



2012

Languages: French GA 3: Examination

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

On the whole, the 2012 French examination seemed well suited to most students. It was evident that many students had learnt interesting idiomatic expressions, which they successfully incorporated in their writing. More complex structures, such as *après avoir/être*, were frequently included. The majority of students made an effort to use the subjunctive (although they should avoid overuse).

Students also seemed familiar with the topics.

Students are advised to use the 15 minutes of reading time wisely. It is most important to read the questions carefully and accurately. In Section 3, too many students missed out on marks by not respecting the required text types and the kind of writing, and by using memorised material without adapting it to suit the question.

Better use of the dictionary is highly recommended to avoid writing *Il amour, je besoin* (I need). Using the dictionary correctly should also help students to avoid choosing the wrong meaning (*fécondité* became 'richness').

Students are advised against using a pencil as answers written in pencil can be hard to decipher. Students should write clearly to ensure their answers are legible.

The usual mistakes were noted in this year's examination.

- *est/et, a/à*
- *beaucoup des*
- *tu/vous* (register)
- genders
- agreements of adjectives and past participles
- subjunctive after *espérer*
- *mon* in front of a vowel became *m'attention, m'âge*
- word order/syntax – *donc, aussi* at the beginning of a sentence
- literal translation – *je serai faire mes devoirs, quelque chose de penser à, bon matin*

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Overall, students seemed comfortable with this section and even became complacent, relying on general knowledge.

Part A – Answer in English

This part assessed students' capacity to understand general and specific texts.

Text 1

Question 1a.

His grandmother

Question 1b.

Both of

- plane/fly (from Melbourne to Paris/France/Charles de Galle [CDG])
- car/drive (from Paris to Lyon/Lyons).

'By plane and by car' alone was accepted since the wording of the question did not specify that the destination should be included.

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Question 1c.

Both of

- Christmas: Lyon or Lyons/at his grandparents'/at his grandparents' house
- New Year's Day: Alps (not mountains).

Question 1d.

Three of

- too inexperienced/not experienced enough/not 'the' experience to drive
- not used to driving on the right side of the road/in Europe
- their car is bigger (than his parents' car) (not too big)
- snow-covered roads in France are more dangerous than Australian roads (in summer).

Text 2

Question 2a.

Four of

- flower floats/carts (not chariots or 'just' flowers)
- big papier-mâché/papier-mâché heads/characters/figures/giant puppets
- atmosphere/ambience/mood (in the streets)
- flower fights/battles
- shows/events.

Question 2b.

All of

- crowds
- accommodation
- money/expensive/costs a lot.

Part B – Answer in French

In this part of the examination, students were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand French and respond in French. Ten marks were given for the capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the text. The number of points to be included was clearly stated in both parts of this section of the examination. Five marks were awarded for conveying information accurately and appropriately in French. Students were required to answer in full sentences.

Text 3

Question 3a.

Any four of the following, expressed in full sentences, were required.

- *Pour avoir des produits/des légumes frais*
- *Pour avoir des produits saisonniers*
- *Il change le menu presque tous les jours/souvent*
- *Des produits régionaux/locaux*
- *Il va tous les jours au marché à 4h du matin/de très bonne heure/très tôt*

The following is an example of an excellent response to this question.

Monsieur Beaumont n'utilise que des produits frais. Il va au marché à 4h du matin tous les jours pour qu'il puisse acheter des produits frais. De plus, il se sert de ces produits le jour où il les achète. D'addition, il change son menu presque tous les jours car les légumes sont saisonniers. Monsieur Beaumont sait aussi que chaque région de France a ses spécialités et donc il peut se servir des meilleurs produits.

Question 3b.

Students were asked to compare three elements of Norman cooking with the cuisine of the South of France. The instructions clearly indicated that all answers were to be based on the text and not on general knowledge. Three marks were given to elements from Normandy and three marks for those from le Midi/South of France.

'Norman' was often taken to be the name of the French chef, which caused great confusion about the origin of the various ingredients that are used in the two regions.

There were some innovative spellings of camembert, such as camanbare, camenbear, and also for *ail*.



Section 2 – Reading and responding

This section assessed students' knowledge and skill in analysing and responding to information from a written text. The passage may contain more complex vocabulary and students should take the time to read the passage several times to get the gist of it before answering the questions.

Part A – Answer in English

Students were asked to show their understanding of general and specific aspects of the text. The number of marks available for each question indicated the number of points or responses required.

Text 4

Question 4a.

The wolf

Two of

- protected in Italy
- returned to France – spotted in the French Alps in 1992/1993
- (now) protected in French natural reservations.

The bear

Both of

- (listed) as endangered/on the list of protected species
- imported/reintroduced from Slovenia.

Question 4b.

Symbol of fear versus symbol of light

Question 4c.

Any four of

- speed
- hearing
- vision
- sense of smell (not sense or feel)
- stamina/travel long distances/endurance.

Question 4d.

Any six of

- protected
- endangered
- increasing in numbers
- live in mountains
- attack other animals (not eat)
- both part of folklore/both symbolic of 'something'/arouse strong feelings
- both seen/spotted in France in the 1990s.

Students found it difficult to identify six points for this question.

Question 4e.

Either of

- the wolf is carnivorous but the bear is mainly herbivorous/vegetarian
- wolves are still killed but bears are not.

**Question 4f.**

Two of

- symbol of fertility
- ancestor of man
- king of the animals in Europe.

For some students, the bear became the king of France/Europe.

Part B – Answer in French

In this part, students were asked to show their ability to

- understand general and specific aspects of the text
- convey information accurately and appropriately in French.

Students were tempted to merely copy rather than to display their ability to write in French and, as a result, they missed out on marks. Students must, whenever possible, try harder to use their own words.

Both questions indicated the number of points to be made. Five marks were given for conveying information accurately in French.

Students were also expected to answer in the first person, *je/nous*, or even *on*, and in the conditional.

Question 5a.

Two of

- *Intérêt historique*
- *Les catacombes/les restes des morts/ossuaires*
- *Activités culturelles alternatives*
- *Rencontres illicites*
- *Explorer les mystères de cet endroit/des tunnels, etc.*

Question 5b.

As for Question 5a., students were expected to answer in the first person (*je/nous*), or *on*, and in the conditional.

Three of

- *Les tunnels qui s'effondrent/l'effondrement des tunnels*
- *Les inondations*
- *Se perdre*
- *Les cataflics/la brigade policière.*

De grands dangers physiques was not a specific enough answer.

Section 3 – Writing in French

In this section, students were asked to show their ability to write an original text of 200–300 words in French on one of five topics, using the following criteria.

- relevance, breadth and depth
- appropriateness of structure and sequence
- accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary

Each criterion carried five marks.

Students should remember the importance of planning their writing. There was evidence of students doing this.

It seemed that Detailed Study material was used, with the usual pitfalls. Such material must fit the topic but also the text type and the kind of writing.

Question 6 was by far the most popular, followed by Question 10 and then Question 7.



Question 6

Students were asked to write a letter to a friend, explaining why they had to give up their part-time work. Students showed a sound knowledge of this text type. Few students used the wrong register.

This is an extract from an excellent letter, with good ideas, excellent vocabulary and very fluid language.

... A vrai dire, je ne vais pas tourner autour du pot trop longtemps mais je t'écis pour te dire que je vais arrêter de travailler.

Tu dois sûrement te demander pourquoi et tu as bien raison. Mais surtout ne juge pas. Le travail était un travail à temps partiel comme son nom l'indique, il me prend la moitié de mon temps. Depuis un an je jongle entre mes livres de chimie et de philo, et ce travail. Je n'en peux plus! J'explose! Je craque! Enfin tu vois. De plus, depuis quelque temps le trajet pour y arriver me prend plus de vingt minutes; dix minutes de plus qu'il y a trois mois.

Ensuite une fois arrivée là-bas, mon patron n'est pas content vu que j'arrive de plus en plus en retard. J'ai eu beau lui expliquer que c'était à cause des moyens de transport et du trafic, rien à faire. Il est têtue ...

Question 7

Students were asked to write an informative article for their school magazine about the influence of mobile phones in 2012, not a speech.

The question lent itself to common, everyday answers, but it also gave scope for a deeper analysis of the positive and negative effects of this modern-day phenomenon.

The following extract presented a good, clear introduction.

Nous vivons tous dans une époque technologique. Les nouvelles inventions ont pour but de rendre notre vie plus facile. L'apparition en particulier des portables a profondément transformé notre vie quotidienne, de façon spectaculaire. Par contre l'influence des portables comporte des points à la fois positifs et négatifs. Dans cet article, nous allons examiner les avantages et les inconvénients des portables.

Question 8

Students were asked to write, as journalists, a review evaluating an exhibition. A great variety of exhibitions were chosen, including those on flowers, Napoleon, puppets, Chanel clothes, but the response had to be evaluative, not just informative.

More interesting responses mentioned the physical set-up of the exhibition, seating space, the venue, etc., which influenced the way the exhibition was judged/or the views/opinions about the exhibition.

Question 9

Students were asked to imagine two astronauts landing on Planet X21 and to write a short story about the astronauts' impressions and how they survive. They were to finish with, 'Where there's a will there's a way', which some found difficult to do. There was the story, then the final quotation, but no connection between the two. The best answers maintained an element of suspense and were tightly written, leading maturely to the conclusion.

Question 10

Students were asked to write the script of a speech to persuade their classmates to help the homeless in their town.

This question was also a popular choice. Students had obviously studied this topic. Again, it was important to treat the topic that was prescribed. Students were asked to write, in a persuasive and not just informative way, about why the homeless should be helped, but they wrote about how. Material that was studied and memorised was used, mostly without adapting it enough to the required task.