

GCSE MFL Subject Content

An AQA briefing paper
April 2021

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	page 2
2. Evaluating DfE's Subject Content Proposals	page 4
3. What do the DfE's proposals mean for MFL teaching?	Page 9
4. Conclusion	page 11
Appendix: Questions for MFL teachers	page 13

KEY POINTS

- The Department for Education launched a consultation in March 2021 on proposed changes to the subject content of GCSE French, German and Spanish. At the core of the proposals are changes to how the vocabulary lists for these subjects are determined.
- AQA's view is that the very prescriptive limits proposed for vocabulary would compromise the validity and reliability of assessments, as well as the ability of exam boards to produce assessments that are not overly predictable. The proposed vocabulary lists also contain a number of significant omissions, which are likely to appear anomalous to many students and teachers.
- AQA believes that the frequency-based approach to vocabulary as proposed in the consultation could be beneficial if vocabulary lists were designed in relation to the specific pedagogical contexts of MFL GCSEs, with input from GCSE MFL teachers and learners. However, in the form proposed, AQA does not believe the proposed subject content will achieve the DfE's objectives.
- AQA also believes that the proposals will not provide a motivating and stimulating learning experience for students at all key stages, impacting negatively on take up of MFL at GCSE, A-level and degree level. The proposals are also likely to increase the divergence between GCSE and A-level.
- The impact of the proposals on school resources at this point in the lifetime of the current specifications will be significant. Other GCSE languages are not part of the current proposals, which will mean different assessment models for different specifications.
- AQA believes that alternative changes could be made to the current GCSE specifications to achieve the aims of the DfE, for example, setting assessment tasks in the Speaking and Writing exams in English.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

AQA is an education charity and exam board, and the largest provider of Modern Foreign Language (MFL) GCSEs in England.

In 2019, the national entries for GCSE French were 130,831, German 42,791 and Spanish 102,242.

The Department for Education (DfE) launched a consultation in March 2021 on proposed changes to the subject content of GCSE French, German and Spanish.¹

The proposals follow a review of language pedagogy carried out by the Teaching Schools Council which was published in 2016,² as well as the recommendations of an expert panel convened by the DfE in 2019.

The exams regulator, Ofqual, launched a parallel consultation on revised assessment arrangements in relation to the proposed subject content.³

1.2. The DfE's Proposals: Objectives

In its consultation document, the DfE has described the objectives of the proposed changes as being to:

- *“ensure the subject content reflects research in language curriculum and teaching and make language GCSEs more accessible and motivating for students.”*

The DfE notes the objective of making GCSE Modern Foreign Language (MFL) courses less burdensome for teachers and students, and in this way, enabling students to be:

- *“confident that they will only be tested on what they have been taught and exams can only contain what is specified in the content.”*

The proposed revised subject content sets out all the vocabulary and grammar that students will need for GCSE. The DfE proposes that the:

- *“vocabulary specified for teaching will be informed by the frequency of occurrence in the language and, as such, will be well suited to communication about a wide range of common themes and topics. The revised GCSE subject content will require students to understand written texts and spoken extracts comprising defined vocabulary and grammar relevant to tier.”*

The DfE proposes that first teaching of the revised subject content would be no earlier than September 2023, with first exams in June 2025.

¹ DfE (2021) *GCSE Modern Foreign Language (MFL) subject content review: public consultation*, DfE, London https://consult.education.gov.uk/ebacc-and-arts-and-humanities-team/gcse-mfl-subject-content-review/supporting_documents/GCSE%20MFL%20subject%20content%20consultation.pdf

² Teaching Skills Council (2016) *Modern Foreign Languages Pedagogy Review* <https://tscouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/MFL-Pedagogy-Review-Report-2.pdf>

³ Ofqual (2021) *Revised GCSE qualifications in modern foreign languages* <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/revised-gcse-qualifications-in-modern-foreign-languages>

Assessment objectives and weightings

In the current GCSE specifications, there are four assessment objectives allocated to each of the four separate skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, equally weighted at 25% each.

In light of the proposed changes to subject content, Ofqual has proposed the following revised assessment objectives:

AO1	Understand and respond to spoken language in speaking and in writing	35%
AO2	Understand and respond to written language in speaking and in writing	45%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification	20%

This proposed redistribution of the assessment objectives aligns with the approach for AS and A-level.

It is proposed that assessments remain tiered (Foundation and Higher tier), and there will be a single tier of entry, foundation only or higher tier only. Non-exam assessment (NEA) is proposed for the assessment of speaking skills, counting towards 25% of total marks.

1.3. Evaluating the DfE's Proposals

The proposed changes to the subject content of GCSE French, German and Spanish have been put forward at a relatively early stage in the lifetime of the specifications. The first exams for these specifications were taken in summer 2018.

In order to support the evaluation of the proposed changes by the DfE and other stakeholders, this briefing paper:

- reviews the details of the DfE's proposed changes to subject content
- explores what the proposed changes would mean for assessment, pedagogy and the MFL teaching community.

2. EVALUATING DfE's SUBJECT CONTENT PROPOSALS

2.1. What has been proposed?

At the core of the DfE's proposals for revising the subject content of GCSE French, German and Spanish are changes to how the vocabulary lists for these subjects are determined.

The DfE proposes that GCSE MFL vocabulary lists should be:

- made up of 1,200 words at Foundation tier and a further 500 at Higher tier compiled with close and explicit reference for each item to frequency of occurrence in the language; and
- 90% of words selected must be from the most frequent 2,000 words occurring in the most widely spoken standard forms of the language.

2.2. What will the DfE's proposals for vocabulary lists mean in practice?

In developing and applying a frequency-based approach to creating a vocabulary list that is useful for teachers and learners, a distinction should be made between:

- words (or headwords): individual vocabulary items

Example: *walk*

- lemmas⁴: a group of closely related vocabulary items that share meaning, usually the same part of speech

Example: *walks, walking, walked*

- word families: a group of closely related vocabulary items that share meaning and common derivative formations, and can be different parts of speech.

Example: *walk, walks, walking, walked, walker, walkers*

The type of word form that is counted for the creation of a vocabulary list can have significant impacts on the number of words and word families that students learn overall.

The DfE proposes GCSE French, German and Spanish vocabulary lists reflect the 1-2,000 most frequently occurring list of words in the recommended corpus in each language.

However, this corpus will be dictated by, and reflect, the sources from which each corpus has been drawn. Written text sources include daily and weekly newspapers, newswire stories, business correspondence, technical manuals, as well as different literary genres.

For example, proposed Spanish sources include transcriptions of conversations from 11 different countries, lectures, sermons, sports broadcasts and written sources include newspaper articles, essays, encyclopaedias, letters and humanistic texts, mostly from the 1990s.

These sources are not necessarily relevant to contemporary 16-year-old learners at GCSE level and so the corpus takes no account of what might be useful, relevant, motivating and age-appropriate to learners at GCSE level.

⁴ See NCELP's document *Word frequency lists: rationales, selection, recommendations and uses* for discussion of different ways of counting words for inclusion in vocabulary lists. Available via: <https://resources.ncelp.org/concern/resources/t722h880z?locale=en>

This approach also means that ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion and evolving language (eg vocabulary items around pandemics, or other emerging issues) is unlikely to be adequately reflected in corpora and subsequent vocabulary lists. As a means of quality assurance, input from teachers and learners would be useful for refining and finalising vocabulary and grammar lists in order to make these most suitable for GCSE MFL contexts.

More widely, the DfE's proposed approach contrasts with the approach taken for recently created lists of high-frequency vocabulary that have been designed for learners of English (eg the Oxford 3000 vocabulary list⁵), which have incorporated thematic clusters of low-frequency items so that, for example, all days of the week, months, numbers etc. are included in vocabulary lists even if they fall below the frequency threshold.

By seeking to apply a different approach for MFL GCSEs, the DfE's proposals could result in a number of omissions in the proposed vocabulary which are likely to appear anomalous to many students and teachers. Omissions of key vocabulary items in individual languages will potentially lead to a disjointed and confusing experience for students. These are illustrated below (Section 2.4) in relation to each of the languages.

2.3 What would the proposed ratio of high- to low-frequency vocabulary mean in practice?

The proposed ratio of 90% high-frequency to 10% low-frequency items lacks evidence from existing studies or peer-reviewed academic literature in support of such a division.

The potential benefits of a frequency-based approach to vocabulary for teaching, learning and assessment would be diminished due to the proposed 90% to 10% ratio of high-frequency to low-frequency vocabulary items. Findings from prior research into the ratios of high-frequency to low-frequency items suggests that texts and speech employed by teachers and encountered by language learners feature a ratio of **at least 80% to 20%** high- to low-frequency vocabulary items,⁶ with high-frequency items being defined as those that fall within the top 2-3,000 most frequently occurring words in the language.

For the purposes of assessment, item writers draw from and adapt learner texts and speech of an approximately 80:20 ratio: item writers adapt selections of text and speech carefully in order to be able to assess students' knowledge and skills in a valid and reliable way while simultaneously ensuring that assessment items do not become problematically predictable. Most frequently, item writers adapt texts and speech for assessment design by replacing low-frequency vocabulary items, which students most likely will not have encountered and will not understand, with synonyms or closely related vocabulary items that are high-frequency. Adapted texts for assessment purpose need not only to feature necessary vocabulary and grammar constructions, but also must relate to topics that are likely to be common for all students in order to avoid unfairly advantaging or disadvantaging students for having differing knowledges of the chosen topic content.

Whether or not texts or speech used for assessment purposes could be designed to uphold a 90:10 ratio – while both covering the required vocabulary and grammar and also covering topics relatable to students – would be entirely dependent on what the precisely defined vocabulary list of high-frequency items would be for Foundation and Higher tiers. Not only would item writers have to adapt the types of texts and speech that learners would normally encounter from 80:20 to 90:10, item writers would also have to adapt text and speech to ensure that the 90% of high-frequency items present are not just high-frequency items from the top 2-3,000 words of a language, but,

⁵ <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/about/oxford3000>

⁶ Gardner, D. (2013) *Exploring vocabulary: language in action*. London: Taylor and Francis Group;

Nation, I.S.P. (2016). *Making and using word lists for language learning and testing*. Amsterdam:

John Benjamins; Nation, I.S.P. (2017) *Learning vocabulary in another language*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press; NCELP (2021) *Word frequency lists: rationales, selection, recommendations and uses*. Available via: <https://resources.ncelp.org/concern/resources/t722h880z?locale=en>

importantly, are from the selected 90% of high-frequency items that have been included in the predetermined vocabulary lists.

The need to draw from a range of predefined vocabulary that has already been set at a ratio of 90:10 would mean a further narrowing of our ability to assess students' learning: assessment writers would have to adapt texts that learners would be familiar with beyond the level at which they currently operate, resulting in a high potential for unnatural language constructions and problematic predictability since the same vocabulary items would be used year upon year. AQA believes that, in line with academic literature concerning the nature of text and speech encountered by GCSE level language learners, **the ratio between high- to low-frequency vocabulary items should be 80% to 20% at the very least**. Furthermore, we strongly recommend that input from GCSE MFL teachers be considered in advance of the finalisation of vocabulary and grammar lists.

2.4 Examples from French, German and Spanish

French

In French, items of vocabulary **not** in the 2,000 most frequently occurring words in the recommended French corpus include:

- *le collège* (school)
- *la chanson* (song)
- *un écran* (screen)
- *le pain* (bread)

Each of these words fall between 2,000 and 3,000 most frequently occurring. Items listed in the 2,000 most frequently occurring include:

- *le sénateur* (senator)
- *une hypothèse* (hypothesis)
- *clore* (to close)
- *irakien* (Iraqi)
- *une exigence* (demand).

German

Items of vocabulary **not** in the 2,000 most frequently occurring words in the recommended German corpus include:

- *der Bahnhof* (rail station)
- *das Brot* (bread)
- *das Fahrrad* (bike)
- *das Kino* (cinema)

This is because all of these words fall between 2,000 and 3,000 most frequently occurring in the selected corpus.

Conversely, items listed in the 2,000 most frequently occurring include:

- *der Vertrag* (contract)
- *investieren* (to invest)
- *die Vorlesung* (lecture)
- *das Wachstum* (growth)
- *die Voraussetzung* (prerequisite)
- *abschliessen* (to conclude).

Spanish

For GCSE Spanish, it is worth noting that the top 3,000 words exclude the words for numbers 16, 17 and 19, and the word for 'Tuesday' is ranked 3101. In contrast, 'geography' is outside the 3000 and yet is one of the areas of focus.

2.5 What do the DfE's proposals mean for assessment?

The proposed approach to determining GCSE MFL vocabulary raises a number of issues for the design of GCSE assessments.

Having analysed the DfE's proposals, and taking account of academic research in this field, AQA's view is that the very prescriptive limits proposed for vocabulary put forward by the DfE will compromise the validity and reliability of assessments, as well as the ability of exam boards to produce assessments that are not overly predictable, series after series. All these outcomes will disadvantage students.

It is an essential feature of a fair exam system that the tasks in question papers discriminate between students of different abilities and that there is a broad distribution of marks across the full mark range. This allows exam boards to set grade boundaries which are spaced out and which clearly differentiate. Where exam tasks do not allow for sufficient differentiation, this results in grade boundaries that are closely bunched together.

In the current specifications, tasks which provide good differentiation are those that require students to make an inference, draw a conclusion, respond to unexpected questions, or deal with unknown vocabulary using communication strategies. None of these sorts of tasks are part of the DfE's proposals, which means that achieving the necessary differentiation described above will be compromised.

The current proposal will lead to students being rewarded for having a good memory and being able to learn the words in the lists in the specification, rather than for their linguistic skills and understanding. Exam boards will find it difficult to differentiate between students if all those who memorised the vocabulary lists can gain all the available marks. Because the words exam boards can test would be 1,700 of the 2,000 most frequently-occurring, the same words would likely be tested in different skills and in successive years, leading to problematic predictability.

2.6 What do the DfE's proposals mean for pedagogy and learning?

The DfE's proposed approach to vocabulary, and other details to the proposals, have a number of implications for MFL pedagogy and learning.

First, students following a specification with a vocabulary of a maximum of 1,700 words would have insufficient vocabulary to communicate effectively outside of the prescribed list. If teaching and learning is restricted to only high frequency words, this will result in students becoming frustrated and demotivated by their lack of communicative ability.

Second, research conducted by Milton⁷ has shown that vocabulary uptake among students is 50% of input, so there is the potential that for students to know 1,500 words, it could be necessary to teach them 3,000. Restricting students to 1,200/1,700 words means that students will struggle to be effective communicators.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a framework used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and increasingly in other countries. It describes language ability on a 6-point scale from A1 for beginners up to C2 which is

⁷ Milton, J (2009) *Measuring Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition*. Bristol, Multilingual Matters; Milton, J. (2011) The role of classroom and informal vocabulary input in growing a foreign language lexicon. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 26, 59-80

mastery. B1 students learning French learn 2,190 words in Spain, 2,400 words in Greek, but the DfE's proposal represents just 1200 words at Foundation and an extra 500 at Higher tier in the UK. This would mean that GCSE Higher would not be B1, given B1 students would need to know 1,500 high-frequency vocabulary items and the same number of less frequent items.⁸

Third, the DfE proposal for exam boards to include Key Stage 2/3 vocabulary, cognates and vocabulary items from the grammar list, would mean that the 10% permitted limit for words not in the high-frequency corpora would soon be used up. Since only 10% of the words exam boards can include may come from outside the high-frequency top 2,000, it would be vital for exam boards to consider carefully what they would want/need to test under that 10%. It is AQA's view that the 10% allowance is therefore clearly insufficient to provide the necessary coverage. As mentioned above, analyses of texts from different genres point to at least an 80% to 20% ratio of high-frequency to low-frequency items and AQA believes that, in line with this evidence, that the proposed vocabulary list should also align with this ratio of **at least 80% to 20%** rather than 90% to 10%.

Fourth, in its GCSE MFL subject content document, the DfE states at paragraph 2 that "GCSE specifications in MFL will take account of the national curriculum programmes of study for key stages 2 and 3."⁹ However, this is problematic given the high-frequency vocabulary approach proposed by DfE, where the relevant corpora may not allow progression from previous learning due to the nature of the words included in the top 2,000. More widely, there is in any case no homogenous KS2 or KS3 prescribed content, and a resulting lack of local cohesion in the transition between the Key Stages may prevent the necessary vocabulary being learnt prior to GCSE studies

Fifth, we would note that working out the meaning of words not listed in the specification using knowledge and understanding of how a language functions can be motivating for students and is a key linguistic skill. Indeed, this skill is one which the current specifications advocate in terms of dealing with unknown vocabulary items and prepares students for encountering and coping with unfamiliar language in real life situations. A whole section on this appears in our current GCSE specifications.

However, the DfE's proposals remove this requirement, which would make the transition to A-Level and beyond more challenging for students and could impact on uptake of language courses. Testing students' ability to work out meanings of unfamiliar words in this way also allows for differentiation between students of different abilities in our assessment tasks.

Sixth, the DfE's proposals for GCSE French, German and Spanish do not contain any requirements for prescribed themes or topics. Instead, any themes and topics, if they are part of a specification, would be informed by the vocabulary lists (based on word frequency) meaning that creating a coherent and logical content is likely to be challenging and differ between different languages.

2.7 Summary of the evaluation of proposed subject content

In summary, it is AQA's view that the DfE's proposals for subject content could result in a backwards step for language learning in England, particularly concerning the reduction in emphasis on communication and cultural (and cross-cultural) knowledge. The restrictions proposed on vocabulary inclusion could hinder exam boards creating stimulating and engaging content for 16-year-old learners which enables them to succeed in language learning. It is our view that the proposals will not provide a motivating and stimulating learning experience for students at all Key Stages, impacting negatively on take up of MFL at GCSE, A-level and degree level.

⁸ For discussion about difficulty of aligning GCSE MFL content to the CEFR, see:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/844034/Investigating_standards_in_GCSE_French_German_and_Spanish_through_the_lens_of_the_CEFR.pdf

⁹ DfE (2021) *MFL GCSE Subject Content*, DfE, London: https://consult.education.gov.uk/ebacc-and-arts-and-humanities-team/gcse-mfl-subject-content-review/supporting_documents/GCSE%20MFL%20subject%20content%20document.pdf

3. WHAT DO THE PROPOSED CHANGES MEAN FOR MFL TEACHING?

3.1. Background

In evaluating the detail and timing of any proposals for changing a qualification's subject content, it is important to consider the implications for wider teaching and learning, as well as the teaching profession. In the current context, the exceptional consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic also need to be considered.

3.2. Resources and materials

The current proposal would require significant reworking of the approach to MFL teaching for both KS3 and KS4 as well as all associated resources and textbooks.

Only two normal exam series (2018 and 2019) of the current specification have taken place so far for French, German and Spanish, one series in 2019 for some of the small entry languages, and no normal series at all for GCSE Persian, Portuguese, Gujarati and Turkish.

As such, teachers preparing students for exams in these languages have had little time to implement the current specifications, and further changes to specifications would therefore be highly disruptive. In addition, if the proposed changes are applied only to French, German and Spanish, this will create problems for teachers, students and exam boards as different models of assessment running in parallel will unduly complicate MFL GCSE assessment.

3.3. Key Stage 3 MFL Teaching

The requirement for proposed new specification content to cover vocabulary from Years 7-11 means that vocabulary from Years 7-9 would need to be aligned to the new GCSE vocabulary which is based on frequency rather than following long-established schemes of work, supported by textbooks and resources.

However, any change should arguably be phased in so that it starts with students in Year 7 and applies to these same students when they reach Year 10/11, rather than introducing the change for Year 10/11 without having ensured that KS3 has been changed to lead up to that point. Given exam board vocabulary lists include words which are learned from the start of KS2 onwards, it is important that progress between the key stages is built into the planning of any reform.

3.4. Other GCSE languages

It is preferable for all GCSE languages to follow the same scheme of assessment. As noted above, the impact of COVID-19 has meant that some languages have not yet experienced a normal exam series.

If the proposed approach to subject content was to be applied to small-cohort languages, vocabulary corpora are likely to be less reliable than for the main languages, and this would create issues for both exam boards and for students studying one of these languages in addition to French, German and Spanish.

3.5. Progression to further study

It is important to consider the impact of the DfE's proposals for changes to GCSE MFL subject content on the current AS and A-level specifications.

Crucially, the DfE's proposals would increase the divergence between GCSE and A-level, since the vocabulary linked to A-level themes is not necessarily high-frequency.

This increased divergence could adversely affect A-level uptake and the ability of students to cope with the demands of an A-level course.

Indeed, there is already concern about the declining uptake at A-level and the existing threat to language courses at degree level.

3.6. Summary of potential impact on MFL teaching

In summary, the impact on schools of MFL reform at this point in the lifetime of the specification is significant in terms of resources. Languages other than French, German and Spanish will not be examined consistently which is a concern and could mean different assessment models for different languages. In addition, the proposals will not in our view result in increased take up at GCSE and are likely to increase the divergence between GCSE and A-level. This will inevitably have an adverse impact on students continuing their language studies to A-level and beyond.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1. Overview

This briefing has considered the implications of the DfE's proposals for changes to GCSE MFL subject content for teaching, pedagogy, progression and the MFL teaching community.

The analysis set out above suggests:

- while a frequency-based approach could be helpful for GCSE MFL teachers and learners, the restrictive nature of the high-frequency approach to vocabulary as set out in the proposals could compromise the validity and reliability of assessments, as well as the ability of exam boards to produce assessments that are not overly predictable, series after series
- a frequency-based approach to vocabulary teaching and learning could be most useful if vocabulary and grammar lists were tailored with input from GCSE MFL teachers and learners to best suit the pedagogical context of GCSE MFL
- the proposals as they stand are unlikely to increase uptake at GCSE and place less of an emphasis upon cultural and cross-cultural knowledge than current specifications
- students will have insufficient vocabulary to communicate in real life situations, where encountering unfamiliar language is unavoidable
- the impact of reform at this stage in the lifetime of the current specifications will cause significant disruption and costs to schools
- the proposals in relation to vocabulary would increase the divergence between GCSE and A-level and are likely to impact adversely on take up of languages both at A-level and degree level.

4.2. Improving current MFL GCSEs

AQA believes that alternative changes could be made to the current GCSE specifications to achieve the aims of the DfE set out in the introduction, ie 'develop [students'] ability and ambition to communicate in speech and writing' and 'provide a strong linguistic and cultural foundation for pupils who go on to study MFL at a higher level post-16'.

For example, potential changes would include:

- setting assessment tasks in the Speaking and Writing exams in English (or in English **and** the target language where appropriate)

Such a change would be merited given that assessments would be more accessible to students, for example, ensuring that tasks which are assessing one assessment objective, eg Writing (AO4) or Speaking (AO2) are not also testing a student's ability in Reading (AO3). Providing the tasks in English would ensure that students are clear on what they are being asked to do and avoid the current situation where students who misunderstand the tasks in the target language are not able to access the full range of marks available.

- removing the requirement for questions and answers in the target language and by removing the requirement for assessment tasks to clearly exceed what is perceived to be 'KS3 level of demand'.

This change would reduce the level of demand of the Listening and Reading tests. According to AQA research using item level analysis of student responses to questions, this would provide a better distribution of marks in the GCSE assessments in these two skills, particularly at Foundation tier.

Overall, we believe a frequency-based approach to vocabulary could be carefully implemented if the constraints that have been outlined in the proposal are refined, with input from teachers and learners as well as experts, to better reflect the context of GCSE MFL.

APPENDIX: QUESTIONS FOR MFL TEACHERS

In preparing their response to the DfE consultation on proposed changes to GCSE MFL subject content, teachers of GCSE MFL may wish to consider the following questions in developing their views:

- Will this more integrated and mixed approach to the assessment objectives make the assessments more coherent and linked?
- Will the transition to A-level be smoother for students where this approach exists already?
- Will this approach make decisions around tier of entry easier for teachers?
- How successfully will students be able to communicate across 'a wide range of common themes and topics' with a vocabulary of this size?
- How do the proposals align with the CEFR and other jurisdictions where language learning is successful?
- How will the proposed approach facilitate students becoming good communicators in the language?
- How will students deal with unexpected language in real life situations?
- How will this sort of specification drive the teaching and learning experience for students?
- Will the KS2/3 experience of this sort of pedagogical approach result in greater uptake at KS4?
- How will this approach regarding themes/topics impact on course structure at KS3 and KS4?
- How will textbooks be structured?
- How will this sort of approach impact on the teaching and learning experience for students?
- How well will students be prepared to move on to further study with a vocabulary of this size after 5 years of study from Year 7-Year 11?

ABOUT AQA

AQA is an education charity and the largest provider of GCSEs, AS and A-levels in England. We set and mark over half of all GCSEs and A-levels taken in the UK every year. As an independent education charity, our income is reinvested back into AQA's charitable activities. It also funds our cutting-edge research, which sits at the heart of our assessments and supports our initiatives to help young people facing challenges in life realise their potential.

We also provide support and services that enable learning. These include a comprehensive support and training package for teachers, opportunities for professional development (CPD) and online resources to help teachers in the classroom.

This briefing was prepared by the Curriculum, Research and Policy teams at AQA.

CONTACT

policy@aqa.org.uk
www.aqa.org.uk