

## GCSE French and Spanish Exam Tips

### Planning your study

Make sure that you have learned all the necessary words after you complete each topic. You could draw a mind map or create a database on your PC. During the topic try to learn ten new words a day. Ask someone to test you on the words: you need to be able to spell the words properly so remember to write them down when being tested.

### Preparing a Revision Programme

You need to prepare a programme which allows you to focus on the weak areas: do not spend time revising the work that you know well. It may make you feel good, but it is unproductive and will do nothing to help you to move forward. Spend time on your presentations for the oral examination and look for ways to improve them. You need to be able to make use of previously learned language in another topic.

### Four ways to improve your grade

#### 1. Listening and Reading

- ALWAYS read the question first carefully and highlight the question word so that you know the information that you are listening for. Use any visuals to help you to predict what you might hear.
- Try to anticipate the answer and note down possible words to listen for.
- Check numbers, dates and times very carefully.
- In the **Listening test**, do not attempt to write phonetically, i.e. what you have just heard! Some candidates find this very confusing and ultimately end up writing about a completely different set of events.
- In the **Reading examination**, read the questions before you read the passage.
- Some words look like English words: you should try to work out their meaning.
- It pays to think LOGICALLY in both the reading and listening papers. Sometimes you have to use your common sense to work out the answers from the information given.
- Examiners will also test your knowledge of synonyms and related families of words.
- Ensure that you know synonyms and families of nouns and verbs.  
Make a list of synonyms, near-synonyms and word families and learn them carefully:  
e.g. *le voyage = le trajet*.

#### 2. Speaking (Oral)

In the Speaking examination, the key is to spend lots of time preparing your answers and revising.

- In the conversation you will be able to discuss matters of personal or topical interest. You must also be able to justify opinions and discuss facts.
- You need to use present, past and future tenses. This is the time to use as many complicated structures as possible.
- Use a variety of verbs each time: try to use at least ten different verbs.
- Remember to speak clearly and to pronounce the words as well as you can.

#### 3. Writing

- In the Writing tests you will be able to use and extend a great deal of the material prepared for the speaking examination.
- You must be able to write accurately and to structure your work logically and coherently.
- It is also important to note that at least 20% of the marks are allocated to knowledge and accurate application of grammar.
- There will be an emphasis on using appropriate structures and on achieving a high degree of accuracy.
- You need to learn your verb tables thoroughly: just as you learned your times-tables in mathematics!

#### 4. Spelling

- It is important to spell accurately.
- If you are in any doubt about the spelling of a word, leave it out and find another way of expressing the idea.
- Always check carefully for accents and capital letters.