

Assessing French at KS3 without levels

*results from my MA in Education research
and some trials in school*



Marion Pellon **@Marionprof**

Head of Languages

The Heathland School, Hounslow

MA with Edge Hill University

<https://sites.google.com/site/marionpellonprof/>

Rationale for the dissertation

- National Curriculum Levels are out
- We still need assessments
- The results of these assessments must be meaningful

Rationale for today

- **National Curriculum Levels are out**
- **We still need assessments**
- **The results of these assessments must be meaningful**
- **I spent many hours looking at academic research before creating a new system – it seems a shame that others “waste” as much time!**

Several frameworks exist, none of which seem to have gained a lot of momentum and there seems to be little point choosing a new system before knowing whether it will allow a good preparation for GCSE examinations. What is certain is that the way in which GCSE examinations are marked will change for Languages, as for other subjects, for examinations taken from 2018 onwards. This means that not only do we have to devise a new reference frame at KS3, but also that this will feed into a new reference frame at GCSE level.

At KS3, the system suggested by the only research report published by the Department for Education (September 2014) offers no practical link for individual departments, let alone Languages. With a system of bands within each year group

Within Each Year Group

- ➔ Entering
- ➔ Within
- ➔ High

it is down to individual departments to decide what should be achieved in each year, and what should be a priority. I am very concerned that different schools will put different emphases on what is learnt first, thus creating a problem when comparing data or when pupils change schools.

Year 9 pupil voice – 9Y (28 pupils) majority combined majority

	<u>Absolutely</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Not really</u>	<u>Not at all</u>
<u>I understand levels in French / German.</u>	15	12	1	
<u>I know what level I am working at.</u>	12	14	1	1
<u>I know how to progress to the next level.</u>	9	15	4	
<u>I think the assessments are fair.</u>	9	18	1	
<u>I can assess my work.</u>	9	16	3	
<u>Formal assessments are a good preparation for future exams</u>	17	8	2	
<u>I think 2 skills assessed every half-term is good.</u>	12	13	3	
<u>I would like all skills assessed every half-term.</u>	2	5	11	10
<u>I think tests are not useful: classroom assessment by the teacher and peers is enough.</u>	2	4	13	9

Comments on the back of questionnaires:

"we could also have more practice tests to make us more prepared for the real tests"

"I think everyone's speaking should be marked by the teacher as it is fair and everyone can comment fairly on it" (absolutely for 1st 8 questions).

**Then asked: What do we need to assess in French?
or what are the things we look for when we assess French? Think of skills as well as grammar/vocab**

2/ Joining the “life beyond levels” working group at school

French Grade Set		Oct yr7	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	YEAR 10/11	OLD GRADES	NEW GRAD
	1b	0						
	1a	10	0					
	2c		10					
	2b	50						
	2a		30	0				
	3c	70						
BG	3b		50	10	0			
	3a	90						
AM	4c		60	30				
	4b		70		10			
	4a			50				
PROF	5c		90		30			
	5b			60				
	5a				50	10		1
MA	6c			70		20	G/F	2
	6b				60			2/3
	6a			90		30	E	3
	7c				70			3/4
	7b					40	D/C	4
	7a				90			4/5
	8c					50	C	5
	8b							6
	8a					60	B	6/7
	9c							6
	9b					70	A	7/8
	9a							8
	10c					90	A**	9

Pinches of salt are here too!

4/ Asking fellow linguists their opinion

Question 6: I am considering adding a "study skills" grid for general skills learners need to master. What 5 skills do you think such a grid should / could have? (I have many ideas but always looking to pick your brains!)

Number 1 - vocabulary learning
- problem solving

Number 2 - writing practice
- note taking

Number 3 - use of dictionary
- using a dictionary

Number 4 - speaking practice for confidence (something to do with becoming more confident in speaking)
- know how to revise effectively

Number 5 - time management
- -

I hope the system I devised will work in my school but also in other settings should teachers choose to use it. I am assuming that the **principles of Assessment for Learning** will continue to be used in most schools, so I can use the newly devised criteria as a benchmark for pupils arriving in my school: **if they are aware of what they know, they should be able to plot their competence on the criteria, thus indicating what their teacher needs to focus on.**

Listening: I can

	Achieved			Time line	Grade equivalent
recognise a few cognates				P1	U
understand a few familiar spoken words and phrases with the help of repetition, mime or pictures				P1	1
identify the main points and simple opinions in a short spoken passage, but some things need to be repeated				P2	2
understand the main points and some of the detail from longer spoken passages				S1	3
identify opinions and reasons				S1	3
get the gist of a short passage (2 or 3 sentences)				S1	4
recognise some complex opinions				S2	4
note down complex opinions				S2	4
understand longer passages (5 or 6 sentences) and recognise different peoples' points of view				S2	5
work out the meaning of isolated unfamiliar words				S3	5
understand spoken passages referring to past, present and future events on several topics				S3	6
use my knowledge of grammar to understand familiar language in a new context				S3	6
identify and understand more difficult structures				S3	6
understand a range of different spoken passages, ie texts for different purposes				E1	6
work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and inferred information				E1	6
identify and understand more difficult structures				E1	7
understand passages including some unfamiliar material from which I can recognise attitudes and emotions				E2	7
transfer skills and recognise vocabulary & structures from other skills				E2	8
understand long passages with very few repetitions				E3	9
listen to the radio/ watch the TV/films in the language, following what is being happening				E4	9

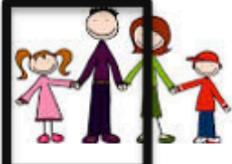
Reading: I can

	Achieved			Time line	Grade equiv
recognise a few cognates				P1	U
recognise a few familiar words and phrases with visual clues				P1	1
understand a range of familiar phrases				P2	2
read aloud familiar words and phrases				S1	3
identify where the information is in a short text				S1	3
identify the main points and simple opinions in a short written text				S1	4
read short articles for pleasure in a foreign language				S2	4
understand simple opinions and reasons				S2	4
work out the gist of written texts				S2	5
understand a range of different written passages, ie texts for different purposes				S3	5
understand the main points and some of the detail from a longer written text				S3	6
identify and understand more difficult structures				S3	6
understand main points in a text referring to present and past or future events on several topics				S3	6
use my knowledge of grammar to understand familiar language in a new context				E1	6
work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and inferred information				E1	6
understand a range of different written material				E1	7
understand passages referring to past, present and future events on several topics				E2	7
start to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and inferred information				E2	8
understand passages including some unfamiliar material from which I can recognise attitudes and emotions				E3	9
read fiction in a foreign language				E4	9

Speaking: I can

	Achieved	Time line	Grade equiv
say a few words and simple phrases		P1	U
answer simple questions and give basic information		P1	1
apply most regular phonetic rules		P2	2
take part in a short conversation of 2/3 exchanges with prompts, from memory		S1	3
give simple opinions and use simple connectives		S1	3
ask and answer questions in full sentences (3/4 exchanges) with prompts		S1	4
give opinions and justify them		S2	4
systematically apply simple and regular phonetic rules		S2	4
use complex opinions		S2	5
take part in a conversation using 2 tenses		S3	5
pronounce most phonemes confidently		S3	6
give a 45-60 seconds prepared talk		S3	6
use my knowledge of phonemes to help me pronounce new words correctly		S3	6
refer to the past, present and future in a range of topics		E1	6
use a range of complex opinions and connectives		E1	6
use familiar language more spontaneously		E1	7
answer simple unprepared questions in a conversation or following a presentation		E2	7
use more complex structures in my work accurately & confidently		E2	8
speak confidently using a variety of tenses		E3	9
use a variety of complex structures		E4	9
speak confidently on a range of topics		E4	9

Speaking

Task				Assessment		
temps	qui?	quoi?	quand?	vocabulaire	verbe	extra?
présent	<i>myself</i>					
présent			<i><u>never</u></i>			
passé			<i><u>LMMJVSD</u></i>			
passé	<i>myself</i>		<i><u>yesterday</u></i>			
futur			<i><u>next week</u></i>			
futur	<i>my friend</i>		 2016			

Writing: I can

	Achieved			Time line	Grad e equiv
spell simple words correctly from memory				P2	1
write 2/3 short sentences from memory and meaning is clear				P3	2
edit and redraft my work (although a skill this is used only in writing)				S1	3
write simple opinions and use simple connectives				S1	3
write 3/4 sentences on a familiar topic				S1	3
use more complex opinions and justify them				S2	4
apply regular grammar rule regarding agreements of adjectives and verbs - skill but silent letters concern writing only				S2	4
refer to specific time frames				S2	4
use set formats to write both formally and informally				S2	5
use 2 tenses				S2	5
use a range of complex opinions and connectives				S3	5
write a longer text and refer to past/present/future events				S3	5
use more complex structures				E1	6
write with no support				E1	6
express and justify ideas, opinions and points of view				E2	7
grammar which is generally accurate				E3	8
write on my own				E3	8
write under timed conditions				E4	9

General skills - linked to studying in general: I can

	Achieved			Time line
Write neatly	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Use correct English	Yes	Yes	Yes	P
Use the internet to do research	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Infer meaning from a range of resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Present to a group	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Use presentation tools to present to a group	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Take notes	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Take feedback on board	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Give feedback to peers	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Assess own work	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Learn short sections by heart	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Work collaboratively in a group	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Structure my ideas by linking sentences and organising paragraphs	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Work independently	Yes	Yes	Yes	E
Create revision aids	Yes	Yes	Yes	E
Use reference material to extend my language	Yes	Yes	Yes	E

General skills - linked to studying languages: I can

Use grammar reference (eg verb tables)	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Change single words in phrases to make new ones	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Look up nouns in a dictionary	Yes	Yes	Yes	S
Use a dictionary more confidently to look up words and gender/plurals	Yes	Yes	Yes	S/E
Use reference material to extend my language	Yes	Yes	Yes	E
Recycle prior learning by changing or reusing complete clauses	Yes	Yes	Yes	E
Use grammar in new contexts	Yes	Yes	Yes	E

Issues

- How to record pupils' achievement efficiently?
- Excel looks promising but need to think it through as there is an issue of practicality (270 pupils per year group in my school!)
- who keeps a record? pupils? teacher? both? synch?

Benefits

- 1 spreadsheet / grid per pupil for whole KS3 + KS4
- if group has a stage missing, should be easy to spot and thus easy to address
- moderation do-able

where am I at now?

