

## WJEC GCE MFL

### FAQs

The following advice applies to **WJEC A Level French, German and Spanish** (unless otherwise stated).

#### Unit 3 (Speaking):

##### *The Independent Research Project (IRP)*

#### **1. What is considered to be 'a wide variety of sources'?**

As the candidate is at liberty to pursue any topic (which satisfies the IRP AO4 criteria) it's not practical or helpful to stipulate a specific number. The number and variety of sources available will depend on the subject matter chosen. As time is short, there is no time to go into the detail of the sources but suitable short references to the sources - where and when found, or quotations from whom - might strengthen the examiner's evaluation of the amount and quality of research.

In addition, the descriptors for AO2 for the presentation and discussion refer to the candidate's understanding of the research findings e.g. *excellent presentation and **understanding** of research findings, based on information drawn from a wide variety of sources.*

The greatest indicator of the quality of research undertaken is shown by the content of the presentation itself rather than any oblique reference to a source. It is therefore not just the variety of sources that is assessed, but the candidate's understanding and evaluation of these sources.

#### **2. Should candidates ask questions in the (IRP) discussion part to get maximum AO1 marks?**

This is not a requirement of either Part A (*IRP Presentation*) or Part B (*IRP Discussion*) and candidates are not rewarded for doing so. The candidate will have sufficient opportunity to fulfil the requirements of AO1 when discussing the IRP subject with the examiner.

- 3. Are the examiner's questions based on the bullet points on the pro forma?**  
**4. Should the examiner ask questions related just to the student's bullet points or can they ask about anything on the topic?**

The specification states that '*a discussion in French/German/Spanish comprising responses by the candidate to questions relating to their independent research project. The questions will be set and asked by the visiting examiner.*'

The candidate's bullet points submitted on the pro forma are there to provide the visiting examiner with an outline of the candidate's IRP and the candidate's

research undertaken. The examiner will want to base his/her questions on what the candidate is discussing.

### **Spanish-specific questions regarding the IRP**

- 1. I have a student who has chosen *Mayan culture in Mexico* for the IRP topic – is this ok even though at the time they were not Spanish-speaking?**

The specification states that *'learners may choose a topic for their independent research project linked to one of the themes or sub-themes listed in the specification. However, the IRP also gives learners the opportunity to study an area or theme not otherwise covered by the specification. Learners must however ensure that the topic they have chosen relates to a country where Spanish is spoken'*. Therefore, learners must ensure that the topic of the IRP fully satisfies the criteria of AO4.

- 2. Can you give some advice about IRPs which look at *Spanish-speaking communities in the USA*? Is it a good idea to avoid such topics?**

No, learners should not avoid these topics. The specification encourages learners to study not only countries but also communities where the language of study is spoken. The specification uses the phrase *'countries and communities where Spanish is spoken'* to indicate this.

- 3. We have warned students away from talking about *Catalan related issues as we felt it may not be linked closely enough to Spanish-speaking communities*. Is this overly cautious?**

Yes, it is. The Principal Examiner advises that any topics studied for the IRP on *Catalunya* (or *Euskadi*) *'should focus on AO4 and that it would be best for candidates to try to answer a question (or address a statement)'*. These are large topic areas, so candidates are advised to focus on a particular aspect. There is no reason to avoid *Catalunya* as long as the AO4 criteria is met by the IRP and the same would be the case for any topics on *Euskadi*.

### **Units 2 (Critical Writing - essay only) and 5 (Critical and Analytical Writing)**

- 1. How is an essay that is too long self-penalising? Can they really write too much and get credit for everything they have written? (Units 2 and 5)**

There is no word count or word limit for this task, there is however an approximate number of words stated for the essay task. The candidate should be able to answer the question as set using the approximate number of words given. All work written by the candidate is marked by the examiner and the mark scheme applied, irrespective of length.

No candidate is penalised for writing too much or too little. However, what must be borne in mind is that by writing less than the approximate number of words, the candidate might not be able to access the full range of the mark scheme due to lack of content. Likewise, by writing more than the approximate number of words

stated, the candidate might run the risk of repetition, loss of focus (clarity and coherency) and possibly an increase in linguistic errors. In these instances, the candidate will be self-penalising as they will be preventing themselves from accessing the higher bands of the mark scheme.

**2. Are filming techniques relevant to the analysis? (Unit 2)**

Candidates are expected to answer the question as set. Depending on the question, it might be relevant to include cinematic technique in the answer. Any material used in an answer should be relevant to the question as set.

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