

Advanced Higher French/German/Spanish

Q I can't get access to the Scholar website to use the activities?

If you are registered with your school to sit the exam, then you should have a Scholar ID and password. Ask your teacher or at the school office. If you have access to some of your subjects, but not others, then probably your details have not been updated, so again, check with your teacher.

Q How can I improve my listening skills?

First is practice. The earlier Scholar activities are easier and slower, so start with them. When you are in the Higher area, on the left under additional tools you will find activities. Click on that, and look for all the listening activities to practise with.

The second thing is to get used to the listening by looking at the script while you are listening. This is easy to do on Scholar by pressing reveal at the bottom of the page. For past papers, you can download the scripts for the last three or four years from the SQA website, as well as the sound files. Listen and read, and pause as often as you want to get used to the listening. You might also find the Intermediate 2 listening exercises good practice.

Thirdly, listen to music, radio and films to help tone your ear.

Q Can I learn some essays for the discursive writing?

No, not normally: you will have a choice of essays, but they do not come up in any pattern, so you don't know what you will have to write about. However, you can get lots of argument and discussion phrases ready, and be prepared to slot them into a discussion on any topic. That could well amount to almost half your essay!

Q What topics come up in the essay writing?

Europe, the role of women in society and the environment usually feature here. Look at the past few years' papers to get an idea of the variety. The questions however can be quite varied!

Q How do I get better at the reading paper?

You need to work at reading skills, particularly dictionary use, and knowing where to find the answers. Try Scholar reading assessments, and for certain you should look at past papers with the SQA marking schemes which you can download from the SQA website. It is different from Higher, and you are expected to write more at length, and give fuller answers with all the accompanying details. Those marking schemes will give you a good idea of how much you should put into your answers.

Q How do I answer the inferential question?

- The answer for this will come from throughout the text, and may well include information you have given as answers to the questions, or which form the translation.
- The texts for Advanced Higher are all taken from journalism, and are written in a journalistic style. That means the author takes a topic, looks at the positive and negative sides of some issue, but does not come to a conclusion. This is left to the reader. **However**, the authors normally (and in Advanced Higher texts almost always) **imply** what their attitude is, and it is up to you to **infer** what they think.
- If you do not show that you are inferring what they think, you get no marks. (See the mark scheme below). No matter how good your answer is, how much detail you give, no marks!
- So, start your answer off with your inference. It might go like, '*Although the author presents both sides of the case, it is clear that he feels this development is in the end a poor/dangerous/unfortunate one.*' Or '*The author examines both sides of the case, but finally infers that the price of this development is worth paying.*'

- Your next task is to give evidence for your decision. That means marshaling the author's arguments for and against the topic. Think about using language such as '*the implication of the example quoted is that...*' or '*By using this example, the author clearly intends us to understand that..*' You can either give the reasons he gives why it is positive then those which are negative, or place them one after the other. '*There is a positive side, namely..., but then the author notes the negative side, that is....*' What is important is to combine your judgement whether these are for and against the case, with examples (in English) taken from the text. Try for at least three on each side.
- Finally, to get the full seven marks, you have to note some stylistic or language features which the author uses to get his point across. This is like in Higher English, '*Show how the author's use of language...*' This could be by using quotes to give more weight to the arguments, using humour or irony, by the regular use of questions to the reader, the use of rhetorical questions.

Q Do I have to be word for word in the translation?

You have to give all the relevant information, but your translation has to read like English! So change what you have to, but make sure you give all the details from the original. It can be quite different from the original, but the key is getting all the detail in. You should look at past papers with the SQA marking schemes which you can download from the SQA website. This will show you the variety of answers which are seen as acceptable.

Q How much time should I spend on the reading and translation?

You should make sure you leave 20 minutes for the translation: it is worth 20 marks, and the questions are worth 40 marks in total. Don't try to do the translation until you have answered the questions (although you might try it before you tackle the inferential question).

Q How do I write a good essay for the folio?

Always write them on a computer: it is easier to edit, and the word count is easily done.

Stick to the word limits: minimum 700, maximum 850, or you will lose marks.

Make sure you put in a good bibliography: the SQA guidance is on another post: if you don't, you lose marks. The title is crucial: it must be one which allows you to write an argumentative essay.

Give your essay a structure: introduction, arguments for and against, and a conclusion.

Make sure you include quotes from the texts you have read (or seen) in the foreign language (and these quotes do not count to your word total).

Don't be tempted to copy and paste chunks from elsewhere, either the web or books, in your essay: SQA have software to detect this.