

French

Course Code: FRN315114

Oral Assessment

The vast majority of candidates seemed almost excited to be doing the oral exam and the number of candidates who appeared nervous was few indeed. Students were extremely comfortable and fluent when answering the basic, everyday questions and their level of comprehension across the whole examination was very high. Only a few candidates needed to ask for questions to be repeated or gave one word answers. Some candidates self-corrected and the number of students who clearly knew how to use the various tenses taught in the syllabus was very impressive.

Students who found the exam challenging had limited vocabulary and confused simple words like *matière* and *sujet* when talking about school subjects. Prepositions proved a sticking point this year with many good candidates unable to use the correct preposition with geographical terms and modes of transport/months of the year. Some students didn't know the gender of common nouns as they applied to their own hobbies and preferences e.g. *je joue du flûte* instead of *de la*. Some students struggled with the pronunciation of words e.g. *corps* used for *cours* and *poule* instead of a pull. The perennial mistakes of adjective agreement and noun confusion e.g. *chevaux* for *cheveux* were still apparent. There is very little even the most dedicated teacher can do to fix these issues but teachers should take heart that these matters do not usually block communication which is the main aim of the oral examination.

This year's group of students has set a very high bar and thoroughly deserve their grades in this section.

Written Examination Paper

Listening and Responding

All candidates did well in this section and had a very good knowledge of the basic, functional vocabulary that students will eventually have to use in shops and other daily settings. Obviously teachers did a great deal of work on theme-based vocabulary and the students were aware of the types of expressions they will hear but not necessarily need to use themselves in everyday settings. Once again this section's marker commented on the high calibre of students that sat the exam this year.

Question 1

Some students wrote banana instead of pineapple. The word *feuille* was not understood and students didn't translate *billet*.

- a) a kilo (1/2) of red (1/4) apples (1/4) a kilo of potatoes (1/2)
 - b) a pineapple (1)
 - c) really (1/2) ripe (1/2)
 - d) to cut (1/2) the leaves (1/2)
 - e) no thank you (1), it's okay like that (1)
 - f) 19, 50(1/2) euros (1/2)
 - g) he only has (1/2) a 100 (1) euro bill/note (1/2)
 - h) 80, (1/2)50 (1/2) euros
- Total: /11

Question 2

The marker commented that students should include as much detail as possible in their responses and that some students had problems with this question for this very reason. The most glaring omission was students not mentioning "surfers" which is the same word in both languages. Many students confused Pays Basque with Pays-Bas.

- a) in the Basque (1/2) region/country (1/2) near (1/2) the Spanish (1/4) border/frontier (1/4)
 - b) simple (1/2) comfortable (1/2)
 - c) by the seaside, (1) surfers (1)
 - d) mussels (1) the best she has ever tried (1)
 - e) 2 weeks (1/2) ago (1/2)
 - f) train (1)
 - g) as usual (1/2), she bought (1/2) too many (1/2) souvenirs (1/2)
 - h) she wants to see (1/2) the new (1/2) Picasso (1/2) exhibition (1/2)
- Total: /13

Question 3

The main difficulty with this passage was the term "immeuble de grand standing". Most students knew immeuble but only a few were able to translate the rest of the phrase. La couture was also problematic and many students simply omitted it from their answer.

- a) she always watches the show (1/2) when she is at home (1/2) on Thursday (1/2) nights/evenings (1/2)
 - b) any of the following - she dreamed of making beautiful costumes for the theatre- or costume designer- theatre costume designer (2)
 - c) she was bad at (1/2) sewing (1/2) or anything like "she couldn't sew"
 - d) it must have been fairly easy (1) because she speaks English really well (1)
 - e) because she had to (1/2) speak English (1/2) with a heavy/strong French accent (1/2) which she normally doesn't do (1/2)
 - f) because he doesn't speak a word of French/ doesn't speak French (2)
 - g) to get her driving licence (1)
- Total: /12

Question 4

Students seem to struggle with the term "le plus proche" and "velours" was often left out of answers.

- a) jewellery (1/2) theft (1/2)
 - b) in a well-to-do/chic/posh/luxurious/rich (1/2) building (1/2) last night (1/2) around midnight (1/2)
 - c) small (1/2) thin (1/2) 1 metre 50 centimetres (1/2) brown hair (1/2) fairly (1/4) long (1/4), curly (1/2)
 - d) a green (1/4) dress (1/2), a black (1/4) velvet (1/2) jacket (1/2)
 - e) a large/big (1/4) black (1/4) handbag (1/2)
 - f) she threatened her victim (1/2) with a gun/pistol (1/2)
 - g) contact police station (1) nearest to you (1)
- Total /12

Question 5

This passage seem to throw up the most number of problematic vocabulary items. Students struggled with the following: un rhume, tousser, même si, les gants, and le pourpre.

- a) a little (1/2) sad (1/2)
- b) d) a little (1/2) ill/sick (1/2)

- c) any two of the following: a cold, a headache, a cough (2)
 - d) are you still intending (1/2) to go to (1/2) Lucienne's (1/2) this evening (1/2)
 - e) she is going (1/2) even if (1/2) she has to come home (1/2) early (1/2)
 - f) bought (1/2) a gift/ present (1/2)
 - g) he doesn't really know (1/2) what she likes (1/2)
 - h) gloves (1) woollen (1/2) scarf (1/2)
 - i) shopping centre/shops (1)
 - j) she always wears (1/2) purple (1/2)
- Total: /14

Reading and Responding

Question 6

The passage was well done by the vast majority of students with the questions leaving plenty of scope for students to show what they understood.

One student didn't notice question (a) below the reading passage. Perhaps examiners could start questions on the opposite page for future exams if the text finishes towards the end of the page.

Many students misinterpreted "vingt pour cent" as being 20 or 100 or else to 20 to 100.

"du pain à volonté" was interpreted as "bread of willpower" or "strong bread".

"n'importe quoi" was frequently interpreted as meaning "imported food".

Fortunately only very few students wrote nonsensical answers e.g. "it is inadmissible if the children don't eat what isn't imported" or "it is inadmissible that children eat good foods". Teachers have obviously done a good job in telling students beforehand to double check what they have written, so that it at least makes sense.

The markers felt that question (g) was open to interpretation, so we accepted a wide variety of answers.

- a) tomato (1/2) sauce (1/2)
 - b) little French kids stay French (1), fight obesity (1), to maintain a true cultural treasure (1)
 - c) American (1/2) fast food (1/2)
 - d) any two of the following-that for the French food equals conviviality/joyfulness/social interaction, the pleasures of the table/ pleasure of enjoying food, not acceptable to drown boeuf bourgignon in tomato sauce (2)
 - e) any 5 of the following: 4-5 dishes every day, a main course, a dairy product, an entrée or dessert or both, as much bread as they want (5)
 - f) it is unacceptable that children eat just anything/any old thing (1 mark); there is so much poverty nowadays (1) that for 20% of students the daily school meal is the only nourishing meal of the day (1)
 - g) some possible answers may include-kids love fast food, it's ironic, it is difficult to encourage students to eat food such as broccoli (2)
 - h) French cuisine is considered part of the nation's heritage (1)
 - i) improve the standard and variety of school meals (1)
- Total: 19

Question 7

This passage was slightly harder than the previous one, but still accessible to most students.

The main problem for the markers here was that answers to questions were all jumbled up and many students repeated the same information in different answers. While every care was taken to acknowledge what the

students *did* know, it was sometimes difficult to decipher answers which had been crossed out/ had arrows pointing elsewhere (if the students realised they were answering the wrong question).

The markers wondered why answer (a) about the proverb was worth 3 marks and accepted a huge variety of responses. No clear answer had been found in the passage.

In (b) "une dizaine" was often misinterpreted as "a dozen" instead of *ABOUT 10*.

For (c) "Adaptez-vous quelque temps" was once mentioned as meaning "adapt yourself to the weather".

In (e), "au moins six ou sept heures" was often taken to mean "less than 6 or 7 hours".

- a) any of the following: the early bird catches the worm, the future belongs to he/she/the one who gets up early/ you can achieve many things if you get up earlier than others (3)
 - b) get up (1/2) about (1/2) 10 minutes earlier (1/2) than usual (1/2)
 - c) any two of the following: adapt yourself a little time/leave time to get used to it; reduce your sleeping time by an extra 15 minutes/quarter of an hour (2)
 - d) (i) a good reason to get up (1 mark)
 - a) (ii) going out (1) organising a walk/hike (1), shopping with friends (1), appointment/meeting (1) you can't cancel (1)
 - e) any two of the following- if you need to sleep 6 or 7 hours , you need to go to bed earlier, organise a good routine(2)
 - f) a comfortable bed (1) if it is too hard or soft (1) don't have a mobile in the bedroom (1)
 - g) you move it far away from the bed (1) your alarm must be out of arm's reach (1)
 - h) people who would like to get up earlier (1)
- Total: 21

Question 8

Students had no major difficulties with this passage which was to be answered in French. Once again, the language of the passage was of a suitable standard.

As it was comprehension, not grammar, being assessed, the many students who kept the "je" text endings for the required "elle" answers, were not penalised.

The markers felt the wording of question (h) was misleading: "quel est son plus cher désir?" was worth 3 marks yet only ONE desire was asked for instead of "quels sont ses plus chers désirs?" However, nearly all candidates mentioned the 3 dreams from the text.

The multiple choice questions proved more difficult than the others, with very few gaining the full 4 marks.

- a) le contrôle (1)
 - b) demandeuse d'emploi (1)
 - c) elle tape sur "Pôle emploi" sur Google (1) elle poste son CV un peu partout (1) Elle s'inscrit à plusieurs alertes emplois (1)
 - d) plus difficile (1) que prévu(1)
 - e) 2 sur 4- elle perd confiance en elle-même, elle remet tout en question, le chômage n'arrive qu'aux autres,
 - a) elle a l'impression que son bac ne sert à rien (2)
 - f) tendue (1) confiante(1)
 - g) pas (1) sélectionnée (1) or elle n'a pas obtenu le boulot/travail (2)
 - h) travailler (3)
 - i) si la carrière qu'elle a choisie n'est pas la bonne (1)
 - j) qu'elle ne s'attendait pas à être sans boulot (1)
 - k) ne va pas bien (1)
 - l) cette personne a du mal à s'habituer à être sans emploi (1)
- Total: /20

Writing in French

	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
Number of candidates attempting the question	7	50	0	5	18

This year there was a definite preference among candidates for essay topic 10 which was no surprise as it was very familiar territory for all students. Question 11 may have suffered because it involved the language of persuasion and many students may have felt less sure about their ability to structure a whole essay around this type of language. Once again the markers commented on how high the standard was this year in the writing section. Students managed to use a wide range of tenses accurately and the writing possessed good flow and form overall. Inversion after reported speech was well done and students managed to use expressions such as *après avoir mangé, bu* etc with great ease.

The usual set of challenges for students could be found throughout the written essays and the list below represents a few of the all too familiar stumbling blocks. The markers commented that many of these errors may have been due to students running out of steam or time. One thing that was concerning this year was the lack of attention paid to the placement of accents on words. Many students also incorrectly copied parts of the essay stem which was very worrying. The number of students who didn't know the gender of the Eiffel Tower or other famous Parisian monuments was worrying.

Direct and indirect object pronouns were occasionally misplaced

Beaucoup de

Des, au become de les and à le

Jouer de and jouer à used incorrectly or the preposition was simply omitted

En+ country and à + city are still major issues

The misuse or lack of accents was concerning in some cases e.g. *trés* (very common), *j'espère*,

Il avait 17 ans became *il était 17 ans*

Sa mère became *son mère*. Men and women continue to swap genders!

Depuis was a problem in many essays

Pronouns, especially direct and indirect pronouns, were misplaced or simply absent.

Articles –omission or wrong gender

Negatives

Verbs linked by a preposition

Ne...pas de

Est instead of *et*

Quelque chose (x) *différent-* missing preposition

Aussi was positioned in sentences to fit English not French usage

Se casser le bras was replaced by "il a cassé son bras"