

## Framework for Assessment in MFL

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This assessment framework for Modern Foreign Languages is designed for use throughout Key Stages 3 & 4. Five level descriptors for each skill are provided within the main strands of the framework, and further supporting strands to guide the teacher in making a firm assessment of each pair of skills (Listening & Reading, Speaking/Interacting & Writing) can be found underneath. We would propose that the 5 levels are each split into two (although without descriptors for the splits) designated as ‘just meeting this level’ and ‘comfortably meeting this level’. Please note that this assessment framework is currently French specific. A glossary is provided at the bottom to define some of the more complex linguistic terms which have been highlighted in **bold**.

**This framework is being sent to participating Consortium teachers to gain feedback on the basic structure and feasibility of the assessment system. The framework will then be drafted in greater detail and with more exemplification once the feedback has been given, with the aim of teachers trying it out towards the end of the autumn term 2012.**

### Listening & Reading

The following criteria pertain to testing conditions only – they do not refer necessarily to teaching students how to listen and read. Thus, for example, in class, students should be encouraged to ask for repetition, clarification, more time etc. We assume that listening texts may take the form of audio recordings, video recordings, language spoken by the teacher or language spoken by peers. We further assume that listening and reading texts may include both monologic and dialogic communication. We suggest that listening and reading comprehension be assessed by a range of tasks including, for example, summarizing in L1, multiple choice in L1 or L2 and comprehension questions in L2.

### Main development strands

| Listening   | Reading  |
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| <p><b>Level 1</b></p> <p>Learners can access main arguments and details of short texts (e.g. three or four short utterances) on a familiar topic, spoken in a way that is suitable for beginners (i.e. slowly and with clear articulation). The speech does not contain unexpected elements or unpredictable information (that is, information which does not match the expectations built up by the context or by the initial information provided). The language is made up mainly of single-clause sentences and the range of vocabulary is generally limited to words or phrases which students have already encountered.</p> | <p><b>Level 1</b></p> <p>Learners can access main arguments and details of short texts (e.g. three or four short sentences) on a familiar topic. Texts do not contain unexpected elements or unpredictable information (that is, information which does not match the expectations built up by the context or by the initial information provided). The language is made up mainly of simple sentences (e.g. one or two clauses) and the range of vocabulary is generally limited to words or phrases which students have already encountered. When reading aloud, learners’ pronunciations of words may be influenced by English <b>symbol-sound correspondences</b>, but they are beginning to try to overcome this.</p> |

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| <p><b>Level 2</b></p> <p>Learners can access main arguments and details of short texts (e.g. about six or seven utterances), spoken considerably more slowly than normal. The speech does not include unexpected information but does include a limited amount of language which they have not yet encountered, and they will therefore have to infer meanings from the context. The language includes a greater range of vocabulary and structures, including utterances containing more than one clause. The language is drawn from several topics they have encountered.</p> | <p><b>Level 2</b></p> <p>Learners can access main arguments and details of short texts (e.g. about 50 words). Texts do not include unexpected information, but do include a limited amount of language which they have not yet encountered, requiring them to infer meanings from the context. The language includes a greater range of vocabulary and structures and is drawn from several topics they have encountered, including those covered in previous terms or years of study. When reading aloud, learners are beginning to pronounce words in a way which is recognizable to a sympathetic native speaker, although the pronunciations of many words may still be influenced by L1 <b>symbol-sound correspondences</b>.</p>   |
| <p><b>Level 3</b></p> <p>Learners can access main arguments and details of longer texts (e.g. about forty five seconds in length), spoken more slowly and clearly than normal. The speech generally contains few unpredictable elements, but does contain language they have not yet encountered, which they will need to infer from the surrounding language and context. The language is drawn from several topics they have encountered, including language encountered in previous terms or years of study.</p>   | <p><b>Level 3</b></p> <p>Learners can access main arguments and details of longer texts (e.g. about 100 words). Texts may contain some unpredictable elements. Learners' reading is characterized by either (a) increased fluency when handling texts which contain a large amount of familiar language; or (b) increased ability to understand challenging texts, which contain larger proportions of language not previously encountered, requiring them to infer from the surrounding language and context. Familiar language may be drawn from several topics they have encountered, including those covered in previous terms or years of study. When reading aloud, students pronounce most words – both familiar and unfamiliar – in a way that would be recognizable to a sympathetic native speaker.</p> |
| <p><b>Level 4</b></p> <p>Learners can access main arguments and details of extended texts (e.g. about one minute in length) which contain unpredictable elements and a range of language which they have not previously encountered, requiring them to infer from the surrounding language and context. The speech is characterized by either greater speed (i.e. approaching native-like speed) or greater complexity in terms of vocabulary, structures and idiom (i.e. having some characteristics of authentic language).</p>   | <p><b>Level 4</b></p> <p>Learners can access main arguments and details of extended texts (e.g. 100-150 words) which contain unpredictable elements and a range of language which they have not previously encountered, requiring them to infer from the surrounding language and context. Texts show greater complexity in terms of vocabulary, structures and idiom (i.e. having some characteristics of authentic language). When reading aloud, students pronounce almost all words in such a way that they would be easily recognizable to a sympathetic native speaker.</p>   |

### Level 5

Learners can access main arguments and details of extended, continuous speech (e.g. about two minutes in length), delivered at normal or near-normal speed, on topics which may go beyond those which they are familiar with or have experience of. The language includes complex structures and richness of vocabulary and idiom, typical of authentic language.

### Level 5

Learners can access main arguments and details of extended, continuous texts (e.g. about 200 words or more in length), covering topics beyond those which they are familiar with or have experience of. The language includes complex structures and richness of vocabulary and idiom, typical of authentic language. When reading aloud, students pronounce almost all words in such a way that they would be easily recognizable to a sympathetic native speaker. When reading texts containing mainly familiar language, they read aloud fluently, that is, without hesitation and with mainly accurate patterns of intonation.

## Supporting strands – Listening & Reading

### Decoding

- Reading Aloud Test (RAT) using individual words (both familiar and unfamiliar), to assess their ability to decode from the written word.
- It would be expected that learners' decoding would initially be heavily influenced by L1 symbol to sound correspondences, but that developing their knowledge and use of L2 symbol-sound correspondences would be a priority in their early reading instruction. By level 4, the vast majority of words are correctly decoded (including words they know, words they don't know and words which look like English words, words which have combinations of letters not found in English). However, even at Level 5, their accent may be non-native like.

### Fluency

- Reading Aloud Test (RAT) using short passages of familiar language, assessed according to rate of reading (length of runs between pauses, appropriate use of pauses, **articulation rate**, use of intonation to convey meaning).

### Segmentation of speech stream

- Listening test using short passages of aural input, in which learners have to identify when they have heard particular items.
- Progression characterized by (a) increasing speeds of articulation and for items including liaison; (b) decreasing linguistic units (questions / answers, individual words, intra-word morphemes (e.g. vingt-**et**-un), individual phonemes (e.g. 'en' / 'an' / 'on'); (c) decreasing salience in the utterance, e.g. identification of **function** words, which are less easily recognised, rather than **content** words in an utterance.

### Vocabulary knowledge

- Similar to speaking / writing – a receptive vocabulary test using items from different frequency bands
- Progression characterized by knowledge of function words, increasing vocabulary breadth (lower frequency bands of words), knowledge of collocations / idiom, ability to correctly recognize cognates and non-cognates.

### **Grammatical knowledge**

- Similar to speaking / writing – use of **Grammaticality Judgement Task**

### **Strategic behaviour**

- Development in strategic behaviour measured by self-report (e.g. checklists) and teacher observation.
- Progression characterized by increasing engagement with text and decreasing reliance on others / teacher; increasing use of multiple sources for engagement with a text and understanding of when and how to use particular strategies for learning.

### Glossary

**Articulation Rate** refers in this case to the number of units (e.g. syllables) produced per time unit (e.g. per second). This is different to the more global measure of words per minute, which would include pauses. In other words, a student could be slow at reading aloud either because you articulate syllables very slowly, or because you articulate fast but leave very long pauses.

**Content** words are words that have meaning rather than a structural function. Nouns, main verbs, adjectives and adverbs are usually content words. E.g. a little cat sat peacefully on the mat and snoozed – ‘little’, ‘cat’, ‘sat’, ‘peacefully’, ‘mat’, ‘snoozed’ are **content** words.

**Decoding** is to convert printed / written symbols or words into sounds.

**Function** words serve to express grammatical relationships with other words within a sentence and have little lexical meaning. E.g. a little cat sat peacefully on the mat and snoozed - 'a', 'on', 'the', 'and' are **function** words.

**GJT – Grammaticality Judgement Task** – in which students are asked to judge whether a given sentence is correct or incorrect.

**Symbol-sound correspondences** or **grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPC)** are the systematic relations between written symbols and the sounds they represent. E.g. in 'quick', <qu> = /kw/, <i> = /i/ and <ck>=/k/.