



2024 specification
first exams in 2026

Practice Papers for GCSE AQA French

Writing: Foundation

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Teacher's Introduction

Purpose:

This pack contains three full practice papers for the AQA Foundation writing exam. When a new specification is launched, initially, teachers may find it difficult to source quality practice papers beyond those provided by the exam board, thereby making it difficult to accurately assess their students. Besides, there is always a risk that students can find the papers provided online by the exam board. The ZigZag practice papers allow teachers to give their students extra practice without taking this risk.

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

The author has taken every step to ensure the structure of these papers mirrors that of the AQA paper, and has used their extensive experience of resource writing to produce varied and unique content. These papers cover all three AQA themes:

1. People and lifestyle
2. Popular culture
3. Communication and the world around us

How to use this resource:

We recommend setting each paper under exam conditions to give an accurate picture of students' ability at a given point. Papers can be used as teacher-assessed tasks (with the teacher marking the paper and feeding back to the students) or as self-/peer-assessment tasks (with each student or their partner assessing their work). We are not providing a full mark scheme here as it can easily be obtained from the exam board's website, but there is an explanation of the mark scheme and how to achieve the top marks for each task. There are also some self-/peer-assessment grids which can be photocopied and given to students to assess their own or their partner's work. At the end of the resource, there is a lined answer sheet for students to write on. You can photocopy as many as required for mock exams.

October 2025

Structure of the Paper and Mark Scheme Exemplification

The AQA Foundation writing paper comprises five tasks:

1. The photo description (10 marks)

Students write five sentences in French. This task is marked for AO2 only (understanding and responding to written language in speaking and in writing). For each sentence, students can score between 0 and 2 marks. For 2 marks, the message is clearly communicated; for 1 mark, the message contains some ambiguity and is not immediately comprehensible; and for 0 marks, there is no rewardable communication.

Marking guidance

- Mark each sentence separately.
- Sentences must be about what is in the photo (they cannot refer to what is NOT in the photo).
- Sentences must be true or 'possibly' true (e.g. colour can be guessed, as photos are black and white).
- Numbers can be written as a figure (e.g. 4) or as a word (e.g. four).
- Verbs and structures can be repeated.
- First- or second-person verb forms are accepted.

2. The 50-word task

There are 10 marks available for this task. It is marked based on two criteria (responding to written language in speaking and in writing) and AO3 (demonstrating accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification). For AO2, students need to address all five bullet points and communicate clearly. For AO3, students must use varied vocabulary and grammatical structures. While students should not make any major errors.

Marking guidance

- You must mark ALL words (total count is approximate).
- All bullet points must be covered.
- Bullet point language does not have to be equal.
- All parts of the grade descriptors must be considered (not just the bullet points).
- Information must be relevant and clear.
- There is no tense requirement, but students may choose to use tenses.
- 0 for AO2 = 0 for AO3, but apart from that, the mark for AO2 does not limit AO3.
- Major errors affect communication; minor errors do not.
- Variety = different adjectives, pronouns, nouns, verbs.
- Look for variety of language NOT complexity.

3. The grammar task

Students complete five short sentences with a missing word. They are given 10 marks available for this task. It is marked for AO3 only (demonstrating understanding and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification). The words written must be completely accurate, and accents (if required) must be included to score 1 mark.

4. The translation task (10 marks)

Students translate a few sentences (approximately 15 words) into French. The task is marked for AO3 only (demonstrating understanding and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification). The task is marked based on two criteria (responding to the original meaning, and knowledge of vocabulary and grammar). Teachers can apply up to 15 ticks to elements which are accurately translated. To score in the 'rendering of the original meaning' category, a minimum of 13 ticks is required. To score in 'knowledge of vocabulary and grammar', students must have a very good understanding of the specification, and their grammar needs to be accurate. Minor errors are to be avoided.

5. The 90-word task (15 marks)

Students choose between two questions which will be on two different themes. Both questions must be covered, and students will be expected to write in three times the length of question 1 (question 2 on the Higher paper). It is marked based on two criteria (responding to written language in speaking and in writing) and AO3 (demonstrating accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification). For AO2, students need to address all three bullet points and communicate clearly. For AO3, students must use a good variety of vocabulary. They must also regularly try to use complex language and successfully use present, past and future time frames. There may be minor errors in complex structures.

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Self- and Peer-assessment Grid

Use the grids below to self- or peer-assess your written responses. Please note the

1. Photo description task:

Have you...	What the mark scheme says	What it means
	communicated relevant information	write only about what is in the picture
	common and use it in a clear way?	keep it simple so everyone can understand
	used complete sentences or clauses (with a verb)?	include a subject and a verb in each sentence

2. 50-word task:

Have you...	What the mark scheme says	What it means
	addressed all five BP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write at least one sentence per BP what you have written must be relevant
	written clearly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write in a way that is easy to understand use only language you know if you translate it back into English it should be understandable
	used a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check that you are not repeating words you can replace 'j'aime' by 'j'adore' use connectors ('et', 'mais', 'parce que', 'mais', 'très', 'un peu', 'assez', etc.) check your present tense verbs (and other tenses in this task)
	checked if you have made errors, are they only minor?	<p>When you have finished, proofread your work for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spelling articles (un/une/des / le/la/l'/les) adjective agreements (usually you need to check feminine adjectives and an -s at the end)

3. Grammar task:

Not suitable for self-assessment. Check the mark scheme for correct answers

4. Translation task:

For the 'rendering of the original meaning' criterion, check the mark scheme for the French which is correctly translated.

Then convert those ticks as follows:

13–15 ticks = 5 marks

10–12 ticks = 4 marks

7–9 ticks = 3 marks

4–6 ticks = 2 marks

1–3 ticks = 1 mark

0 ticks = 0 marks

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For the 'knowledge of vocabulary and grammar' criterion, you can check your work using the following table:

Have you...	What the mark scheme says	What it means
	shown very good knowledge of vocabulary?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> translate all or nearly all the words
	translated the message appropriately?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not leave any gaps if you translate the message back into your language, does it make sense?
	used high level grammar accurately?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check your verbs (present and past)
	checked if you have made errors, are they only minor?	<p>When you have finished, proofread your work for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spelling articles (un/une/des / le/la/l'/les, etc.) adjective agreements (usually you need to check feminine adjectives and an -s at the end of nouns)

5. 90-word task:

Have you...	What the mark scheme says	What it means
	addressed all three bullet points with relevant information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write at least one sentence per BP what you write must be relevant to the question use the correct time frame for BP2
	communicated clearly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write in a way that is easy to understand if you translate it back into English, does it make sense?
	regularly developed your ideas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> give at least three or four ideas per paragraph
	used a good range of vocabulary?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid repetitions (use each word only once) include different subject pronouns, negatives, etc.
	regularly tried to use complex language and structures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use a range of time phrases ('le week prochain', etc.) use connectives ('et', 'mais', 'donc', 'peu', 'beaucoup', 'assez', etc.) and structures ('ensuite', 'finalement', etc.) you could use relative clauses using structures such as 'j'aime aller', 'je pense que', etc.
	used present, past and future time frames mainly successfully?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are your present, past and future verbs used correctly? are they in the right paragraph, with the right time frame? (remember, 'dernier/dernière' = past, 'prochain' = future)
	checked if you have made errors, that they are mainly minor (though some major ones may appear)?	<p>When you have finished, proofread your work for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spelling articles (un/une/des / le/la/l'/les, etc.) adjective agreements (usually you need to check feminine adjectives and an -s at the end of nouns)

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ZigZag Practice Exam

Supporting GCSE AQA French: 2024

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Write-on paper

French
Writing



Foundation Tier Practice Paper 3

Name

Time allowed: 1 hour 10 minutes

The maximum mark for this paper is 50.

Information:

- Answer all questions in the spaces provided.
- In **Section A**, you should answer all the questions.
- In **Section B** you should answer either **question 5.1** or **question 5.2**. Do not answer both questions.
- Answer questions in French.
- You must not use a dictionary.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets.
- You can write your first draft in the answer book. Clearly cross out everything that should not be marked as part of your answer.

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Section A

1. Your French friend sends you this picture via Snapchat.



What is in this photo?

Write **five** sentences in **French**.

1.1



1.2

1.3

1.4

1.5



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2. Your French friend is coming to visit you soon. Write a short description of your town.

Your answer must be in **French** and should be approximately **50 words**.

You must write at least one thing about each bullet point.

Mention:

- where you live
- the shops
- the transport
- activities for young people
- any other interesting point



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3. Complete the following sentences in **French** using your grammar knowledge.

Choose the correct **French** word from the three options given. The correct word goes in the space. Use the example to help you.

Example

Nousaimons..... le français.

aimons	aime	aiment
--------	------	--------

3.1  re.nts en France chaque année.

va	allons	vont
----	--------	------

3.2 Le restaurant est

complet	complète	complets
---------	----------	----------

3.3 Ma amie s'appelle Chloé.

meilleur	meilleurs	meilleure
----------	-----------	-----------

3.4 Au collège, portes un uniforme scolaire.

je	tu	vous
----	----	------

3.5  k-..... dernier, j'ai un film.

regardé	regarde	regarder
---------	---------	----------

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4. Translate the following sentences **into French**.

I live in a big city.

.....
.....

My birthday is in October.

.....
.....

In my bedroom, there is a small bed.

.....
.....

I don't like to do my homework in the evening.

.....
.....

Last week, I bought some fruit and vegetables.

.....
.....

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Section B

Answer **either** Question 5.1 **or** Question 5.2.
Only answer **one** of these questions.

EITHER

5.1 You are emailing your Belgian friend about your part-time job.

Write your answer in French. It should be approximately 90 words.

You must write at least one detail for each bullet point.

Describe:

- the people you work with
- what you did at work yesterday
- a job you will do in the future

[15 marks]

OR

5.2 You are writing a postcard to your family.

Write your answer in French. It should be approximately 90 words.

You must write at least one detail for each bullet point.

Describe:

- your family
- what you did last weekend
- an activity you will do next week

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ZigZag Practice Exam

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Non-write-on paper

French
Writing



Foundation Tier Practice Paper 3

Time allowed: 1 hour 10 minutes

The maximum mark for this paper is **50**.

Information:

- In **Section A**, you should answer all the questions.
- In **Section B** you should answer **either question 5.1 or question 5.2**. Do not answer both questions.
- Answer all questions in French.
- You must not use a dictionary.
- The marks for each question are given in brackets.
- You can write your answers in the answer book. Clearly cross out everything that should not be marked as part of your answer.



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Section A

1. Your French friend sends you this picture via Snapchat.



What is in this photo?

Write **five** sentences in French.

- 1.1 [2 marks]
1.2 [2 marks]
1.3 [2 marks]
1.4 [2 marks]
1.5 [2 marks]

2. Your French friend is coming to visit you soon. Write a short description of your town.

Your answer must be in **French** and should be approximately **50 words**.

You must write at least one thing about each bullet point.

Mention:

- where you live
- the shops
- the transport
- activities for young people
- any interesting events

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3. Complete the following sentences in **French** using your grammar knowledge.

Choose the correct **French** word from the three options given. The correct word goes in the space. Use the example to help you.

Example

Nousaimons..... le français.

aimons	aime	aiment
--------	------	--------

3.1 Mes parents en France chaque année.

va	allons	vont
----	--------	------

3.2 Le restaurant est

complet	complète	complets
---------	----------	----------

3.3 Ma amie s'appelle Chloé.

meilleur	meilleurs	meilleure
----------	-----------	-----------

3.4 Au collège, portes un uniforme scolaire.

je	tu	vous
----	----	------

3.5 Le week-end dernier, j'ai un film.

regardé	regarde	regarder
---------	---------	----------

4. Translate the following sentences **into French**.

I live in a big city.

My birthday is in October.

In my room, there is a small bed.

I don't do my homework in the evening.

Last week, I bought some fruit and vegetables.

Section B

Answer **either** Question 5.1 **or** Question 5.2.

Only answer **one** of these questions.

EITHER

5.1 You are emailing your Belgian friend about your part-time job.

Write your answer in **French**. It should be approximately **90 words**.

You must write at least **three** details for each bullet point.

- Describe:
- the people you work with
 - what you did at work yesterday
 - a job you will do in the future

[15 marks]

OR

5.2 You are writing a postcard to your family.

Write your answer in **French**. It should be approximately **90 words**.

You must write at least **three** details for each bullet point.

- Describe:
- your family
 - what you did last weekend
 - an activity you will do next week

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Preview of Questions Ends Here

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Indicative Content

Practice Paper 1

1. Indicative content:
 - 1.1 Sur la photo, il y a quatre personnes.
 - 1.2 Il y a deux filles et deux garçons.
 - 1.3 Ils sont dans un parc.
 - 1.4 Ils jouent au foot.
 - 1.5 Il y a du soleil.
2. Indicative content: Je fais de la natation tous les week-ends avec mon frère. Je fais mes devoirs quand j'ai le temps. Je regarde souvent des émissions de sport avec mes amis. Je préfère faire du shopping en ligne car c'est plus facile que d'aller avec mes amis.

3. The correct answers are:

- 3.1 est
- 3.2 amusante
- 3.3 vieille
- 3.4 vous
- 3.5 visité

4. Indicative content:

	Element of original language	Indicative content	Alternative acceptable renderings
1	I am	Je suis	
2	a student.	étudiant(e).	un/une étudiant(e)
3	In summer,	l'été	Pendant l'été,
4	it is sunny.	il y a du soleil.	il fait soleil.
5	My mother	Ma mère	Ma maman
6	she works	travaille	
7	in an office	dans un bureau	
8	in town.	en ville.	au centre-ville.
9	I think that	Je pense que	Je trouve que / Selon moi / A mon avis
10	the new film	le nouveau film	
11	is very interesting.	est très intéressant.	
12	Last year,	L'année dernière,	L'année passée,
13	I visited	j'ai visité	
14	an old castle	un vieux château	
15	with my family.	avec ma famille.	

5.1 Indicative content: Mon collège est assez grand. Il y a plusieurs bâtiments et un grand jardin mais il n'y a pas de piscine. Cependant, il y a un grand centre sportif où on joue au football. Hier, j'ai mangé avec mes amis puis j'ai fait mes devoirs de maths parce que j'ai un examen difficile ! La semaine prochaine, nous allons visiter un musée avec ma classe. C'est un peu ennuyeux !

5.2 Indicative content: Ma chanteuse préférée s'appelle Adele. C'est une artiste anglaise et à l'étranger. J'aime sa personnalité car elle est sympa et elle n'est pas triste. Dernièrement, j'ai téléchargé sa musique et j'ai adoré ses nouvelles chansons. Je pense que c'est un artiste extraordinaire. Nous allons chanter et ça va être génial !

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