**Highly frequent, regular word families**

**What is this resource and what is it f*o*r?**  
The [GCSE Subject Content for French, German and Spanish](https://resources.ncelp.org/concern/resources/t148fj60d?locale=en) specifies all of the grammar features on which students may be assessed (see Annex B). This resource lists all of the word families¹ within the 2,000 most frequent words, in each language, that exemplify a *regular* grammar feature as described in the GCSE Subject Content. The resource can be used to inform vocabulary selection.

**Why is this resource important?**

Vocabulary selection can be guided by a number of principles (e.g., [frequency](https://resources.ncelp.org/concern/resources/t722h880z?locale=en), [transferability across contexts](https://resources.ncelp.org/concern/resources/rv042v928?locale=en), relevance to the learners, purpose of instruction). One of these principles is the alignment between the vocabulary and grammar content of a course. By choosing words that exemplify regular grammar features, word list creators can provide students with the vocabulary needed in order to understand and communicate meaning (e.g., tense, person, number). Having a wide range of high frequency regulars can help learners to ‘segment out’ the grammar, so they can then manipulate it to express meaning. For example, if a vocabulary list includes plenty of regular verbs, students will have a range of ‘hooks’ onto which they can ‘peg’ inflectional patterns.

This resource also highlights how some regular features are language-specific. For example, in German there are more ways to pluralise nouns than in Spanish. Creators of German word lists may therefore need to pay particular attention to noun selection to ensure that students can practise with the full range of endings specified in the GCSE German grammar content.

**How was this resource made?**

We first extracted all examples of regular grammar features mentioned in the new GCSE French, German and Spanish Subject Content (all of which have an exemplar word labelled with the “Y †” symbol in Annex E2). We then found all words that follow that same regular pattern in the 2,000 most frequent words. Since this process was objective, it did not require multiple raters for each language. This generated a list of words that ‘fit’ each regular grammar feature.

For the sake of completion, we also listed all of the interjections, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions from the top 2,000 that could be chosen by a list creator for each language. Even though these parts of speech are not necessarily considered to be ‘(ir)regular’, providing them simply created a more comprehensive master list.

Finally, the lists were organised into a spreadsheet of broad grammatical categories (e.g. verb groups) within which individual grammar features were placed.

**Notes**

¹The term ‘word family’ refers here to a version of level two of Bauer & Nation’s (1993) seven levels of affixes. At level two, the dictionary form of the word is listed and it is assumed that inflections (endings) with a grammatical function (e.g., plural –s in English) are known.

2Note that the examples listed in this resource are not formatted in line with the notation in Annex E. Only L2 headwords and some suggested English translations are provided (alternative translations and the inclusion or otherwise of e.g., orthographic variations and prepositions or reflexive pronouns with verbs are at the discretion of the list creator). Please refer to Annex E for a suggested format.

**References**

Bauer, L., & Nation, P. (1993). Word Families. *International Journal of Lexicography,* 6(4), pp. 253-279.