

'SCHOLAR' ADVANCED HIGHER FRENCH

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'Scholar' is the major Science e-learning programme of Heriot-Watt University. Currently 45,000 students are enrolled on a 'Scholar' programme in Scotland and every local authority is now a member of the 'Scholar' Forum. At the Scottish CILT conference in February 2003, a new addition to the programme, 'Scholar Advanced Higher French', was introduced and teachers were given the opportunity to explore the programme's features and potential. Below is a quick reminder of what 'Scholar' can offer modern language staff who are considering offering Advanced Higher French in the forthcoming academic session. The design model of the 'Scholar' Advanced Higher French material is based on the SQA Arrangements document. The material covers the topics established by the SQA such as the Environment, the Media, the European Union and so on. It also revises the grammar points stipulated by SQA, sometimes by illustrating and teaching a new point, but more frequently by offering opportunities to revise and practise language patterns or structures that, in theory at least, would have been introduced at Higher level. Within each theme there is internal progression by banding the material into three levels or 'trois niveaux'. 'Niveau 1' is an introduction to the theme and is accessible to a student who has just finished the Higher course. 'Niveau 2' builds on that knowledge and contains exercises benchmarked against the end-of-unit test. 'Niveau 3' continues the progression and includes activities that reflect the demands of the externally assessed SQA examination. Because the approach is consistent throughout it would be appropriate for students to work through the themes at 'Niveau 1' and 'Niveau 2' first, before moving to the more demanding 'Niveau 3' nearer the examination time. The material itself is very interactive. Teachers attending the 'Scholar' session at the Scottish CILT conference had an opportunity to work through the exercises which feature 'drag and drop' of words, phrases and even paragraphs. Completion of phrases or parts of verbs also feature, as do drop-down menus for agreements of adjectives. Vocabulary work uses linkages of different kinds.

In terms of availability, all schools across Scotland have free access to the French material for the remainder of this academic session. For the 2003-04 session, the local authority subscription will include the French material, so if your school signs up to 'Scholar' the French material will be available. The 'Scholar' team at Interactive University* have submitted a bid for SEED funding for further developments. Development of language-learning materials at Higher and Advanced Higher is a top priority.