



Modern Languages Webinar of 18th January 2017: Questions and Answers

Assessment of the Advanced Higher

The Portfolio

Are candidates allowed to use a film with English subtitles as long as it has been produced in the target language?

Candidates should not access English subtitles when viewing a film to be used as a main source for the Portfolio. If required they may access subtitles in the target language.

Are there films available in Gaelic?

SQA cannot endorse specific texts or films for use in the Portfolio but there are a couple such as the short film Foighiddin and the feature Seachd which it inspired.

Can candidates use a translated text as an additional source?

The conditions for the Portfolio are that the two main sources must have been written for speakers of the target language but additional sources may be in any language.

Can candidates use a source which has been translated into the target language from another language?

As already explained, the conditions for the Portfolio are that the two main sources must have been written originally for speakers of the target language and if a text was originally written in, for example, Swedish and then translated into German (the target language) it does not qualify as a main source. There is no reason, however, why a candidate could not use it as an additional source, depending on the focus adopted for the analysis.

Do all sources mentioned in the bibliography have to be referred to in the Portfolio?

Not all sources listed in the bibliography need to be referred to in the Portfolio. It may well be that additional sources have been consulted to aid understanding or to provide confirmation for information already sourced from elsewhere. It must be remembered, however, that any sources which are quoted in the Portfolio must be referenced within it.

What would be an essay title that would be too obscure, too wide or too narrow?

It is important that the title chosen for the Portfolio essay should clearly outline the approach the candidate intends to take. An obscure title would therefore be one which did not give a clear indication of the focus to be adopted, for example 'Immigration in France', 'The Works of García Lorca' or 'Work Experience in Germany'. Equally unsuitable would be a title which attempted to encompass too many sources or too many different aspects of an author or director (for example, plot, characterisation, language, themes, historical background and comparison with another). An example of a title which is too narrow could be one which concentrates on, for example, one small aspect of two poems (eg metre or scansion).



Can you give more detail on what is meant by critical terminology?

With reference to the 'critical terminology' there is no specific list of terms which SQA would be looking for and these terms will vary depending on whether students are analysing, for example, a novel, a poem or a film. For literary analysis these could include references to, for example, tone, register, narrative point of view, structure, rhyme patterns, use of imagery, metaphor and other figures of speech as well as to the style of the writing (diary, stream of consciousness, for example) and the type of language used (highly descriptive, colloquial, etc). In terms of a film this could include references to imagery, effects, cinematography, use of flashback, etc.

Given that there is a penalty for being 10% over the word count is there a similar penalty for being under?

No, there is no specific penalty for Portfolio essays which are below the word count but pieces which are significantly shorter than the minimum required are likely to be self-penalising.

How many sources would constitute a reasonable bibliography?

There is no fixed number for a reasonable bibliography. As a minimum of two sources in the target language must be quoted this would be the minimum expected. Ideally a bibliography should contain the following:

For a book: last and first name of author, title of book, publisher, year of publication

For a film: name of film, name of director, year of release

For an article or report: name of author (if known), title, name of publication, country of origin, date of publication, page number(s) (if suitable)

For internet sources: name of author (if known), title of article (if applicable), full URL and date accessed

Does the second text have to be referenced directly in the title or must it be woven into the body of the Portfolio?

It is not necessary to reference the title of any source directly in the title of the Portfolio essay but clearly any sources quoted directly would need to be referenced in the piece.

Performance: talking

When will we get notification of when the Visiting Assessor is coming for the Talking assessment?

Visiting Assessors receive notification of their itineraries at the end of January and will contact centres as soon as possible after that. The period for Visiting Assessment lasts from mid-February to mid-March.

How many topics should the candidates choose per context for the Performance: talking?

There is no prescription as to the number of topics to be listed. The STL form is intended to provide the Visiting Assessor with a framework for the conversation and, as such, the more information which is included the better. At the same time, the candidate should remember that the section related to the topics studied is likely to last at least ten minutes and should be able to sustain the conversation during this period.

Are students penalised for going significantly over the word count?

As per the Detailed Marking Instructions there is no specific penalty for this but essays which fall significantly outwith the prescribed word count are likely to be self-penalising.

Translation

When attempting to translate idiomatic expression, should candidates attempt to find the equivalent English idiomatic expression or should they stay closer to the original text?

It is unlikely that candidates would be asked to translate idiomatic expressions but, in the event that this happened, they should remember that the purpose of the translation is to render the text into correct English which is as close to the original as possible.

Is there any information about the use of synonyms or to what extent one word could be substituted for another?

A list of acceptable translations can be found in the marking instructions related to each assessment. The use of alternative responses is fully discussed at the Markers' Briefings which take place prior to any marking taking place, with all acceptable and unacceptable translations being recorded.

Overall Purpose Question

Where can we get guidance on how much candidates should write?

For further guidance on inferential type questions go to:

secure.sqa.org.uk/files/snabs/Exemplification_Inferential_Question_AdvancedHigher

In the event of there being problems with this link consult the Secure Site, Previous NQs tab. It is then necessary to access the files for individual languages and follow the instructions on each page to arrive at 'Exemplification of Inferential Question'.

General guidance about all aspects of the Advanced Higher course is to be found in the Course Report for each language. These can be accessed from the main Advanced Higher Modern Languages page under the banner 'Verification and Course reports' – see:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/48456.html>

Understanding Standards

Exemplars of standards relating to aspects of the Advanced Higher examination can be found at:

www.understandingstandards.org.uk

This site includes exemplars of Discursive Writing and Portfolio for each modern language.

Exemplars relating to the Performance: talking can be found on SQA's secure site at:

<https://secure.sqa.org.uk/secure>

See NQ tab, select language then scroll down to Advanced Higher