prepared to explain what it is!

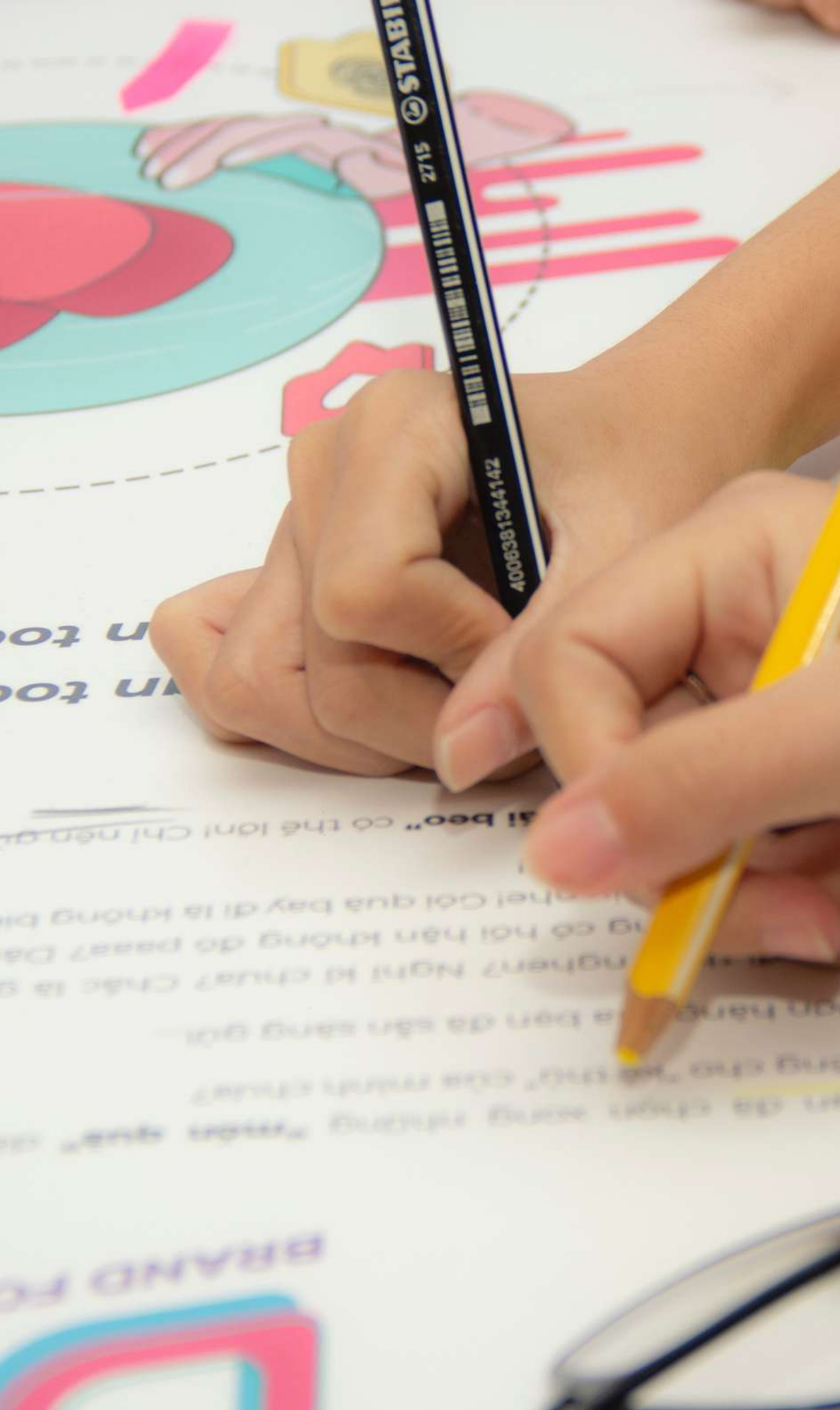
Build confidence in speaking

Include short speaking activities in class, to build confidence and reduce anxiety about the 'real' speaking test

Practise key phrases for the role plays:

- I would like ...
- I'm looking for ...
- Do you have ...?
- No that's all.
- How much is that?
- Here is 10€.
- Here you are.
- At what time does ...?
- Where is/are ...?
- Is/are there a/any ...?





MFL and the ISEB Project Qualification

Supporting the development
of independent-learning skills.

ISEB Project Qualification (iPQ)

A recording of the ISEB webinar on 27th April is available on ISEB's YouTube channel.

The focus of the IPQ is on the **process** of producing a short project (15-20 hours), rather than on the outcome, but could offer some **exciting opportunities** for language learners, for example:

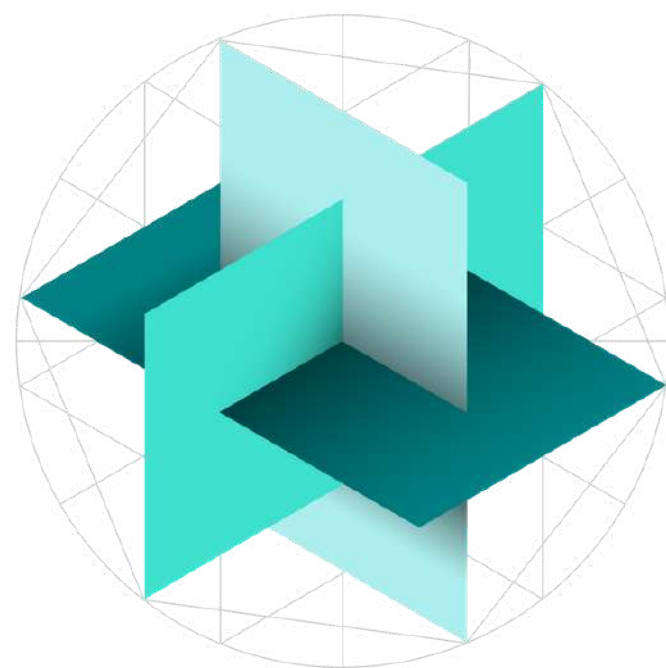
- a stop-go animation of a role play
- the production of a short play in the language
- planning a school trip to the country being studied, where to go, what to visit etc.
- discovering and learning about:
 - a town or region
 - a regional or national celebration
 - an artist (painter, sculptor, writer, composer etc.)
 - an historical figure
 - a sportsman/sportswoman

Pupils would not be expected to complete the project in the foreign language – but might like to include some elements.

Resources

Galore Park are planning to publish an updated French Revision Guide and an updated French Exam Practice Questions & Answers book in April 2022.

It is hoped that some Spanish resources will follow.



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