



2013

Languages: French GA 3: Examination

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students responded well to the 2013 French examination. Students made an effort to incorporate complex grammatical structures such as relative pronouns – for example, *pour lesquelles* – ‘si clauses’ and the subjunctive, but were not always successful.

Most topics appeared to suit students’ knowledge.

Some students responded in the wrong language. Students are advised to use the reading time wisely in order to ensure questions are answered adequately and appropriately.

It was pleasing to see students using a variety of idiomatic expressions, such as *nous avons fait face à la situation et nous en sommes ressorties indemnes*.

In Section 3, thorough planning should help students demonstrate depth by showing that they can describe in detail, explain, exemplify, contrast, compare and analyse.

Common errors included

- negative structures – *il y n'a pas*
- gender – *une homme*
- use and place of articles – *il a des l'expérience*
- the use of the infinitive with consecutive verbs – *ont décidé de allait vivre, je vouloir aider*
- the use of the possessive adjectives – *avec elle vêtements*
- conjugation in all tenses of the most common verbs – *ils faisaient du shopping, parce que il peux*
- use of preposition with countries, cities and regions – *dans l'Afrique, à l'Australie* (very few students used the correct prepositions for countries and towns).

It is recommended that students develop dictionary skills in order to make better selections when translating words, rather than simply choosing the first entry.

SPECIFIC 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

Part A – Answer in English

This section assessed students’ capacity to understand general and specific texts. Overall, the order of the questions corresponded to the order in which information was presented in the texts, but some questions related to the passage as a whole, and some information was located in different parts of the texts.

Students generally performed well in this section.

Text 1

Few students received full marks for these questions.

Question 1a.

A gift voucher

Question 1b.

Four of

- available in a range of prices
- gives the recipient the freedom to choose what they want
- relieves the giver of the burden of choosing a gift

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- good for people who are difficult to please
- a solution that makes the recipient feel happy/truly appreciated.

Question 1c.

A dog food

Question 1d.

All of

- being playful and full of energy/good health/keeping young (any two of these points)
- having a superb/lovely/beautiful coat
- having a (complete) diet (enriched) rich in vitamins and quality ingredients.

Text 2

Question 2a.

Four of

- Yvette is French and helps Annie with her French/She practises her French with Yvette
- Annie has a (French) (oral) exam coming up
- Annie intends to continue French at university next year/sustain her relationship with Yvette
- Annie is gaining confidence from her sessions with Yvette
- Annie enjoys seeing/meeting Yvette/loves to go to see her
- Annie had promised to meet Yvette at 2 pm
- to 'keep in shape' mentally for university.

Question 2b.

Both of

- the changed meeting time to see a movie
- forgetting about Yvette and her role in Annie's life.

Part B – Answer in French

In this part of the examination students were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand a text spoken in French by responding in French. Ten marks were awarded for the comprehension of the text and five marks for conveying information accurately and appropriately in French. Answers in dot-point format were not acceptable. Students needed to respond in full sentences.

Text 3

Question 3a.

Possible answers included

- *C'est une émission éducative*
- *C'est une émission (historique) sur l'histoire*
- *C'est une émission hebdomadaire*
- *Les étudiants/ Les écoles forment l'audience*
- *On peut l'écouter en podcast/sur le site ouèbe*
- *Parle d'un personnage important chaque semaine/toutes les semaines.*

Question 3b.

Possible answers included

- *Camille a de bonnes connaissances en histoire/L'histoire est sa passion*
- *Alexandre est l'hôte de l'émission /ils sont les animateurs/présentateurs de l'émission*
- *Alexandre ne s'est jamais vraiment intéressé à l'histoire/n'est pas très fort en histoire.*

Question 3c.

Possible answers included

- *ont été guillotinéés la même année/en 1793/à la même époque/au 18^{ème} siècle*
- *étaient des personnages historiques/célèbres*
- *ont vécu pendant la révolution française/à la même époque.*



The passive was not always used correctly when talking about the fate of Marie Antoinette and Charlotte Cordet – some students used *les femmes ont guillotiné* instead of *ont été guillotonnées*.

Students needed to base their answer on the text, rather than on their general knowledge.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

This section assessed students' knowledge and skill in analysing and responding to information from a written text.

Students are encouraged to read the passages several times in order to identify the main points and the most complex vocabulary. Taking notes will also assist them in making links with other texts when necessary.

In order to prepare for this section, students are advised to

- read a variety of French texts with broad themes to help expand their vocabulary
- learn to identify the main points and ideas in passages
- avoid excessive use of dictionaries
- learn to rephrase, to avoid copying chunks from the texts when writing in French.

Part A – Answer in English

Students were asked to demonstrate their understanding of general and specific aspects of the texts.

Text 4

Question 4a.

Two marks were awarded for each reason given. An example should have been provided for each.

- archaic/aggressive sexual discrimination/different attitude to gender roles, e.g. women left the table and did not take part in the men's after-dinner conversations
- stricter table rules than those of today, e.g. people needed to excuse themselves before leaving the table/did not put arms or elbows on the table/did not talk loudly/or about politics/did not wipe their plates clean with bread/ate fruit with a knife and fork.

Many students provided examples but did not clearly state the specific reasons.

Question 4b.

The silver cutlery they used to eat their food/They used silver knives and forks.

It was essential that students mentioned the word 'silver' in order to be awarded the mark.

Question 4c.

Both of

- Pierre is obviously interested in soccer/football.
- Pierre is also interested in his own family's lively/passionate/political discussions at the table.

Students had to include the word 'lively', 'passionate' or 'political' in order to be awarded full marks for the second answer.

Question 4d.

Both of

- not being able to have a good, boisterous discussion at the dinner table
- not being able to wipe his plate clean with his bread.

Question 4e.

Three of

- they are brother and sister
- Pierre has just returned home
- Marie-Louise is living away (from home) (and may have been having problems)
- they are French.

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Text 5

Question 5a.

He convinced his brother that eating in front of the TV is stupid/ridiculous.

Question 5b.

He wanted to

- share his experiences
- hear about what others did during the day.

Question 5c.

Similarities (any two of)

- They would rather have (both enjoy) family meals at the table.
- Both had had an educational experience in England.
- Both were frustrated and unhappy.

Differences (any three of)

- Pierre had just returned from England, while Louis's educational experience took place five years earlier.
- The family with whom Pierre was billeted had very strict rules about eating at the table, whereas the family with whom Louis was billeted ate in front of the television.
- Pierre's opinion about eating at the table was reinforced by his experience in England, while Louis's experience in England changed his opinion.
- Louis was on exchange, while Pierre completed a work-experience placement.
- Louis has a brother and Pierre has a sister.

This question was not answered well, as many students inferred the answers instead of carefully analysing the similarities and differences that were stated in the text.

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 had to make reference to five points, linking the position description with Bastien's profile. Students missed out on marks if they did not make all the necessary links. Students must try harder to express their answers in their own words.

Text 6

Question 6

Any five of

- *Bastien doit parler 3 langues dont l'anglais + il parle l'anglais l'espagnol et le chinois à un niveau opérationnel.*
- *Le travail nécessite de pouvoir se servir des équipements informatiques + il maîtrise Word Excel et PowerPoint.*
- *Il est capable de développer un "programme enfants" + il a été tuteur.*
- *Il peut travailler dans l'équipe de vente + expérience comme stagiaire au musée du Louvre dans la vente des billets.*
- *Il est capable d'aider à l'accueil physique et téléphonique des visiteurs + stage au Louvre dans le bureau des renseignements.*
- *Bastien peut donner des informations sur le château et les environs + il a été rédacteur pour la rubrique Arts et Spectacles pour le magazine de la faculté de lettres de l'université.*

Students tended to state Bastien's qualification without drawing a connection between the qualification and the requirements of the position. Successful students explicitly stated the links and used connectors within paragraphs and sentences.

The following is an extract from an excellent response.



Bastien a plusieurs qualifications et des expériences professionnelles pour lesquelles je le choisirais pour le poste de stagiaire au château. D'abord, le poste nécessite que l'on puisse s'exprimer en trois langues, l'anglais obligatoire. Bastien peut parler en anglais en espagnol et en chinois.

Section 3 – Writing in French

In this section, students were asked to write an original text in French on one of five topics, using the following criteria

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

Most students gave a sense of structure to their writing task. There was evidence that students were aware of the importance of planning.

However, it appeared that Detailed Study material may have been utilised, resulting in errors because the material did not correlate to the topic or the requested text type and writing style.

Question 9 was the most commonly selected, followed by Question 7 and then Question 11.

Question 7

Students were asked to write a journal entry describing an amusing incident they were involved in during the holidays, explaining how they reacted and what their impressions were.

Students did not always set the situation up successfully, resulting in a story that lacked a climax.

The best responses used appropriate language to describe the surroundings, the feeling and the reaction.

Notre incident amusant s'est passée le cinquième soir. Nous nous étions dit bonsoir et étions presque toutes endormies lorsqu'un bruit s'était fait entendre. Les branches et les feuilles mortes autour de notre tente craquaient sous les pas de quelqu'un ou d'un animal. Nous étions terrorisées, et, tremblantes comme des feuilles serrées les unes contre les autres.

Question 8

Students were asked to write a report informing French tourists about five steps being taken by Australians to preserve the environment for future generations.

Although most students used the correct text type and responded to the question adequately, many used generic answers, rather than coming up with ideas to specifically suit the Australian context. Many responses lacked an explanation of why such measures are important.

Question 9

Students were asked to write an article for the magazine *Voyages* describing their move to another country a year ago. In this article, students had to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of their new life, including at least two positive and two somewhat negative aspects.

Many students wrote something more like a diary entry than an article, and tended to describe events rather than analysing facts, feelings and emotions. Many responses lacked headings, a title and an author by-line. They also utilised very personal language, tending to use the first person *je* instead of using *on* and featuring a more formal style.

Question 10

Students were asked to write a short, imaginative story starting with, 'While Dominique was sitting on the grass, absorbed in a novel, he suddenly he heard an unusual noise behind him and noticed a strange shadow beginning to surround him...'

Students did not always include the main text type features. The stories were not always coherent and they often lacked a resolution. However, some students managed to interest the reader in their story.

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Question 11

Students were asked to write a speech to present to the Year 12 French students in their school, persuading them to take part in a program aimed at the construction of some houses for the inhabitants of a village in a French-speaking country in Africa. Students who tackled the topic appropriately used persuasive language devices, such as

- *Ce programme est vraiment unique, et si vous choisissez de participer, vous ne serez pas déçus.*
- *Est-ce que vous pouvez imaginer vous-même dans cette situation ?*
- *Il est grand temps d'agir avant qu'il ne soit trop tard !*
- *Je vous prie de considérer de participer dans ce programme.*