



**National Qualifications – Standard Grade
Revised Arrangements in Modern Languages
(French, German, Italian, Spanish and Urdu)**

Foundation, General and Credit Levels in and after 2003

December 2006



**NOTE OF CHANGES TO ARRANGEMENTS
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COURSE TITLE Modern Languages (Standard Grade)

COURSE NUMBER: French 1000 01
German 1300 01
Spanish 3800 01
Italian 1900 01
Urdu 4100 01

National Course Specification: Appendix 3 amended to correct inaccuracies.

National Unit Specification: No changes.

Administrative Information

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Rationale and Aims

Rationale

The study of at least one modern foreign language is a normal part of the secondary school curriculum for all students up to the end of their period of compulsory schooling, ie in most instances until the end of S4. Thereafter, students may opt to continue with the study of one or more languages; to embark on the study of a new language; to discontinue study until later in life; or to discontinue their study altogether. Whichever path students choose, it is important that their language learning up to the end of S4 equips them with useful and transferable language skills and gives them a sense of worth and achievement.

Learning and teaching programmes leading to a qualification at Standard Grade should provide continuity, progression and development from the various levels of 5-14, while at the same time offering pathways into the wider framework of National Qualifications in Modern Languages.

Standard Grade awards are made at Foundation, General and Credit Levels, but the Arrangements are based on a syllabus which is the same for all candidates, defining the themes and topics to be studied, as well as the areas of grammar with which they are expected to become familiar.

Assessment in the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing is compulsory for all candidates, in recognition of the interdependence and value of all of these skills not only in language development and the teaching and learning situation, but also in everyday life and the world of work. Listening and Reading are tested by means of external examination. Speaking is assessed internally with external moderation. Writing is assessed by means of a folio of three pieces of work, generated internally, written under controlled conditions and marked externally.

Speaking and Reading will be double weighted in the calculation of the overall award for the subject. This recognises the primary importance of Speaking as a skill for basic communication in the language and of Reading as a key means of introducing language, with the written text being the starting point for a lot of work done in class to support the development of the other skills. The increasing importance of Reading as a skill for accessing information both on screen and on the printed page is also recognised in this weighting.

Aims

The aim of courses leading to Standard Grade is the establishment and growth of communicative competence and confidence through

- the development of language skills
- the development of an understanding of how language works
- the development of learning and thinking skills
- the development of learner autonomy

This clearly makes an important contribution to the wider educational aims of

- the development of self esteem and positive dispositions
- the development of the ability to contribute effectively to modern society

These aims can be described as follows:

- **The development of language skills**
- **The development of an understanding of how language works**

An awareness of the key concepts and patterns of language is an essential part of language learning. Knowing about language will be developed from the 5-14 programme. Access to and application of grammatical structures and patterns increases understanding of Listening and Reading beyond the mere recognition of items of vocabulary, and enables learners to monitor the accuracy and appropriateness of the language they produce in Speaking and Writing. Learners also need to develop a range of social strategies for interaction with others, including an awareness of the implications of register. The practice and use of real language in real and virtual situations which young people perceive as relevant to them both now and in the future will foster this development.

- **The development of learning and thinking skills**

Using a different language requires the application of a range of skills: problem-solving, reasoning and decision-making skills. Effective use of the dictionary and of other reference sources is an essential skill, which must be taught and practised to enable the learner to identify, organise, process and restructure information. The ability to use the dictionary independently to understand and to produce text (applied language) is essential in language learning and this is assessed in the Reading and Writing elements of Standard Grade Modern Languages. The ability to process language quickly and automatically, and to produce a response is also essential in language learning. This involves memorisation and recall strategies.

- **The development of learner autonomy**

The ability to adapt and change, to learn how to learn, to evaluate what has been learned, how effectively it has been learned and how it connects to what is already known should be further developed through Standard Grade. Learners should discover and apply effective strategies to help them comprehend, memorise, adapt and use new language for specific purposes.

- **The development of self esteem and positive dispositions**

The activities and experiences of the Modern Languages classroom will help learners to develop a sense of themselves as confident and successful language learners and users, working with others and developing intercultural awareness, empathy and responsibility towards others through participation in an expanding network of 'real' and 'virtual' communities: school, local, regional, national and international.

- **The development of the ability to contribute effectively to modern society**

The study of a Modern Language will enable young people in Scotland to develop the qualities necessary to live and work in a competitive European and global environment. The issues and situations encountered in Standard Grade Modern Languages will equip young people to interact at an appropriate intellectual and linguistic level with others in that environment. In this, courses will build on and progress from the language learned at 5-14, and will form a firm basis for continued study within the National Qualifications framework. Languages are of increasing importance in the workplace, in a world where global trade, business, travel and ICT are part of everyday life. Standard Grade courses will reflect these international trends and the increasingly vocational needs of young language learners.

The skills, capabilities and dispositions at the heart of language learning are those which will equip young people to develop as capable, responsible citizens and which will help them to make their way in the world of work and in the world at large.

Overview of Standard Grade Modern Languages

A qualification at Standard Grade represents the first opportunity for national certification of achievement in Modern Languages. Standard Grade in Modern Languages establishes a level of competence which will enable students to function in certain specific situations using the target language in Scotland and in the country/countries where the language is spoken. Success at Standard Grade enables students to continue the study of languages at appropriate levels of the National Qualifications framework, or to return to language study at a later date.

Standard Grade examines and recognises achievement of a national standard at three levels: Foundation, General and Credit.

The assessments and standards set for Modern Languages test communicative competence. This means the ability to engage in real or virtual communication in a modern language using Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing for a variety of specific purposes: personal, social, transactional and vocational through:

- “learned” language
 - Automatic language which is recognised, processed and acted upon instantly, and which is required for Listening, Speaking and as the basis for Reading and Writing. This type of language requires the memorisation, practice and internalisation of a broad vocabulary base and common language patterns.

and

- “applied” language
 - Effective use of grammatical knowledge, and of a dictionary (representing reference sources in examinations), increasing the scope of Reading and Writing in particular. This type of language requires a knowledge and understanding of grammatical patterns and of their application.

Assessment

Summary of the arrangements

Syllabus

- The same overarching themes and topic development are common to all candidates.
- The same overarching themes and topic development are common to all skills, to facilitate exploitation of Reading and Listening texts through Speaking and Writing.
- Different levels of attainment for Speaking and Writing are specified by means of Grade Related Criteria. Candidates' grades are determined by the quality of their output.
- The Grade Related Criteria for Listening and Reading define the nature of texts which are appropriate for each level. Candidates' grades are determined by their ability to comprehend input at the relevant levels.

Assessment

Speaking

will be assessed **internally** on the basis of activities covering prepared talk, conversation and role-play carried out during the course; assessment will be verified by SQA.

Prepared talk (maximum 2 minutes)

Candidates will prepare a talk on a subject of their choice. They will be permitted to prepare headings in advance (no more than 5 headings of up to 8 words each in English, in the target language or in any other language as they wish) and to refer to these in their talk. Candidates will have a maximum of 2 minutes in which to deliver the talk.

Conversation (maximum 5 minutes)

Candidates will take part in discussion on familiar topics. Conversations will last for up to 5 minutes; they may arise from the prepared talk above, but need not do so.

Role-play (maximum 5 minutes)

Candidates will take part in role-plays lasting up to 5 minutes in order to demonstrate their ability to negotiate transactions or to interact in vocational contexts without extensive preparation. Candidates will be expected to observe relevant politeness conventions and, at General and Credit Levels, to be able to cope with additional questions or problems.

Examples of possible tasks for Speaking assessment are given in Appendix 1. Further information is contained in Appendix 2.

Listening

will be assessed **externally** by means of three separate papers, one each at Foundation, General and Credit Levels.

Reading

will be assessed **externally** by means of three separate papers, one each at Foundation, General and Credit levels.

Writing

will be assessed by means of a folio of three pieces of work, and will be marked **externally** by SQA.

The pieces of Writing will be generated during normal class time. Tasks and assessment dates will be internally set. Tasks will be supported by preparation, which may involve drafting and redrafting. The final pieces of Writing which will be sent to SQA for external marking will be produced in class, under controlled conditions, with no support other than a dictionary. Candidates may spend up to 30 minutes on writing the final version of each piece of work for the folio.

Examples of possible tasks for Writing assessment are given in Appendix 1. Indications of length are given in the Grade Related Criteria (page 31).

Assessment Syllabus

1 The interdependence of skills and curricular areas

This section describes the assessment procedures for the four skills examined in Modern Languages at Standard Grade.

Although the skills are assessed separately, it is anticipated that centres will teach candidates to approach each skill with an awareness of the interdependence of language skills. Candidates can be encouraged to profit from Reading by taking vocabulary understood in a written text and using that vocabulary productively, for example to take part in a discussion or to write a response to or summary of a text. They can be taught to use Writing to support Speaking, or to predict and support Reading and Listening activities.

Table 1 (page 11) shows the *content* of the examinations.

The topics and topic development strands outlined in **table 1** are the same for all four skills, to facilitate transferability of language from one skill to another.

Table 2 (page 20) shows the *contexts* in which these topics are deployed.

The vocational context, taken in its wider sense of polite language used with adults, could apply to all topics, and most of the topics can be treated in more than one context.

The functional/notional grid which was provided in the original Standard Grade Arrangements document is subsumed by these topics. The functions described in the original Arrangements are reproduced here for reference, and they have been grouped according to the topic context (**table 2**) in which they are most likely to occur.

Personal/Vocational	Transactional/Vocational	Discursive/Vocational
Greeting/Taking leave	Being polite	Agreeing/Disagreeing
Being sociable	Attracting attention	Refusing/Accepting
Introducing someone	Thanking, Apologising	Approving/Disapproving
Expressing good wishes	Asking about (topic)	Coping with language problems
	Needs/Requests/Wishes	Opinions/Feelings
	Instructions/Commands	Likes/Dislikes
	Intentions	Reasons
	Permission, Inviting	
	Suggesting, Offering	

The topic contexts outlined in **table 2** are similarly to be understood as interdependent. The personal information which would occur in personal contexts (eg, name, age) and information about part-time jobs, leisure activities and school would also occur in a job interview. The focus and register of language might be different, but the information and vocabulary basis would remain the same. Opinions about food could form part of an extended talk, an informal discussion, or a transactional role-play in a restaurant.

In this way, it is envisaged that centres will equip candidates with the linguistic skills to be able to function in different contexts, using a variety of vocabulary “areas”. Examples of the type of language for each context are given before **table 2**.

Appendix 2 (page 38) shows the *focus* of the examinations, in terms of purposes, skills and assessment tasks and types.

The language learned in courses leading to the revised Standard Grade examinations in Modern Languages should have real and practical application. Contextualisation of texts and of activities is important in the learning process. In the examination, contextualisation will be used in such a way as to make comprehension of tasks easier for candidates.

2 From 5-14 to Standard Grade – Topics, Topic Development and Overarching Themes

The basic topics listed in the table below will have been covered in the 5-14 programme, or will quickly be assimilated by students starting additional languages. Building on good practice in language teaching, the topics listed under Standard Grade topic development recycle and expand on the basic topics. The overarching themes recognise the interconnected nature of these topics.

Table 1

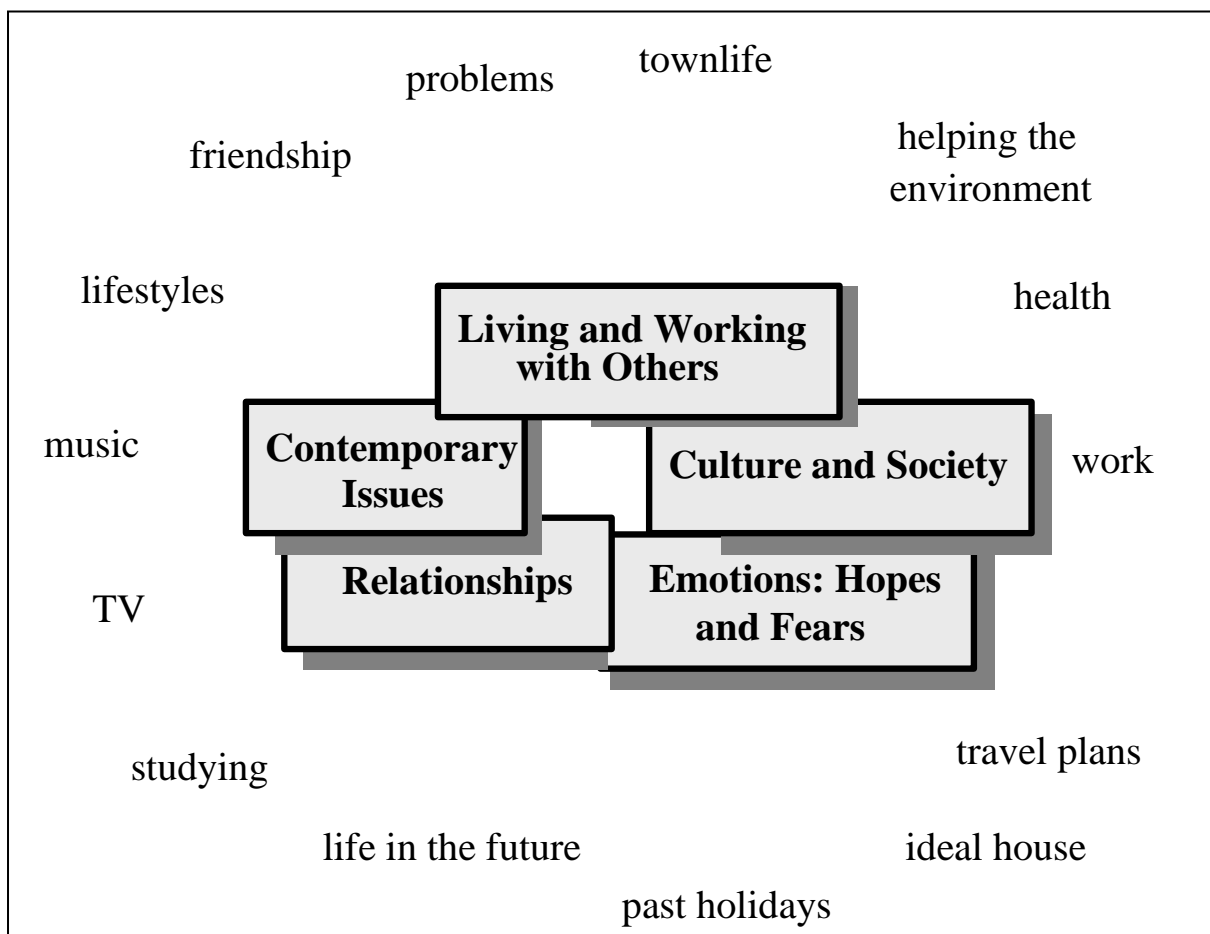
<i>Basic topics</i>	<i>Standard Grade topic development</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name, age, domicile, nationality, cardinal points, spelling, distances • members of family, friends, physical description • parts of body illness/accidents • own house/rooms • routine • birthdays, days, dates • school subjects, time • leisure, sports • foods/drinks • snack food • simple directions • buildings • pocket money • simple transactions, eg souvenirs, gifts, clothes, accommodation, snacks, transport • countries/place • weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal information given/asked for in polite language • members of family, friends and friendship, physical and character description, interpersonal problems and relationships • parts of body, illness/accidents • making appointments • houses/rooms and ideal house • comparison of routine and lifestyles in Scotland and in the other country/countries • life in future, past and future events (in routine) • comparison of education system with that of the other country/countries • leisure, sports and health issues: healthy eating, exercise, drugs • TV, film and music • other food issues • restaurants/menus, making arrangements • giving simple and complex directions • tourist information, comparison town/country, helping the environment • changing money • negotiating transactional problems • jobs/working and studying • relative merits of jobs • work experience • future employment • travel information • travel plans • relative merits of different means of transport • comparisons between different countries • weather • future holidays • ideal holidays • past holidays

Overarching themes

The overarching themes are:

- Living and Working with Others
- Culture and Society
- Relationships
- Emotions: Hopes and Fears
- Contemporary Issues

These are not presented in any particular order: they overlap and complement each other and should permeate the teaching and learning of the topics in table 1 (page 11). The box below illustrates this with a selection of topics. Some of these are described in more generic terms than in table 1, eg 'illness/accidents' is part of 'health'.



The topics in table 1 could be covered under any or all of the overarching themes. The themes give specific focus to the topics. Their interconnected nature will lead to a recycling of the vocabulary and of the topics with a different emphasis and focus, extending coverage and depth.

3 Examples of Topic Development under the Themes

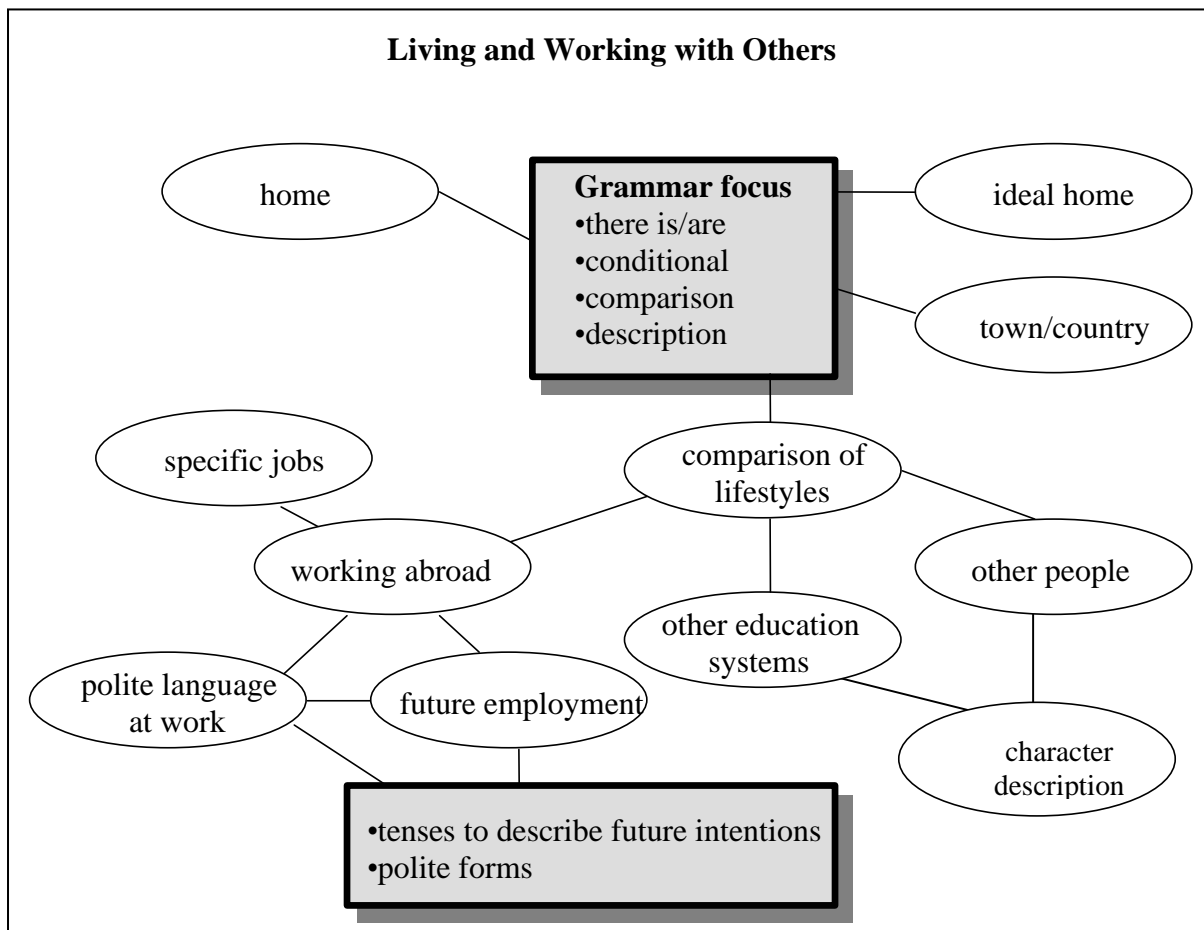
Any of the topics could be covered under each theme.

The following examples show how themes might be developed, with a view to revisiting a number of topics to consolidate and expand students' communicative competence.

Example 1: Living and Working with Others

An initial topic (for Speaking/Writing) could be **home/ideal home**. This takes a basic topic, which students will have covered as part of the 5-14 programme (or will quickly cover in a new language), and builds on that knowledge towards more mature ideas, incorporating aspects of living with others: how easy it is to get on with others, etc. At this point, transactional/vocational aspects such as expressing wishes in connection with booking accommodation abroad could be dealt with (*grammar focus: there is/are and the conditional*), expanding then into text study (Reading/Listening) of **town/country life** (*focussing on building expressions of opinion and using these for Speaking/Writing*) expanding then into a general **comparison of lifestyles in Scotland and in the target language country/countries** (*grammar focus: comparison: relevant conjunctions, adjectives, etc*) focussing then on **other people**, in Scotland and abroad and examining national characteristics and prejudices in terms of **character description** (*grammar focus: adjectives, position, agreement, etc*). This could then bring in a **comparison of school systems** and of **jobs/working and studying** in the other country/countries, **work experience, future employment** and unemployment and **specific jobs** – leading to a consideration of **polite language at work**.

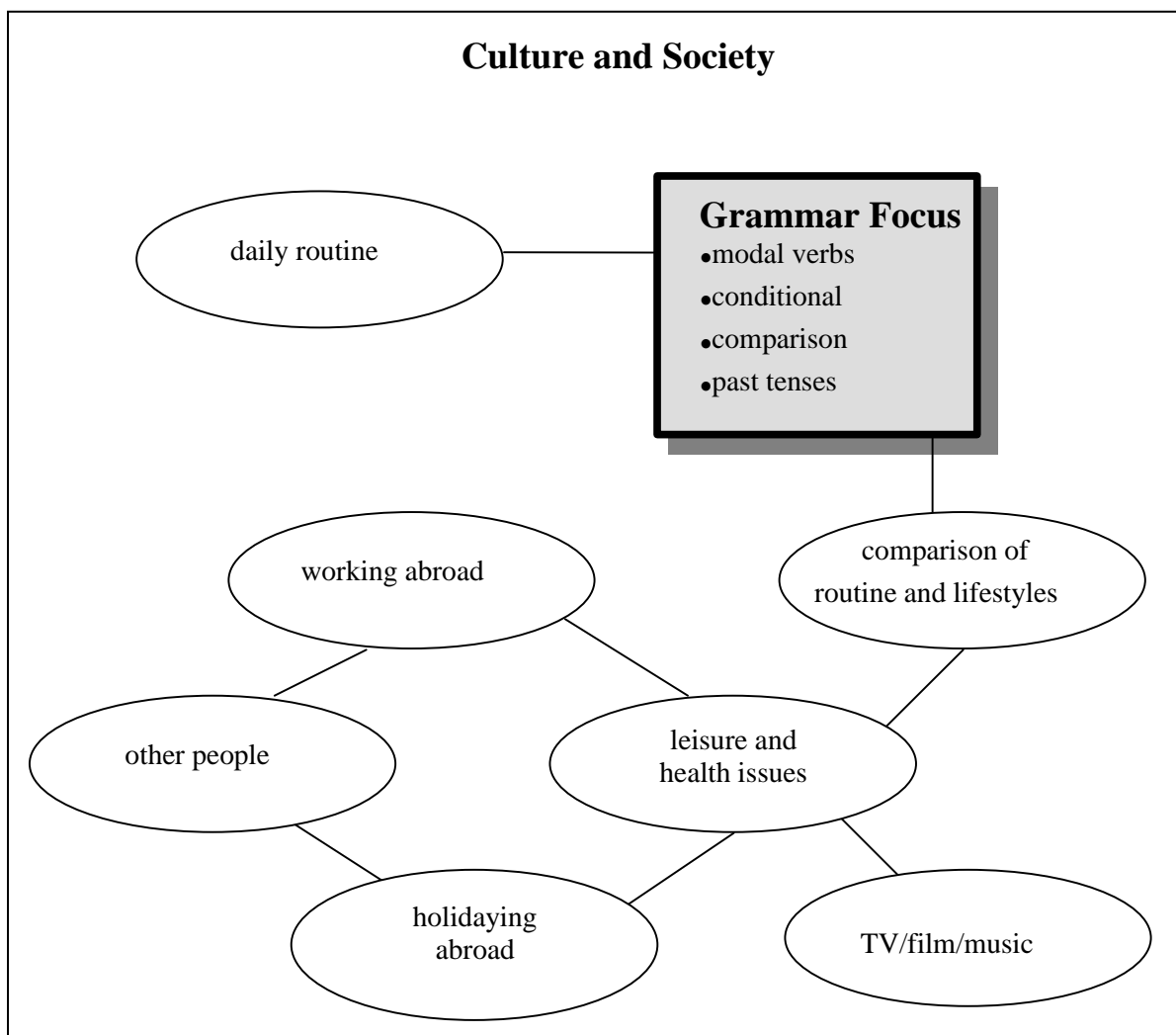
The following diagram may help to illustrate the above example:



Example 2: Culture and Society

A revision topic of **daily routine** could then be expanded into **a comparison of routine and lifestyles in Scotland and in the other country/countries** (*grammar focus: comparison and modal verbs*) focussing on how life is lived in the other country/countries, including **TV, film and music** as an expression of national character. **Leisure and health issues** with regard to the other country could take in national sports and events and could consider national diets and related health (*grammar focus: "if" clauses and conditional*). In covering national diets, **foods** typical of the other country could be compared to those of Scotland. Finally, there could be consideration of what it is like to **work abroad**, looking at the past experiences (*grammar focus: past tenses*) of other people, and how different it is to **holiday abroad**, concluding with observations about national characteristics and prejudices.

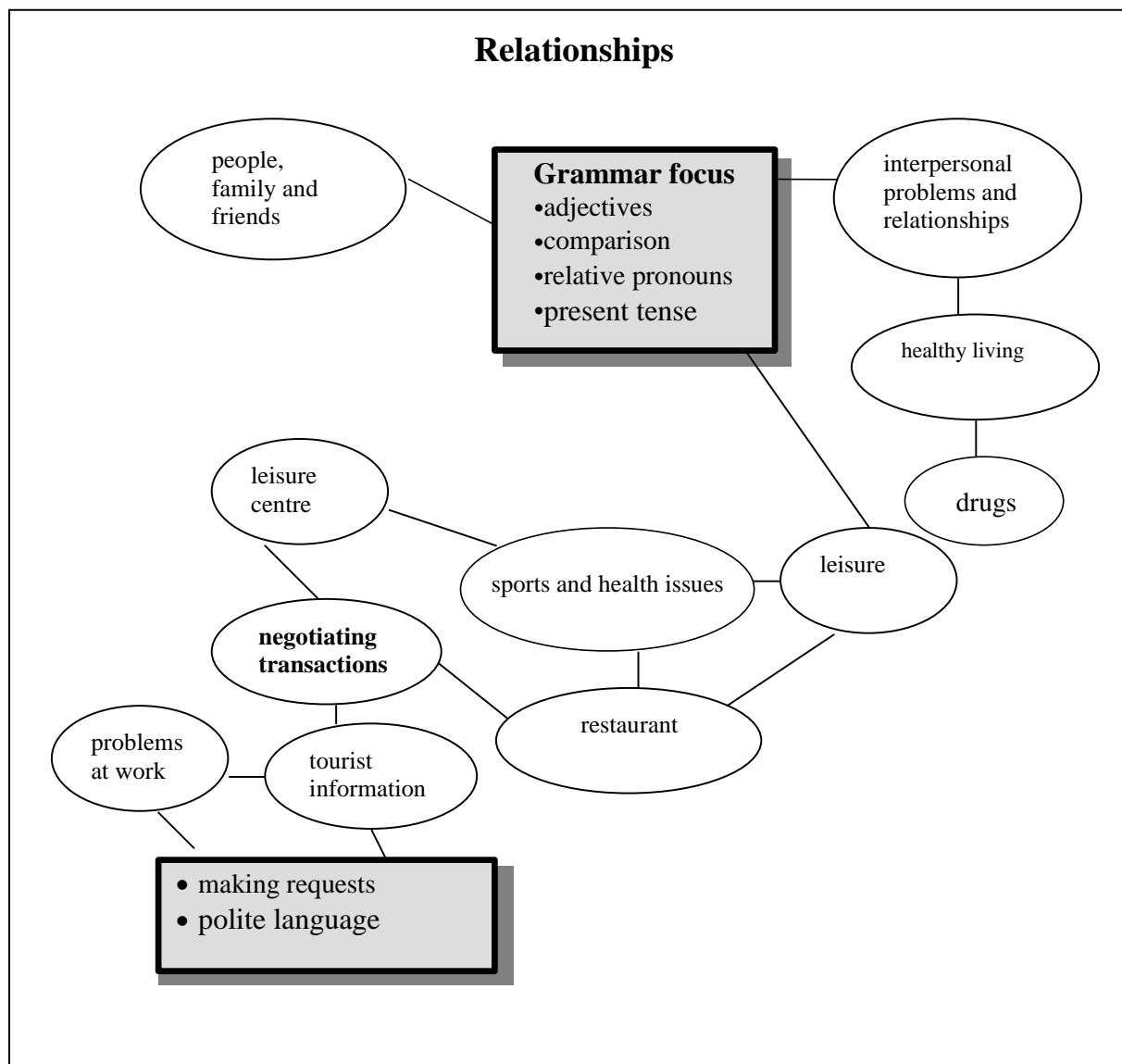
The following diagram may help to illustrate the above example:



Example 3: Relationships

The obvious starting point for the theme of relationships would be the basic topic of **people, family and friends**: revising or introducing vocabulary for people (man, woman, girl, boy, (girl)friend, (boy) friend) and family members, and for basic **physical and character description** (*grammar focus: adjectives/agreement*). This could then be expanded into a consideration of **interpersonal problems and relationships** and of behaviours within relationships: what makes a good friend/teacher/parent (*grammar focus: comparative/superlative adjectives, relative pronouns and present tense*). Part of the focus on shared **leisure interests** and **sports and health issues** could be **negotiating transactional activities: in restaurants**, in the **tourist office**, at the **leisure centre**; social transactions, such as **making arrangements** to meet; and vocational transactions, such as dealing with **problems in the workplace** (*grammar focus: polite language/verb forms, making requests*). Part of the focus on what makes a good friend/parent/teacher could be their attitude to **healthy living** and to things like **smoking, drinking and drugs**.

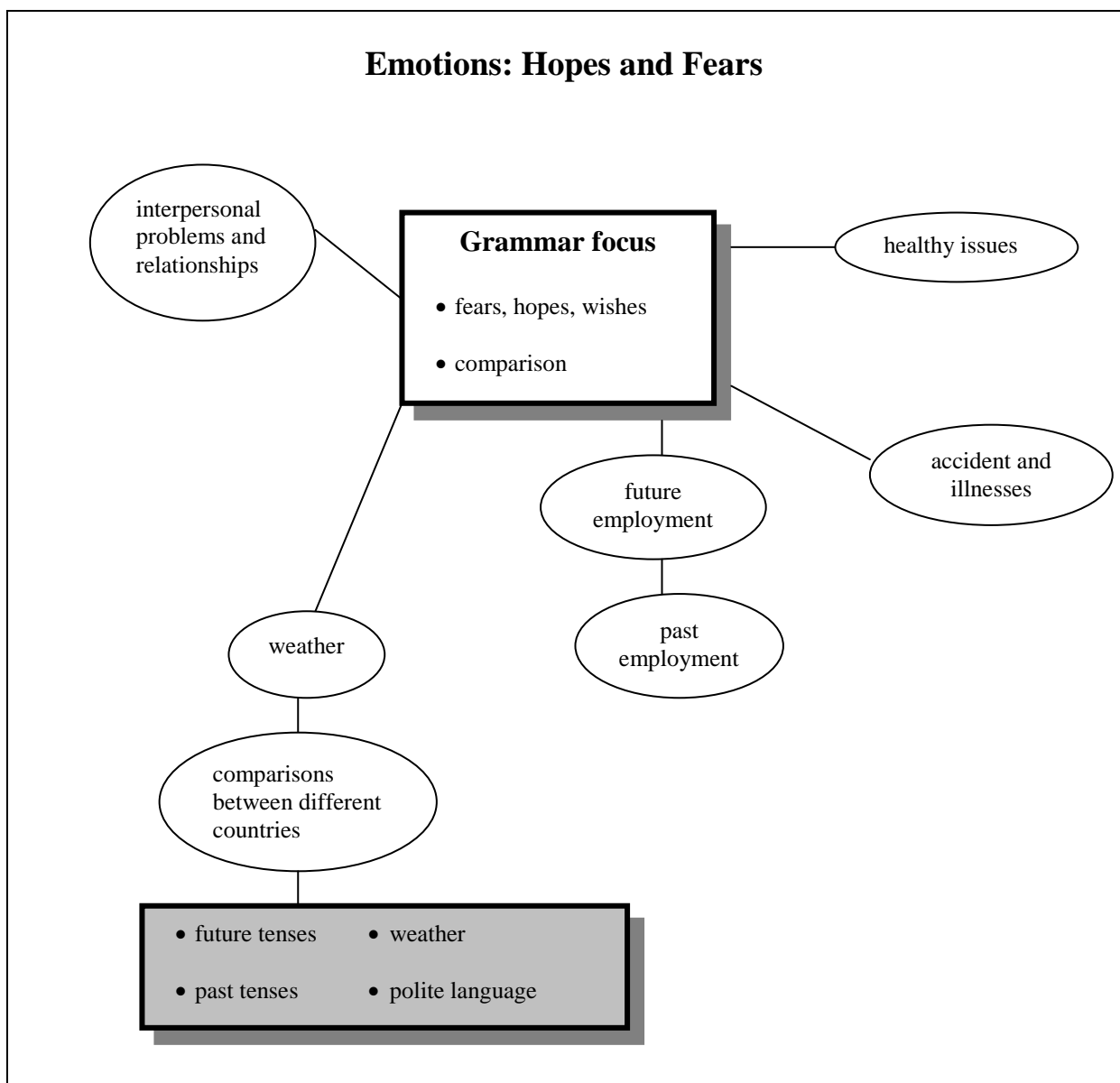
The following diagram may help to illustrate the above example:



Example 4: Emotions: Hopes and Fears

Many of the topics developed at Standard Grade could be dealt with under the theme of Emotions: Hopes and Fears. If **interpersonal problems and relationships** have been covered under Relationships, they can here be revised and expanded with the focus on feelings and reactions: what makes people happy/sad, confident/afraid (*grammar focus: vocabulary and verb forms to express fears, hopes, wishes*). Extreme forms of emotion can be covered in terms of eating disorders (**healthy eating**) and of **accidents and illness**. Ambitions and hopes for the future could then be developed under **future employment** (*grammar focus: future tense*), and compared with any past **work experience** (*grammar focus: past tenses*). This could be developed into the vocational context of a job interview, requiring *polite language*. Finally, a look at the topic of **weather** under this theme could lead to consideration of the effects of the weather on national temperament and activities/traditions (**comparisons between different countries**).

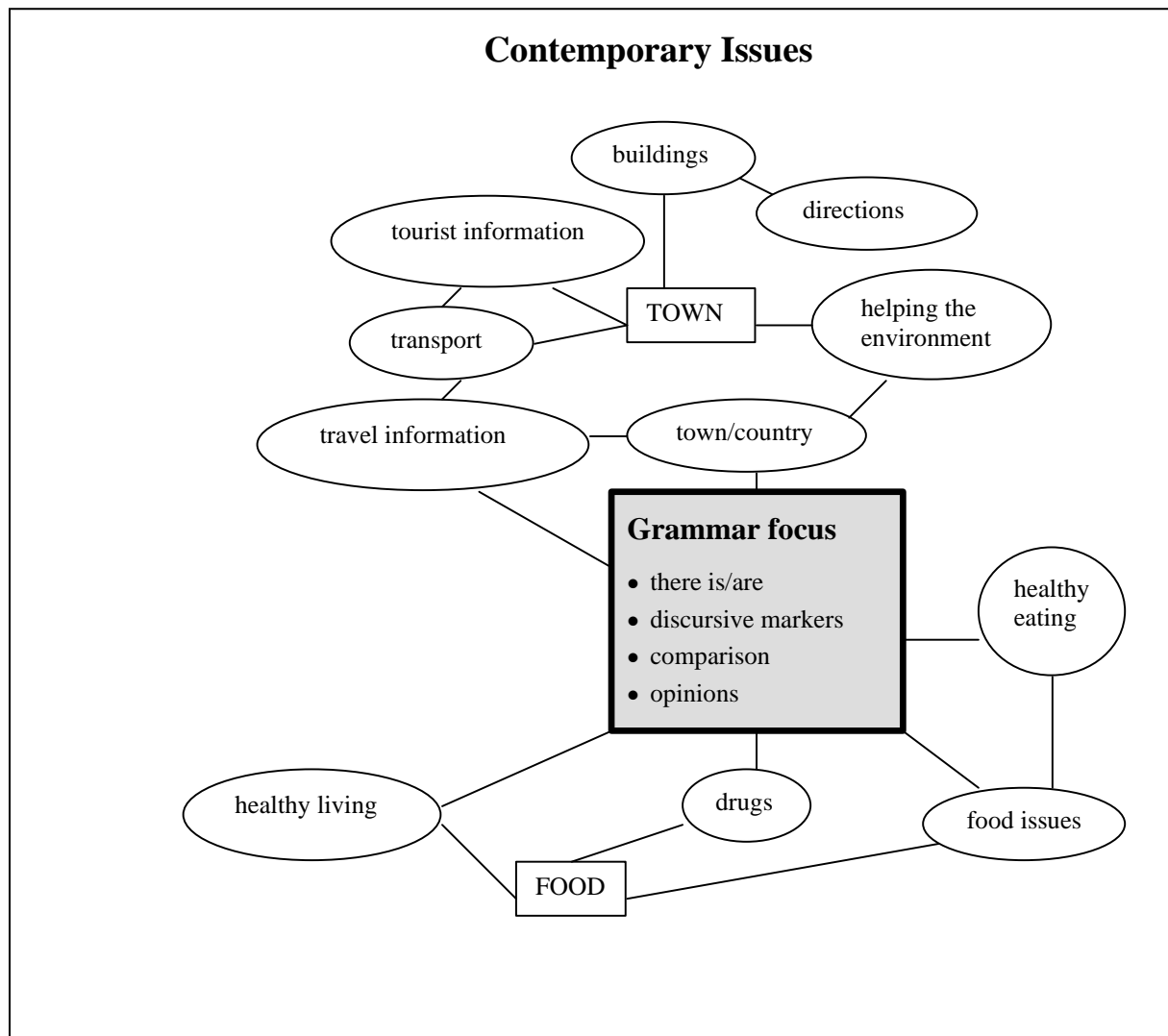
The following diagram may help to illustrate the above example:



Example 5: Contemporary issues

This theme allows the topics developed under Standard Grade in Modern Languages to be given greater contemporary relevance for young people. This theme provides the greatest focus for discursive language, which could provide the unifying structure for the theme, although such language (advantages/disadvantages, good/bad things, opinions, etc) will be covered elsewhere. A topic such as **town** could be approached by revising **buildings** and **directions**, role-plays in the **tourist office**, **transport** and role-plays centering on **travel information**. This could then be developed into work on comparing **town and country**, including a look at traffic, noise and pollution, and finishing with a section on **helping the environment**. Another such topic could be **healthy living**, starting with the basic topic of **food** and bringing in **healthy eating** and other **food issues** (eg BSE, vegetarianism), **smoking, alcohol and drugs**, and moving on to **exercise** and other **health issues**.

The following diagram may help to illustrate the above example:



Standard Grade Topics and other Levels in the NQ Framework

This table shows how the Standard Grade topics relate to the Themes of the National Qualifications framework at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher.

Basic Topic	SG Topic Development	NQ Theme
Personal Description	Personal information in polite/vocational contexts	Lifestyles
People, Family, Friends	Friends and Friendship	
	Interpersonal problems and relationships	
	Physical and character description	
Parts of the body	Accidents and Illnesses	
	Making appointments	
Own house/room	Houses/rooms	
	Ideal house	
	Comparison with country/ies of target language	
Buildings in town	Simple and complex directions	
	Comparison town/country	
	Helping the environment	
Daily Routine	Comparison with country/ies of target language	
Food	Restaurants and menus	
	Food issues	
	Healthy Eating	
Leisure	Sport and health issues	
	Smoking, alcohol and drugs	
	TV, film and music	
	Parties, discos	
	Making arrangements	
School	Comparison with country/ies of target language Opinions	Education and Work
Work	Working and studying Comparing different jobs Future employment Work experience	
Pocket money	Changing money	
Transport	Travel and transport Travel plans/comparison of types of transport	
Holidays	Weather Future holidays Past holidays Holiday transactions The European Dimension: comparisons	The Wider World

4 Context of topics

The contexts described and exemplified below and in Table 2 overleaf are by no means mutually exclusive. The **Personal** context focuses on personal experience, the students' or others' experience, and this is expanded and developed by the **Discursive** context. Here students will develop their ability to organise and express facts and opinions and to justify these. The **Transactional** context enables students to transfer knowledge about requesting and responding from one topic area to others. Once the pattern for successfully negotiating transactions has been established, it can be applied to other situations. The **Vocational** context is very broad. It could subsume the other three contexts by re-siting topics in polite situations: eg, a discussion about holidays (discursive) could take place among friends (personal) or in the work place among adults (vocational).

Interdependence of contexts

Table 2 gives an idea of the likely focus of these contexts, but any of the contexts could, in theory, be applied to any of the revised Standard Grade topics. If students meet similar language areas in different contexts, and under different themes, they are more likely to develop the ability to transfer knowledge about language to new situations, and to become more autonomous in their use of the foreign language.

Some of the more likely uses of language in context are given below.

Personal language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eliciting or giving personal information• questions in a social context
Discursive language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• discursive conventions (polite agreement, etc)• summarising, justifying, giving reasons• discourse markers (firstly, most importantly, etc)
Transactional language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• polite register• requests (can I have, I would like, could you, etc)• payment• thanking
Vocational language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• polite register• job interview/CV (giving personal information in polite register)• instructions, arrangements, plans• employment, past and future

Context of topics

Table 2

Personal	Discursive	Transactional	Vocational
Personal information		personal information given/asked for in polite language	
		negotiating transactions	
Members of family, friends, physical and character description			
interpersonal problems and relationships		illness/accidents	
house, rooms and ideal house		making arrangements and appointments	
comparison of routine and lifestyles in Scotland			
and in the other country/countries			
life in the future			
past and future events (in routine)			
comparison of education systems			
leisure, sport and health issues, healthy eating, exercise, drugs		restaurants/menus	
other food issues			
comparison of town/country		giving directions	
relative merits of different means of transport			
travel plans		travel information	
		changing money	
future holidays, past holidays, ideal holidays, countries, places, weather		tourist information	
		helping the environment	
	TV/film/music		
	jobs, working/studying, relative merits of jobs, work experience, future employment		

Assessment for Certification

Candidates will be assessed in the four elements Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.

- The certificate will record element grades and an overall grade. In calculating the overall grade, Speaking and Reading will be double weighted.
- Speaking will be internally assessed at all levels with external moderation.
- Writing will be assessed by means of a folio of three pieces of work, produced internally under controlled conditions and marked externally.
- Reading and Listening will be assessed externally at all levels.

Speaking

Speaking will be assessed internally by the class teacher and externally verified by SQA (see page 23).

Assessment tasks will arise out of normal class work.

Assessment will cover:

- prepared talk on a topic/topics of interest to the candidate (using no more than 5 headings of up to 8 words each in English, in the target language or in any other language as the candidate wishes)
- conversation (on the same or a different topic)
- role-play requiring polite language (transaction/job interview/vocational language) (*see Appendix 1 for examples*)

Candidates should be able to demonstrate the ability to take part in a conversation, to use polite language as appropriate and, at General and Credit Levels, to be able to cope with additional questions or problems. At Foundation Level, “conversation” may well mean “take part in question and answer exchanges”.

Provisional grades will be awarded for candidates’ normal performance in each of the three types of task. Final grades will be awarded on the basis of the sum of the three grades divided by three. Final grades containing .66 should be rounded up. Final grades containing .33 should be rounded down.

Listening

Listening will be assessed by an external examination.

There will be three separate papers, one at each level.

Material will be presented in recorded form and will be heard three times.

Questions will be set and answered in English, with appropriate support at each level, ie questions may be supported by multiple-choice or gap-filling tasks, even at Credit Level.

The Foundation Level paper will concentrate on basic topics (see Table 1, page 11), such as the understanding of number (days, dates, money, etc) family members, pets, descriptions, places in town, directions, items of food and drink, leisure activities, means of transport and common accidents/illnesses.

The introduction and questions in English will be both printed on paper and recorded on tape.

The same scenario may not apply throughout the paper: each Listening paper may be in several unrelated sections, if this will avoid unnecessarily complicated explanations in English.

Candidates will **not** be allowed to use a foreign-language dictionary.

Each Listening paper will last no more than 30 minutes.

Reading

Reading will be assessed by an external examination.

There will be three separate papers, one at each Level; each paper will comprise several texts, which may be unrelated.

Questions will be set and answered in English, with appropriate support at each Level, ie questions may be supported by multiple-choice or gap-filling tasks, even at Credit Level.

While the content of Reading assessments should be familiar to candidates, the contexts may not be.

Unusual words will be glossed.

Where appropriate, authentic texts will be adapted to make them more representative of levels described in this document, and therefore accessible for candidates at each Level.

At least one passage in each paper will be work-related and will require comprehension at text level, ie candidates will have to identify several points for action described in a fax/memo/e-mail/letter.

Candidates will be allowed to use a foreign-language dictionary.

The Reading paper will last 45 minutes at Foundation and General Levels and 1 hour at Credit Level.

Writing

Writing will be assessed by means of a folio of three pieces of work generated during normal class activities. Topics may be selected by the candidate (*see Appendix 1 for examples*). Where appropriate to the task, headings may be provided by the teacher. Submissions can be prepared in advance, drafted and re-drafted. The final submissions must, however, be produced under controlled conditions, ie each piece will be written in class, within 30 minutes, under supervision, with no support or recourse to notes or reference sources other than a dictionary.

All submissions will be marked externally by SQA.

Pieces of Writing should normally be between 25 and 200 words in length, should relate to three different topics or tasks and should represent the candidate's best work. (See Grade Related Criteria, page 31, for indications of length.)

Verification of Speaking

To ensure the application of national standards, internal assessment of Speaking will be subject to verification by Visiting Verifiers appointed by SQA. This will normally take place in November/December.

Centres will be required to have available, prior to the Verifier's visit, a provisional grade reflecting each candidate's normal performance in Speaking across the three specified activities.

The Verifier will wish to be present during six examples of a prepared talk and six examples of teacher/candidate interaction (conversation and/or transactional or vocational role-play), covering the full range of grades. Centres and candidates are free to choose the focus for the talks and interactions, in order to reflect the focus and range of teaching and learning.

The Verifier will not conduct the activities, but will observe the performances of the sample of candidates and will discuss with the teacher(s) the allocation of grades to these performances. This will indicate the standard against which centres will finalise their assessments in French, German, Italian, Spanish and/or Urdu. Time should be made available to allow the Verifier to discuss the outcome of the verification with the Principal Teacher or other designated teacher. It will be the responsibility of this teacher to ensure that any teachers not present during the discussion with the Verifier are made fully aware of the advice and/or instructions delivered by the Verifier.

In the light of the Verifier's advice/instructions, the centre will review candidates' provisional grades in each of the languages being presented and will determine the final grades to be awarded.

Grammar Grid for Productive Language

Introduction

In the initial stages of foreign language learning, words and phrases are learned in specific contexts, and learners are not necessarily aware of the grammatical import of the different elements of what they learn. Effectively they learn a whole phrase as if it were a single word. To enable students to move beyond this vocabulary level, and to apply language learned in one context to different contexts with a certain degree of flexibility, the mechanics of the language need to be explained. This does not mean that students need to understand and control the whole grammatical structure of a language before they can use the language, but rather that students need to be shown strategies to help them understand texts of increasing difficulty, and produce language of increasing accuracy, fluency and complexity.

The Grammar Grid on page 26 describes candidates' levels of attainment in Speaking and Writing. It does not describe characteristics of Reading and Listening texts which students may work with in class. The level of language to which learners are exposed should incorporate unexpected elements, and go well beyond productive expectations.

The Grammar Grid is an aid to teachers to give a clear idea of what is meant by terms used in the Grade Related Criteria (GRC) for Speaking and for Writing such as “grammatical accuracy”, “accuracy in basic structures” and “a range of structures”. It is to be understood as a description of grammatical control characteristic of each Level. **It is not a teaching programme**, but rather a description of how candidates cope at different Levels with the grammatical complexity of language, having been exposed to a wide variety of structures.

The Grammar Grid shows the type of language which candidates should be able to **produce**, with varying degrees of accuracy, towards the end of their Standard Grade course. Foundation, General and Credit are descriptions of candidates' performance in assessment activities, and may well not have a one-to-one relationship with the level at which candidates have been operating in the learning and teaching situation.

The grid relates to grammatical competence and accuracy in Speaking and Writing. It does not mention other important elements of productive language, which are dealt with elsewhere in the revised Standard Grade arrangements: *discourse competence*, the ability to present, to structure and to organise language (GRC pages 29-31), *socio-linguistic competence*, the awareness of the implications of register and of politeness conventions (GRC pages 29-31) and *cultural competence*, an awareness of the cultural context for the language and its use in the country/countries where the language is spoken (Culture and Society page 14).

Basic Structures

In the Grade Related Criteria for Speaking and Writing, reference is made to accuracy in basic structures. This is to be understood as straightforward, simple language, characterised by the following grammatical features, as appropriate for each language.

Verbs

- Fairly consistent use of the correct form of the present tense to express being, having, going, doing, and liking, and other activities which can be expressed using regular verb patterns in first and third persons singular. This includes using subject pronouns (as appropriate in the language) and correct verb endings, particularly where these also indicate subject.
- The ability to express negation.

- The ability to ask simple questions in an appropriate register.
- Fairly accurate use of verbs in high frequency personal language and polite language (used in transactions/interactions in more formal contexts). This includes the correct linguistic conventions for polite verb forms, for requests (“could you...”, “I would like...”), and also includes the correct verb forms for plural subjects in very common expressions: eg my sisters have..., my friends are...

Nouns

- Fairly consistent use of the correct type of article/determiner (a, the, this), although not necessarily the correct form, (eg correct gender or number) along with an indication of number in the noun or elsewhere in the sentence as appropriate for the language.
- High frequency nouns used with appropriate gender marking on article and/or adjective.
- Clear indication of person when nouns are used with possessive (eg *my* and *your* used the correct way round).

Grammar Grid for Productive Language (Speaking and Writing)

	Foundation	General	Credit
Word Order	Shows awareness of different linguistic conventions, eg noun/adj order	Shows some control of different linguistic conventions in straightforward expressions, eg position of verbs	Has control of different linguistic conventions in straightforward expressions and shows some control in more complex structures
Person	Can make person understood	Uses subject pronouns/verb endings (as appropriate) fairly consistently and shows awareness of the use of object pronouns	Uses subject and object pronouns consistently and shows awareness of the use of indirect object pronouns
Tense and Mood	Can use high frequency verbs in present tense with some accuracy in first and third person singular	Can use present tense and at least one other with some accuracy in all persons	Can use a range of tenses as appropriate
	Can articulate basic questions to adults and peers	Can articulate common questions using politeness conventions on more demanding topics and can use common commands	Can ask a range of questions in different ways and can articulate commands
	Can use fixed phrases, eg I would like, I must	Can use modal verbs+ infinitive in plain and polite forms (eg present and conditional)	Can use modal verbs+ infinitive in a range of tenses as appropriate
Articles	Uses some form of article/determiner	Uses articles/determiners correctly, but may not be entirely accurate	Uses articles/determiners consistently and accurately
Cases and Agreement	Shows awareness of case	Uses correct case with high frequency expressions	Shows some control of cases (as appropriate in the language)
	Shows awareness of adjective agreement	Uses correct adjective agreement with high frequency nouns (regular forms)	Uses correct adjective agreement with a wider range of nouns (regular and some irregular forms)

Grade Related Criteria

Grade Related Criteria (GRC) are positive descriptions of performance, against which a candidate's achievement is measured. Direct comparisons are not made between the performance of one candidate and that of another.

GRC are defined at three levels of performance: Foundation, General and Credit. Candidates' grades in Speaking and Writing are determined by the quality of their language output, measured against the relevant GRC. The GRC for Listening and Reading define the nature of texts and tasks which are appropriate for each Level. Candidates' grades are determined by their ability to comprehend input at the relevant Levels.

Speaking and Writing

Each Speaking performance and piece of Writing is assessed holistically. Grades are awarded on the basis of length, structure and/or focus, accuracy, range of vocabulary and of grammatical structures. The Criteria are to be understood as characteristics of Speaking and Writing at each Level; thus, for example, the length of a piece of Writing or its accuracy alone is not sufficient to guarantee an award at a particular Level. The GRC are presented as holistic statements, to reinforce the need to consider each Speaking performance and piece of Writing from several aspects simultaneously. Teachers may wish to share these GRC with candidates, in order to give them individual and attainable targets for improvement.

To gain the lower award at each Level (ie grade 2 at Credit Level, grade 4 at General Level, and grade 6 at Foundation Level), candidates will have met the criteria for the Level, demonstrating a satisfactory overall standard of performance. To gain the upper award at each Level, candidates will have met the criteria for that Level, demonstrating a high overall standard of performance. Below each set of GRC for Speaking and Writing are brief indications of how these standards apply in each case.

General Level is an interpolation between Foundation and Credit Levels. Speaking and Writing at this Level may contain features which correspond to some of the criteria for Foundation and/or Credit Levels. Grade 3 would be awarded for Speaking and Writing which met the criteria for General Level and perhaps also contained aspects of the GRC for Credit Level. Grade 4 would be awarded for Speaking and Writing which satisfied the criteria for General Level but which was very inaccurate or lacking in range.

Calculation of final grades and estimate grades

Grades for Speaking will be calculated on the basis of candidates' normal performance in each of the three task-types. Final grades are calculated by adding the three grades together and then dividing by three. Final grades containing .66 should be rounded up. Final grades containing .33 should be rounded down.

Grades for Writing will be calculated by SQA on the basis of candidates' performance in the three pieces of writing. Final grades are calculated by adding the three grades together and then dividing by three. Estimate grades should be calculated in the same way.

Eg	Speaking	Grade	Writing	Grade
	Prepared talk	2	Task 1	3
	Conversation	3	Task 2	3
	Role-play	5	Task 3	2
	Total	10($\div 3=3.3$)	Total	8($\div 3=2.6$)
	Speaking grade	3	Writing grade	3

Grade Related Criteria for Speaking: Prepared Talk

Although short talks (of up to one minute) may be the norm in performances at Foundation Level, longer talks may be the norm at General and Credit Levels (up to a maximum of two minutes).

Foundation		General		Credit	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talks are limited and may be unfocussed or lacking in structure. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talks go beyond basic content and show evidence of structure and/or focus. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talks are comprehensive in content, well-structured and/or focussed. 	
<p>Candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can make a short presentation on a prepared topic can make themselves understood, although there may be mispronunciation, incorrect intonation, other-tongue interference, hesitation and quite frequent grammatical error have a limited range of vocabulary, structures and phrases tend to repeat structures and/or whole phrases may express simple opinions 		<p>Candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can speak at some length on a prepared topic can communicate with some success and accuracy in basic structures, although there may be some mispronunciation and weakness in intonation, grammatical errors and occasional hesitation may attempt a range of tenses and/or vocabulary can express opinions and reasons as required may make an attempt at a wider range of vocabulary, phrases and structures with frequent error or may speak carefully and deliberately but be more accurate 		<p>Candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can make a full and comprehensive presentation on a prepared topic have no difficulty making themselves understood can use the language flexibly and are generally accurate although there may be occasional grammatical errors particularly in more complex language express opinions and reasons well and may expand on them have generally correct intonation and pronunciation 	
Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 1
Talks tend to be short, limited in range, unfocussed and very inaccurate.	Talks may be short and limited in range, but are more focussed and accurate.	Talks may be inaccurate with reasonable range, or more accurate but lacking in range.	Talks are more accurate and vocabulary and structures are more wide-ranging.	Talks are mostly accurate but ideas are less well developed or ideas are better developed but talks are less accurate.	Candidates are able to speak at some length, showing both development of ideas and control of the language.

Candidates may use headings: brief reminders in note form – no more than 5 headings of up to 8 words each in English, in the target language or in any other language as they wish.

Grade Related Criteria for Speaking: Conversation

Although short conversations (of up to two minutes) may be the norm in performances at Foundation Level, longer conversations may be the norm at General and Credit Levels (up to a maximum of 5 minutes).

Foundation		General		Credit	
<p>The Interlocutor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses short phrases and sentences has to speak slowly, perhaps using repetition and/or rephrasing has to provide a great deal of (unsolicited) help 		<p>The Interlocutor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> goes beyond short phrases and sentences can usually speak at normal speed, using repetition and/or rephrasing as required has to provide some help 		<p>The Interlocutor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can use a wide range of language can speak at normal speed, occasionally using repetition and/or rephrasing may have to provide minimal help 	
<p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can take part in simple conversations can ask for help, and with help provided can understand most of what is said tend to limit themselves to basic content and phrases may express simple opinions can make themselves understood beyond fixed phrases, the language tends to be inaccurate and hesitant, with mispronunciation, incorrect intonation, other-tongue interference and frequent grammatical errors have a limited range of vocabulary and structures 		<p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can take part in simple conversations can understand most of what is said and can ask for help if required are prepared to go beyond basic content and phrases may take the initiative can express agreement, disagreement, opinions and reasons can communicate with some success and cope reasonably well with unexpected questions, although there may be many grammatical errors there may be mispronunciation, occasional other-tongue interference and weakness in intonation may speak carefully and deliberately with some accuracy or be more fluent but less accurate show a reasonable range of vocabulary and structures may attempt a range of tenses 		<p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can take part in extended conversations can understand immediately almost everything said and seldom need to ask for help have no difficulty going beyond basic content and phrases readily take initiative express agreement, disagreement, opinions and reasons well and can expand on them if required have no difficulty making themselves understood and can use the language flexibly, coping well with unexpected questions are generally accurate although there may be occasional grammatical errors and weaknesses in pronunciation speak with little hesitation, other-tongue interference or weakness in intonation can use a range of language structures with some confidence may attempt a range of tenses 	
Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 1
Interactions tend to be very limited in range. Candidates need a lot of unsolicited help.	Interactions are less limited in range and content. Candidates need some unsolicited help.	Interactions may be inaccurate with reasonable range, or more accurate but lacking in range.	Interactions are more accurate and vocabulary and structures are more wide-ranging.	Interactions are mostly accurate and candidate is able to use the language flexibly.	Candidates are able to converse at some length and show control of the language.

Grade Related Criteria for Speaking: Role-Play

At General and Credit Levels, candidates are expected to go beyond the basic scenario. Although short role-plays (of up to two minutes) may be the norm in performances at Foundation Level, longer role-plays may be the norm at General and Credit Levels (up to a maximum of 5 minutes).

Foundation		General		Credit	
<p>The Interlocutor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses short phrases and sentences has to speak slowly, perhaps using repetition and/or rephrasing has to provide a great deal of (unsolicited) help 		<p>The Interlocutor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> goes beyond short phrases and sentences can usually speak at normal speed, using repetition and/or rephrasing as required has to provide some help develops the scenario by introducing additional questions or problems 		<p>The Interlocutor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can use a wide range of language can speak at normal speed, occasionally using repetition and/or rephrasing may have to provide minimal help develops the scenario by introducing additional questions or problems 	
<p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can take part in simple face-to-face role-plays but do not go beyond the basic scenario can ask for help, and with help provided, understand most of what is said may express simple opinions can make themselves understood beyond fixed phrases, the language tends to be inaccurate and hesitant, with mispronunciation, incorrect intonation, other-tongue interference and frequent grammatical errors have a limited range of vocabulary and structures show awareness of correct register but tend to be inconsistent in their use of polite language are unable to cope with additional questions or developments 		<p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can take part in face-to-face role plays and are able to go beyond the basic scenario can understand most of what is said and can ask for help if required may take the initiative can express agreement, disagreement, opinions and reasons can communicate with some success and cope reasonably well with additional questions or developments although there may be many grammatical errors there may be mispronunciation, occasional other-tongue interference and weakness in intonation may speak carefully and deliberately with some accuracy or be more fluent but less accurate show a reasonable range of vocabulary and structures may attempt a range of tenses show awareness of correct register and use of polite language 		<p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can take part in extended face-to-face role plays, readily go beyond the basic scenario and take the initiative can understand immediately almost everything said and seldom need to ask for help express agreement, disagreement, opinions and reasons well and can expand on them if required have no difficulty making themselves understood and can use the language flexibly, coping very well with additional questions are generally accurate although there may be occasional grammatical errors and weaknesses in pronunciation speak with little hesitation, other-tongue interference or weakness in intonation can use a range of language structures with some confidence may attempt a range of tenses show awareness of correct register and use of polite language 	
Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 1
Interactions tend to be very limited in range. Candidates need a lot of unsolicited help.	Interactions are less limited in range and content. Candidates need some unsolicited help.	Interactions may be inaccurate with a reasonable range, or more accurate but lacking in range.	Interactions are more accurate and vocabulary and structures are more wide-ranging.	Interactions are mostly accurate and candidates are able to use the language flexibly.	Interactions are mostly accurate and well sustained; candidates show control of the language.

Grade Related Criteria for Writing

These criteria are to be understood as characteristics of Writing at each level; thus, for example, the length of a piece of Writing or its accuracy alone is not sufficient to guarantee an award at a particular level. The **overall quality** of the written language is what is being assessed.

At all levels, candidates may use short headings, in English, in the target language or in any other language as they wish.

Foundation		General		Credit	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the content is appropriate to the task, but very limited. communication is achieved despite frequent grammatical errors candidates may express simple opinions candidates can use simple structures with some accuracy. there is a limited range of vocabulary and structures. there may be a tendency to repeat structures and/or phrases 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> writing shows evidence of structure and/or focus communication is achieved with some success and consistency, despite grammatical errors candidates can express simple opinions and reasons candidates can use simple structures with more accuracy there is a reasonable range of vocabulary and structures there may be an attempt at a range of tenses 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> writing is well structured and/or focussed candidates can write with some flexibility candidates can express opinions and reasons well and may expand on them candidates are generally accurate in their use of language although there may be occasional grammatical errors, particularly in more complex structures there is evidence of a wide range of vocabulary and structures candidates use a range of tenses as appropriate 	
Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 1
Writing is limited in range and very inaccurate	Writing is limited in range, but may be more focussed and/or accurate.	Writing may be inaccurate but with a reasonable range, or more accurate but lacking in range.	Writing is more accurate, and vocabulary and structures are more wide-ranging.	Writing is mostly accurate but ideas are less well developed or ideas are better developed but writing is less accurate.	Candidates are able to write at some length showing both development of ideas and control of the language.

Although short texts (up to 50 words) may be the norm in performances at Foundation Level, longer texts will be expected at General and Credit Levels (up to 100 words at General and up to 200 words at Credit Level).

Grade Related Criteria for Reading and Listening

Texts appearing in Reading and Listening assessments will relate to Standard Grade topic development. In Reading, candidates should be prepared to encounter language in unfamiliar contexts and to work out its meaning with the help of a dictionary.

Reading

Foundation	General	Credit
<p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can extract information from texts in response to specific questioning • can give more general responses 		
<p>Texts and Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts are straightforward. • The content should be familiar. • At least one text will relate to the world of work. • Questions are supported. • Candidates may use a dictionary. 	<p>Texts and Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts are straightforward and may cover a range of tenses. • The content should be familiar. • The contexts may be unfamiliar. • At least one task will require a response to a work-related text. • Questions are supported where appropriate. • Candidates may use a dictionary. 	<p>Texts and Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts are straightforward and may cover a range of tenses and grammatical structures. • The content should be familiar. • The contexts may be unfamiliar. • At least one task will require a response to a work-related text. • Some questions may be supported. • Candidates may use a dictionary.

Listening

Foundation	General	Credit
<p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can extract information from the items heard in response to specific questioning. 	<p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can extract information from the items heard in response to specific questioning. • can give more general responses. 	<p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can extract information from the items heard in response to specific questioning. • can give more general responses.
<p>Texts and Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts are very straightforward and concentrate on basic topics. (See Table 1, page 11) • The content is confined to the statement of basic information. • Questions are supported. • The foreign language is spoken clearly, carefully and deliberately. 	<p>Texts and Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts are straightforward and may cover a range of tenses. • The content goes beyond the statement of basic information. • Questions are supported where appropriate. • The foreign language is spoken clearly and carefully. 	<p>Texts and Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts are straightforward and may cover a range of tenses and grammatical structures. • The passages may contain a number of major and subsidiary points. • Some questions may be supported. • The foreign language is spoken clearly.

Appendix 1: Internally Generated Assessment

Examples of possible tasks for Speaking assessment

To enable the assessment of Speaking to arise from normal classwork, centres are free to devise their own assessment tasks, and to give these a focus that will be familiar to candidates. The following are examples of the type of tasks which centres could set.

Prepared Talk (similar titles can be used to generate Writing assessment tasks)

- My ideal holiday.
- A local tourist attraction.
- Why it is important to eat healthily.

Conversation

- on the above type of topic, covered in normal classwork.

Role-play

(a) **Transactional role-play: Accommodation**

Advice to candidate:

<i>You wish to book a hotel and require:</i>	<i>You must find out:</i>
Room(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For two people• For five nights (15-19 June)• With a bath and a shower• With breakfast• You wish to spend no more than **	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If breakfast is included in the price• What time breakfast is served• What the room(s) will cost• Your room number(s)• Where your room is
<i>If possible, you would also like:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A TV• A balcony/view of the **	

Candidates should be prepared to negotiate at an appropriate level, eg if the rooms available only have showers, if they cost more than the candidate is willing to pay, if some of the additional requirements cannot be met.

(b) **Vocational role-play**

Contexts should be within candidates' present or potential future experience. Contexts could be simply "in the workplace". Conversations would then arise on topics similar to those mentioned under Prepared Talk and Conversation, but using polite forms and conventions.

- Interview the teacher/FLA about the pros and cons of his/her job.
- You have a summer job working in your local tourist office.

- You have a job working as a waiter/waitress in (target language country) – your teacher will play the role of the customer.
- You have an interview for the job of receptionist in a hotel (in target language country) – your teacher will play the role of the interviewer.

Examples of possible tasks for Writing assessment

To enable the assessment of Writing to arise from normal classwork, centres are free to devise their own assessment tasks, and to give these a focus that will be familiar to candidates. The following are examples of the type of tasks which centres could set. These have been set out under the headings *Personal Language* and *Discursive Language*; there is however no requirement that a candidate's folio should contain examples of both types of language.

The submission could include items such as:

Personal language

- a personal letter to a friend in the target language
- preparation for a first e-mail to a student in a different country
- personal information (leisure activities, etc) for prepared talk
- a personal response to an article/book/film, etc (source need not be in the target language)

Discursive language

- an essay giving opinions about eating meat
- a report on the good and bad things about TV
- a summary of something read/viewed/listened to (source need not be in the target language)
- preparation for a talk on health issues

Supportive assessment

The assessment of Writing should be supportive of candidates, and should encourage them to write with increasing sophistication and accuracy. To this end, candidates may consult notes, written texts and reference sources to draft their pieces of Writing, and they should be encouraged to redraft following advice from the teacher.

Learned language

The ability to write in a foreign language requires a certain amount of “learned” or “automatic” language and a certain amount of understanding and control of grammatical structures, both of which help learners to monitor the effectiveness and accuracy of what they write. Judicious use of a dictionary is an additional aid to accuracy in Writing. To this end, the final pieces of writing must be produced under controlled conditions, with no access to reference sources other than a dictionary.

Headings to support candidates

Some candidates may find the task of producing and structuring written texts of the required length very daunting. Teachers may break the tasks into more manageable chunks for these candidates by providing headings in English, as shown below:

A personal letter to a friend in the target language

- write about yourself
- write about your interests
- write about your plans for when you have left school

A personal response to an article/book/film, etc (Source need not be in the target language)

- write what the film is about
- write why you like it
- write about one of the characters
- tell the reader to see it!

A report on the good and bad things about TV

- write how often you watch TV, and comment on this
- write what you like about TV (which programmes, why)
- write what you dislike about TV and why

Submission of Writing assessment

The final submission should represent a range of the candidate's work. However, it is recognised that some candidates will find more discursive tasks very difficult, even with a great deal of support. The decision as to which pieces of Writing should be submitted for each candidate is therefore the responsibility of the centre.

Appendix 2: Assessment Focus: Purposes, Requirements and Assessments

Reading

- Purposes:**
- to widen vocabulary
 - to help formulate opinion
 - for enjoyment
- For examination*
- to obtain information

Reading in a foreign language requires a combination of skills and strategies which should be made explicit to language learners. Some of the skills which make texts more accessible to candidates are listed below. These should be taught, and then practised and assimilated by students to encourage wider and more independent reading.

Learning to use a dictionary is an essential part of language learning, and of growing independence in language application. Learners should be encouraged to think of the dictionary as a precise tool which can help them to understand texts in close detail. They should not, however, lose sight of the fact that a dictionary can only really fine-tune comprehension, and that an overview of written text is gained through known, learned vocabulary and structures which can be recalled at will.

Skills	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognition of wide general vocabulary, including the meaning of prepositions and pronouns • making connections with English/other languages • making connections within the target language • use of contextual clues • prediction • word order conventions • tense conventions • re-reading • skimming • scanning • close reading • effective use of dictionary, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identification of parts of speech - recognition of grammatical terms - selection of appropriate translation among many - dictionary conventions (eg that verbs are listed as infinitives) - an awareness of when it is appropriate to use a dictionary 	<p><i>Assessment focus</i></p> <p><i>With the help of a dictionary</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification of facts and opinions • reaction to texts <p><i>Assessment tasks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • questions and answers in English • questions supported as appropriate • glosses provided for unusual words • contexts may be unfamiliar

Listening

Purposes:

- to consolidate vocabulary
- to help formulate opinion
- for enjoyment

For examination

- to obtain information

Strategies for Listening comprehension also need to be made explicit to learners. Learners need to be made aware of their limitations and of strategies for coping with partial comprehension. They should be led to expect not to be able to understand everything, and to develop the ability to understand gist. Skills of prediction and of retrospective reconstruction of what they have heard, based on known language and contextual clues should also be taught, and then practised and assimilated by candidates to encourage confidence when listening and to promote wider and more independent Listening. Above all, candidates should be encouraged to develop strategies for learning vocabulary and language patterns. Listening comprehension requires a great deal of “learned” language, as described in the Overview on page 6.

Skills	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognition of wide general vocabulary• coping with partial comprehension• making connections with English• use of contextual clues• prediction• retrospective reconstruction• note-taking• tense conventions• prepositions and pronouns: meaning• some word order conventions	<p><i>Assessment focus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identification of facts and opinions <p><i>Assessment tasks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• questions and answers in English• questions supported as appropriate• familiar contexts: personal, vocational, transactional, discursive

Speaking

Purposes: in general and for examination

- to establish contact
- to exchange information
- to explain and instruct
- to present information
- to express opinions
- to express understanding

Speaking requires a variety of skills. Learners improve their Speaking skills by learning and reproducing utterances of increasing length and complexity. To encourage the memorisation of longer “chunks” of language, prepared, learned talks will be assessed at Standard Grade. It is hoped that the opportunity to prepare these talks in advance will encourage candidates to use written texts as a basis for vocabulary building.

However, Speaking generally involves direct interaction, which brings an amount of uncertainty into activities and assessment. Part of the development of Speaking skills is the development of strategies to cope with the unexpected and with non-comprehension. Candidates’ ability to cope with this is assessed in the interactive assessments of Conversation and Role-Play. The Role-Play assessments also test candidates’ ability to interact in more formal contexts, using appropriate politeness conventions.

In these ways, the arrangements for the internal assessment of Speaking seek to mirror classroom practice, based on sound learning principles and on real uses of real language.

The productive Grammar Grid is the same for Speaking and for Writing, although the emphases for these two skills are very different. Speaking generally requires “automatic”, learned reactions to situations which are not wholly predictable, but can be supported by repetition, gesture, intonation, etc.

Skills	Assessment focus and tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of wide and active, general vocabulary • asking questions • changing questions into answers • “automatic” comments, discussion and (dis)agreement strategies • organising language (discourse markers) • strategies for coping with non-comprehension • strategies for reacting to others • strategies for the production of language, including control of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - common verb forms and tenses - modals+infinitives - gender/agreement <p>Polite language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • polite forms/questions <p>Personal language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informal forms 	<p>3 different types of assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presentation of facts and opinions • conversation • transactional/vocational role-play

Writing

Purposes:

- to note vocabulary
- to record, practise and consolidate language
- to create and play with language

For examination

- to present information
- to express opinions, reasons, justification

Writing is a more deliberate, reflective activity than Speaking. The “finished” nature of writing means that comprehension has to take place in the absence of the writer, and so accuracy must be greater in Writing than in Speaking, where re-phrasing and repetition can compensate for misunderstanding.

The “thinking time” and the opportunity to use a dictionary in Writing mean that a higher level of accuracy is possible, but only if strategies for effective use of time and reference sources have been practised and learned.

Skills	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use of wide general vocabulary• effective use of dictionary• organising language (discourse markers)• organisation of content• time management• coping with verbs:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- infinitives- pronouns, etc- tense conventions- negation• coping with nouns:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- determiners- noun/adjective word order- plurals- agreement• prepositions• conjunctions/word order	<p>3 pieces of Writing to reflect candidates’ ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• present information• present reasons• present opinions• justify opinions <p>as appropriate.</p>

Appendix 3: Examples of Calculation of Final Grade

The Reading and Speaking elements are double weighted, with Listening and Writing being single weighted. Examples of how the final grade is calculated are outlined below.

<i>element</i>	Reading	Speaking	Listening	Writing	<i>total</i>
Ratio	2	2	1	1	6

Example 1:

	Reading	Speaking	Listening	Writing	<i>total</i>
Grade	1	1	1	3	
Weighted value	1 x 2	1 x 2	1 x 1	3 x 1	8
				÷ 6	1.33
				Overall grade	1

Example 2:

	Reading	Speaking	Listening	Writing	<i>Total</i>
Grade	4	5	1	2	
Weighted value	4 x 2	5 x 2	1 x 1	2 x 1	21
				÷ 6	3.5
				Overall grade	3

Appendix 4: Candidates' Guide

Standard Grade Modern Languages Candidates' Guide

Why should I study a language?

Modern Languages are very important for all sorts of things – holidays, making new friends, future employment and further study. Learning a language can be lots of fun and can be useful in finding a job, especially one where you have to deal with people from other countries. Languages other than English are increasingly being used on the Internet, and knowing another language can open up lots of new possibilities.

What will I learn if I do Standard Grade?

You will learn about the language you are studying and about the people and places where the language is spoken. The language will be used a lot in class. As well as dealing with everyday topics like your home, family, school, hobbies, holidays and life in the country whose language you are studying, you will also be learning about issues of concern to young people of your own age. These issues might include sports; diet, health and fitness; smoking, drugs, alcohol; relationships; the environment; music; cinema; future plans. You may well have the opportunity to use the computer to support your language learning.

What assessments will I have to do?

You will be assessed in each of the four skills of Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.

How will I be assessed in Speaking?

Speaking will be assessed by your teacher in the course of normal classroom activities. You will be assessed giving a short prepared talk in the foreign language, having a short conversation, and role-playing situations like shopping, job interviews or asking for directions in the foreign language.

How will I be assessed in Listening?

Listening will be assessed as part of the final examination. You will have to listen to a recording of native speakers of the language talking about some of the things you have studied in the course. You will hear the recording three times and you will have to answer a number of questions in English about what you have heard. Some of the questions will require short written answers and others will be true/false or multiple choice. You will not be allowed to use a dictionary in this exam.

How will I be assessed in Reading?

Reading will be assessed as part of the final examination. You will have to read some short texts in the foreign language, relating to some of the topics which you have studied. You will have to answer a number of questions about what you have read. Both questions and answers will be in English. Some of the questions will require short written answers and others will be true/false or multiple choice. You will be allowed to use a dictionary in this exam.

How will I be assessed in Writing?

You will be writing in the foreign language as part of your normal classroom activities. Your teacher will give you advice about what you have written in order to help you improve. From time to time, you will redraft a piece of work and then write a final version in class, under exam conditions. You will be allowed to use a dictionary to help with this, but you will not be allowed to use other reference materials or notes. Towards the end of your course, the final version of your three best pieces of work will be sent to SQA to be marked.

How will my final grade be worked out?

All of the skills assessed (ie Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing) will contribute to your final grade. Your certificate will show both your overall grade for the subject and the grades you achieved for each of the four skills. When your overall grade is being worked out, your grades for Reading and Speaking will be multiplied by 2. All four grades will then be added together and divided by 6. So, for example, if your grades are :

Speaking – 2

Listening – 4

Reading – 3

Writing – 3

then your final overall grade will be **3**.

What can I do afterwards?

After completing Standard Grade in Modern Languages you will be able to communicate at a basic level in a number of everyday situations in the language you have studied. You will have practical skills which you can use to communicate with young people your own age, or in your future work, or on holiday or in learning another language. You will also have the opportunity to develop these skills further, either immediately or later in life, by continuing to study the same language and/or another at school, college, university, evening classes, in the workplace or by studying on your own.