



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE (NEW)
FRENCH
A Level**

SUMMER 2019

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FRENCH
General Certificate of Education (New)
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COMPONENT 1: SPEAKING

General Comments

The Principal Examiner's report on the 2018 examination of this component provides information on the guidance which Eduqas offers centres submitting candidates for this test, the administrative requirements, the IRP form, centre/candidate declaration and possible models of a good presentation. That report also explains how centres can give candidates general advice without giving individual candidates specific help on their projects and suggests one model for a good presentation.

Comments on individual questions/sections

This test consists of two tasks: a two-minute presentation on the IRP followed by a discussion about it, and a card-based discussion. The presentation (10 marks) and the discussion of the IRP (30 marks) are two thirds of the marks awarded for the Eduqas A level French oral test. The remaining third of the marks (20 marks) are for the card-based task. The speaking test is worth 30% of the total qualification.

In addition to the comments on the A level card-based task contained in this report, centres might find the comments on the Eduqas AS level oral test useful as that test consists of two card-based tasks.

Task 1

The presentation

Two assessment objectives are used for the evaluation of the candidates' presentations: AO2 (five marks) and AO4 (five marks). Both assessment objectives are weighted equally for the presentation. The timing of the presentation is strictly limited to two minutes. There is no need to spend time stating the IRP title during the presentation as the examiner will have a copy of the IRP document.

AO2 is the candidate's ability to respond to written material from a variety of sources. Many candidates did show that they had undertaken first-hand research for the presentation and the IRP. As only two minutes are allotted to the presentation, there was no time to go into detail of the sources but suitable short references to the sources - where and when found, or quotations from whom - did strengthen the examiner's evaluation of the amount and quality of research. The greatest indicator of the quality of research undertaken, however, was from the content of the presentation itself rather than any oblique reference to a source.

The second criterion is AO4. Here, the candidate needed to show knowledge and understanding of different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken, and which was relevant to topic to the subject chosen. Even a short presentation did show the extent and depth of understanding, analysis and evaluation of issues raised by the topic under discussion.

Some candidates had learnt their presentation by heart and delivered it at a fast pace. This made comprehension difficult at times. In some instances, candidates became nervous or forgot parts of their presentation. Candidates were allowed to bring a copy of their IRP pro-forma into the examination as a memory aid. On some of the IRP documents, the initial bullet points served as an aide-memoire to the presentation. Using an aide-memoire made the presentation sound more natural and spontaneous.

The presentation serves as a springboard for the discussion that follows as it is likely to provide the examiner with possible lines of enquiry. It needs to be well-ordered and self-contained.

The discussion

The discussion lasts 9-10 minutes. The examiner will have made notes during the presentation of the types of question that arise from it. The examiner will also have a copy of the completed IRP pro forma.

Three assessment objectives are used in evaluating the quality of the discussion: AO1 (5 marks), AO3 (15 marks) and AO4 (10 marks).

In this part of the test, the ability to manipulate the language accurately in its spoken form is explicitly evaluated and AO3 is worth half of the marks awarded for the discussion. As the candidates responded spontaneously to questions, the level of accuracy did suffer at times but in the majority of instances the language was accurate enough to ensure comprehension. In many instances, both the quality of the grammar and the knowledge of topic-related technical terms were good. Nevertheless, the usual mistakes in verb forms, tense formation (where relevant), genders, agreements (where audible), pronouns and possessive pronouns were evident, as was the inability to form more complex sentences correctly. Lack of accuracy did affect understanding of what was being said (AO4) in some instances.

Candidates could generally answer the questions the examiner asked them, and they showed that they could “understand and respond in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction” (AO1), especially if they were prepared for a question. Please note, however, that in this part of the test, candidates are not expected to ask (nor are rewarded for asking) the examiner a question.

The weighting for AO4 i.e. "show knowledge and understanding of and respond critically to aspects of the culture and society of the countries/communities where the language is spoken", namely 10 marks out of 30, makes it imperative that candidates give relevant information and evaluate it properly.

It is important to note that if candidates chose to discuss any films or books, they needed to concentrate on the film or book's contribution to AO4 - knowledge of country etc. of the language studied. Character studies or discussion of the plot of books or films were unlikely to do so. For example, when discussing *La Haine*, the picture of French society at the time and of life in the *banlieue* was relevant and character studies of Vinz and others or discussion of the plot did not contribute actively to AO4.

Similarly, when a certain famous French person, e.g. Dior or Marie Curie, was the topic of the IRP, then the contribution of that person to France or French society was required, not a factual biography or a “generic” account of that person’s contribution to science, sport, fashion etc. to the world in general. Louis Pasteur’s contribution to medicine is important and his contribution to French agriculture and the French wine industry, for example, is something specific to France.

Task 2

The theme-based discussion (worth 20/60)

Candidates are given five minutes to prepare for the card-based task in the examination room itself with the examiner. This arrangement means that there is no need for any supervised preparation time before the test. The recording continues to run during this silent preparation time. The system worked well, although some candidates forgot to bring in blank paper or pens with which to make notes.

The twelve cards in the card-based task covered the whole of the four themes of the A level specification (see page 6 of the specification) and almost all sub-themes were covered across the 12 cards. In 2019, candidates were allowed to see briefly and then choose one of two pre-determined cards. These cards were on two different sub-themes.

Although candidates were not limited to one sub-theme this year because they now had a choice of two cards, some candidates still lacked the depth of knowledge (AO4) expected. Each theme had its own challenges. The cards on “France 1940-50: The Occupation and post-war years”, for example, required some historical knowledge and the ability to evaluate historical events but obviously the theme related directly to France. Discussions on cards relating to “Being a young person in French speaking society”, often became discussions about young people in general, and candidates transferred their knowledge about the UK to France or a French-speaking country/community. This was in spite of the fact that the set question and the follow-up question, as well as the content of the reading passage made it clear that the context of the discussion was France or a francophone country. Many candidates lacked sufficient information to fully discuss “Understanding the French-speaking world” and “Diversity and difference”.

Many candidates did not give sufficient attention to the reading passage on the card during their discussion even when prompted to do so by the examiner. Nevertheless, candidates responded better to this aspect of the task than last year. Although these reading passages were quite short, they did give some background ideas and ideas to inform the discussion. It is the candidate’s response to the reading text which is assessed. The content of the photos on the cards did not form part of the assessment for AO2 and describing them wasted valuable discussion time.

In this task, candidates were required to ask the examiner two questions. Some found it difficult to do so even when prompted by the examiner. Candidates should not ask the examiner any personal questions, but they were free to ask for the examiner’s personal reaction to the topic under discussion. Examiners often responded by asking the candidates about their opinion about what they had just asked.

The time allowed for the discussion is 5-6 minutes. This is quite short when you consider that the candidate has to ask the examiner two questions (and wait for their brief replies), has to give attention to the text as well as answer the “set question” and the follow-up question. Candidate answers had to be succinct. Candidates often tried to answer the first question (the “set” question based on the statement on the card) at much too great a length

and this limited the time for the discussion. On the other hand, candidates did often find that it was possible to incorporate an evaluation of the reading passage into their response to the first question. Then a longer reply is relevant. They could often incorporate information in the text into subsequent answers. Good discussions came from the candidate's ability to select, manipulate and evaluate the subject knowledge that he or she had rather than the depth and breadth of that knowledge.

Summary of key points

- Candidates' responded well to the IRP task which gave them a very good opportunity to discuss a topic related to France or a French-speaking country or community which was of particular interest to them. This often helped the production of good quality presentations and discussions.
- The presentation was important because it gave many candidates an opportunity to supply the examiner with "hooks" for possible questions.
- The card-based task is worth one third of the marks awarded for this component and candidates need specific support from centres to prepare for this part of the test, in particular in their ability to ask suitable questions and in the acquisition of a sufficient body of knowledge to sustain a short discussion.
- Although candidates must undertake and complete the project by themselves, centres can still give valuable general support.

FRENCH

General Certificate of Education (New)

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COMPONENT 2: LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

General Comments

Component 2 is divided into three sections and the assessment objectives are divided as follows:

- Listening (30 marks) AO1
- Reading (30 marks) AO2
- Translation (40 marks) AO3.

Detailed answers to questions 1-10 are provided in the published mark scheme as well as possible correct alternative answers.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A - Listening

- Q.1** Generally well done but most mistakes occurred in (1) where (f) was confused with (b) and in (5) where (l) was confused with (n). The idea of Omar missing his family was not in the text.
- Q.2 (a)** Well done with most candidates identifying statements (c) and (d) as being correct.
A few candidates negated rather than constructed a new response.
In some cases, the wrong tense was used by candidates thereby rendering the response incorrect.
Vocabulary was well known and did not impede comprehension apart from in (e) where *le maire* was wrongly interpreted as *par le meilleur, par le mari or par Marie*.
- (b)** The concept of *selon les objets vendus* was found difficult but the idea of *gratuits pour les habitants et commerçants de la ville* was readily understood. *Distinct* was confused with distant which led to many incorrect answers. Some candidates referred to “selling Louis XIV’s antiques”.
Some candidates did not understand *autres que* and gave shopping activities as an answer. There was confusion between *films d’animation* and *la bande dessinée d’occasion*. Very few candidates offered *le semi-marathon* as a correct activity.
Care was needed with the use of *plus de and moins de* with *14 ans*. A few candidates confused 4 and 1.
The last part was very well done apart from the ambiguous *chasseur* and *chasseur* which were both incorrect.

- Q.3 (a)** (c) There was often confusion with *très nombreuses* and *très renommées*.
(d) *plus* frequently confused with *moins*.
- (b)** This question was mostly well done apart from (g) being offered instead of (h) where candidates confused the wishes of the state and those of Mme Rachid.

Section B – Reading

Q.4 Care is needed not to include too few words e.g. *mener* without “à bien” (N.B. rubric *le mots ou les mots adéquat(s)*)

Q.5 Question 5 Gap-fill exercise
The most common incorrect words were for (2), (3), (4) and (8).
(2) *guérison* was only known by a few candidates although the idea had been introduced in the first few lines (*guérir* and *maladie*).
Manquent fitted grammatically but a contradiction to *belles* and *riches*.
Diffèrent was not recognised as a 3rd person plural verb in the present tense but as an adjective *différent*. This emphasises the close and careful reading required by candidates.

Q.6 (a) This is written summary and was well attempted.
In both parts of this question candidates succeed in selecting the correct information from the text and used the vocabulary therein to provide a correct answer. Where candidates “lift” whole sections without filtering the information, this leads to the dilution or contradiction of the answer and to marks being lost.

Section 1- both parts correctly answered by most candidates but some merely repeated the idea of censorship and only gained one mark.
Section 2 - many chose the first two options but a few understood the concept of *race aryenne* as an alternative. Candidates who referred to *les Juifs* (no connection with “acting” nor “theatre”) did not gain a mark.
Section 3 - correctly answered by most candidates.

- (b)** (a) Many gave *couvre-feu* as a reason, but this was not a correct answer to *soudainement interrompues*. Marks were lost when *courants* and *bombardements* were offered without qualification.
(b) Many gained 2 marks for two of the three options. In some cases, not enough information was provided e.g. *miroirs*, or facts were misinterpreted e.g. *On a fait des présentations sur le toit*.
(c) was well answered by most candidates, apart from *la langue allemagne/allemande*.
(d) this proved to be challenging for many candidates as the idea of increase and decrease was often missed.
(e) A lot of candidates thought that the question meant “who”? References to *Jean-Paul Sartre* and *Serge Guitry* were incorrect.
(f) Many candidates managed to provide a correct answer but some responses were too vague or incomplete.
(g) A lot of candidates were able to infer the ideas of *patriotisme* and *résistance* but some said (incorrectly) that *Hitler était dans le théâtre*.

Section C – Translation

Q.7 There was a pleasing improvement in this question. The candidates coped well with the vocabulary and grammar but where idiomatic language was needed, they found this more challenging. They should be careful to ensure that every word is taken into account when translating into English, especially qualifiers and conjunctions, and check tenses carefully.

- Candidates mostly started the translation question well. They were usually very successful with sections 1-4 provided they did not omit the qualifier *très*.
- In section 5 and 6 *issues de* and *à des degrés divers* proved more challenging and there were many mistranslations.
- In section 7 *choqué* was often mistranslated as “surprised” and some candidates offered an incorrect double negative – “nobody was not shocked”.
- In section 8 many candidates did not spot the perfect tense.
- In section 9 *amener* was often mistranslated although a number of valid verbs were offered to gain a mark.
- In sections 9-11 some did not translate any of the possessive adjectives and *même* was wrongly translated as “some”.
- In section 13 *elle a réussi* was sometimes omitted.
- The whole of section 15 was often omitted resulting in a mark being lost.
- In section 17 *uniquement* was wrongly translated and sometimes appeared in section 16.
- In sections 17-18 both elements were challenging to most candidates where *le sang* needed to be qualified in English by “ties” or “links”. *Appartenance* was wrongly translated as “belonging”.
- Sections 19-20 were well done provided candidates did not look for creative ways to translate these elements. There was confusion with *pratique collective* as to which was the noun and which the adjective.

Q.8 There was an improvement overall in this question. Some candidates displayed an excellent knowledge of idiomatic French and a high level of grammar and syntax.

By contrast many candidates did not know common items of vocabulary and grammar therefore marks were lost. Formation of the perfect tense was often insecure as well as grammatical points such as object pronouns, reflexive pronouns and 2nd verb infinitive.

- In section 1 a surprising number of candidates did not know the verb “to miss” and although there is more than one acceptable alternative, *perdre* was often used.
- In section 2 the majority of candidates did not realise that a verb was needed to express the idea of (going) home.
- In section 3 the idiomatic phrase *fondre en larmes* was little known although many candidates were able to convey the meaning successfully by using other vocabulary. There was great confusion between *pleurer* and *pleuvoir* and great deal of rain fell erroneously! *elle a sauté en gouttes* and *elle a explosé en pleurs* were seen.
- In sections 3 and 14 *station* was frequently used incorrectly for *gare*.

- In section 5 *savoir* was used by the majority but there was difficulty with the negative In section 7 most candidates knew *SDF sans-abris* but had difficulty with “was passing by”.
- In sections 8, 11 and 15 the tense and the pronoun caused problems, also the past participle of *offrir*.
- In section 9 there was ambiguity in the use of *il*.
- In section 10 many candidates omitted the reflexive pronoun if they used *se promener* or *se balader*. Few knew *errer*.
- In section 11 the idea of “he took her to ...” was often wrongly translated as verbs such as *prendre* and *conduire* were wrongly chosen (often with incorrect past participles).
- In section 12 a surprising number did not know “to leave” in this context and many candidates did not know the perfect infinitive construction.
- In section 13 the auxiliary was often incorrect and *rentrer* incorrectly chosen.
- In section 14 to “take back” was known by very few.
- In section 16 the reflexive pronoun *se* was omitted if *assurer* used.
- In section 17 the pluperfect tense was not recognised in English and the perfect tense was used incorrectly.
- Sections 18 and 20 were very successfully translated by most candidates.
- In section 19 “to raise money” was often incorrectly translated with candidates opting for *prendre/gagner/ramasser*.

Summary of key points

This was the second series of this new specification and candidates were familiar with the style of questions, the mark breakdown of the three sections and the skills assessed.

Generally, candidates understood the demands of the paper and the mechanics of the tasks. This resulted in fewer marks being lost for incomplete answers or choosing too many details. Most questions were attempted and with varying degrees of success.

Candidates who had been well prepared for the style of questions and had good knowledge of grammar were able to manipulate the language well using a range of lexis and structure. These candidates successfully avoided lifting sentences from the reading and listening texts which did not answer the question set.

The translation Questions 7 & 8 showed an improvement in the way in which the candidates answered these questions. They displayed a greater knowledge of the techniques needed for the transfer of meaning from one language or another.

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COMPONENT 3: CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

General Comments

This was the second year of the new Specification and it was pleasing to see that some of the recommendations following last year's examination have been implemented. There were a greater number of essay plans in evidence this year and the tendency to greatly exceed the recommended word count was less apparent – though some candidates still wrote far too much, thus losing focus and self-penalising on account of linguistic errors.

It was very pleasing to see how many candidates met the demands of this Component, often producing two essays of high linguistic quality (AO3) and knowledge of the text/film (AO4). However, there was sometimes a marked difference in attainment between the two essays, both linguistically and in their knowledge and understanding of the text/film.

No example of a candidate choosing two texts were seen.

The theme of France 1940-1950 continues to provide useful background knowledge for *Les Choristes*, *Au Revoir les Enfants*, and *le Silence de la Mer*. This year, the question on *Antigone* as a symbol of the *Résistance* benefitted in the same way. However, as was the case last year, this was sometimes taken to extremes. In some cases, the tendency to provide extraneous information from Theme 4 detracted from the essay and strayed too far from the question set. It is not possible to comment on every film and text as not all were attempted or no examples seen.

Comments on individual questions/sections

No et Moi

This novel was a very popular choice. Students engaged well with the themes and responded to the topicality of the issues involved.

Very few candidates chose question 1, *l'importance de la scolarité*, but those who did performed well on the whole. The best answers dealt with Lou, Lucas and No whereas the weaker ones concentrated on Lou only.

The second question on Lou's relationship with her parents was the more popular. The answers were generally of a good standard, the most common failing being excessive description, especially with regard to Anouk's depression. Some candidates dwelt too much on Lou's late sister.

Antigone

The standard of essays for this text was good. Very few candidates chose question 5, *les rapports entre Créon et Hémon* and those who did concentrated on the generational conflict and divided loyalties.

Question 6 was chosen by the majority. Candidates were obviously very well prepared for this aspect of the play. However, a frequent weakness in answers was to discuss the

character Antigone as a symbol of the Resistance, rather than the play itself, as the question required. This resulted in incomplete answers. There were some lengthy digressions into Brechtian philosophy and the influence of Brecht on Anouilh.

L'Etranger

This was a popular choice, but less so than in previous years.

Very few candidates chose question 8 on the theme of solitude, but those who did provided well written, interesting and thoughtful answers.

Most candidates chose Question 7, *les relations entre Meursault et Marie Cardona*. There was a tendency to provide a character study of Marie rather than an analysis of the relationship. Some answers focused mainly on Meursault's sexual interest in Marie and did not explore his emotional reactions to their relationship. There was quite a lot of discussion of the role of women in Algeria at the time of writing. Marie was considered to be in need of a man to support her because women could not survive independently, and men were in short supply. Hence Marie's willingness to marry Meursault whether he loves her or not. These essays could not be supported by evidence from the text.

However, there were some excellent answers, both linguistically and in terms of content and understanding.

Le Silence de la mer

As in previous years, candidates had engaged well with the text and the issues involved and their greater understanding of the period enhanced their appreciation of the text. Care should be taken not to include information gleaned from the study of Theme 4 which is irrelevant to the questions set e.g. *la nièce* being a symbol of *une collaboratrice horizontale*. Both questions were attempted.

Question 9, *les rapports entre l'oncle et la nièce* was less popular. However, there were some very interesting essays on this question which demonstrated much thought and sensitivity. Some candidates focused too much on *la Résistance* and *le maquis* but this could not be supported by evidence from the text.

Question 10 on the importance of symbolism was chosen by the vast majority. There were very few 'complete' answers in that important aspects, such as the significance of the title or of *la Belle et la Bête* were overlooked. Some candidates merely gave long lists of symbols, including *la cheminée* and *l'ange* but with little real analysis of how they related to the text and ideas therein.

However, in many of the essays there was evidence of considerable understanding and empathy with the characters and the issues involved.

Intouchables

This was a very popular choice of film and both questions were represented.

Fewer candidates chose Question 13, on the theme of integration, but some of those who did this essay produced good quality answers.

The majority chose Question 14 on stereotypes. The main shortcoming was excessive detail and long lists of examples of stereotypes. This often detracted from the quality of the essay and included material not relevant to the question.

Of all the questions on the paper, this question 14, a very popular choice, but was also where many candidates produced answers of excessive length.

Les Choristes

Another popular film. Question 15 on the role of Clément Mathieu was more popular. Candidates had engaged very well with the film and with the character of Mathieu in particular. However, there was frequently too much digression, for example, into comparisons of Rachin with Hitler, which took candidates away from the role of Mathieu into excessive discussion of aspects of the war and its aftermath. This leads to irrelevant information being included and detracts from the question set.

Very few candidates chose question 16 on the theme of success but these essays were generally competent.

To produce a successful essay which answers the question within the word limit planning was the key.

La Haine

This remains a popular choice of film. Again, there was sometimes too much space devoted to Kassovitz and events which fired his creativity in making the film. Similarly, while the cinematographic effects are significant, they were sometimes excessively described.

A very small number of candidates chose 19, the importance of friendship. This was surprising as in some respects, this is a more straightforward question.

Question 20 had much wider appeal. Candidates had engaged with the events described in the film and essays were on the whole thorough and pleasingly analytical.

Au revoir les Enfants

This remains a popular choice and essays were satisfactory on the whole. As in previous years, candidates demonstrated great empathy with events described in the film.

Question 21 on *la menace et la peur* produced some very good answers. Candidates had really picked up on the feeling of gloom and dread that pervades the film and the techniques used by Louis Malle to enhance this.

Question 22 on the role of religion was more mixed and some answers were spoilt by an imbalance in the treatment of Judaism and Catholicism – Catholicism was sometimes omitted altogether. The nun in the infirmary was rarely mentioned and on some occasions her role as a *collaboratrice* was overlooked but the role of Père Jean was often handled very well indeed.

Boule de Suif et autres contes de guerre

Most of the candidates had chosen question 11, *comment Maupassant représente l'ennemi*. The essays were satisfactory, and the candidates had obviously been well prepared. Candidates had a very good idea of how and why Maupassant had depicted the Prussians as he did.

There were no examples seen of question 12 on the *représentation du monde féminin* which might have produced some very interesting answers.

Summary of key points

- Overall, this was a very encouraging second series of the examination. Recommendations following last year's examination appear to have been followed regarding the task itself.
- There was evidence of careful planning by candidates ensuring that the material selected was relevant to the question set. The ensuing essays were focused and pertinent. To produce a successful essay which answers the question within the word limit planning was the key.
- There is still a tendency to write very long introductions where most of the ideas presented are repeated in the main body of the essay. Also, the question is being re-written in the introduction. Lengthy conclusions which merely paraphrase inconclusively points already covered must also be avoided. These techniques must not be employed as they result in too many words being wasted which especially affects the AO4 mark. They tend to be a pre-learnt paragraph which is generic rather than specific in detail.
- Spelling of the titles of texts/films was often incorrect, as were the names of characters and authors e.g. *Philippe, Vercors, Meursault, Morhange*. Essential words were also spelt incorrectly e.g. *handicapé, banlieue, galerie, Allemagne, enterrement, surveillant, cercle vicieux, chrétien, le crétinisme* – for Christianity.
- In many cases the more that is written, the incidence of errors increases and consequently affects the mark for AO3. Common errors occur frequently with familiar vocabulary and grammar e.g. gender errors, incorrect adjectival agreements, poor use of pronouns, missing or incorrectly placed accents which affect meaning. Too many errors are seen in the third person (singular and plural) of the present tense with verbs which should be thoroughly familiar and well-practised within the context of the film/text studied.

Overall, there are examples of very good practice with candidates engaging well with the film and texts. They employ good analytical skills and respond appropriately to the question set and write with flair and style in French.



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