

2017 VCE French written examination report

General comments

Most students were well prepared for the 2017 French written examination.

Students who scored highly provided correct responses, demonstrating that they understood the general meaning and specific elements of both the aural and written texts, while also incorporating complex language structures. Students who scored highly demonstrated the ability to apply grammar rules (such as gender, conjugation, use of appropriate articles and spelling of words) when responding in French.

Students are advised that it is important to:

- take notes for both the listening and reading sections of the examination
- use a bilingual dictionary when necessary and be familiar with using a bilingual dictionary
- attempt all questions
- adhere as closely as possible to the suggested times displayed on the front page of the examination paper so as to manage one's time efficiently
- engage with authentic texts in an in-depth and critical manner in order to respond adequately to questions that are more complex and require higher-order thinking skills
- use connectors and avoid bullet points to enhance the fluidity of responses when writing in French
- be familiar with different text types and different kinds of writing when responding to Section 3.

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 answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

This section assessed the students' capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts.

A significant number of students found Text 2 challenging. Students who scored highly in this section of the examination provided relevant responses that addressed all aspects of the question. Their answers were logical and well formulated.

Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Question 1a.

Either of:

- Everything is going well.
- She feels isolated (in the village).

Question 1b.

- go to the Christmas market
- buy traditional wooden objects
- walk around (Strasbourg) at night
- admire the (Christmas) lights

Question 1c.

That it is not rainy and not too cold

Text 2

Question 2a.

- Napoleon himself experienced a fire in the palace (where he was sleeping).
- Napoleon experienced another fire during the ball (celebrating his marriage).
- Napoleon was personally affected by two fires.

Question 2b.

All of:

- being French
- being over 18
- succeeding in a test of physical skills
- passing written exams in both French and Maths.

Question 2c.

All of:

- checking vehicles and equipment
- sessions for professional development/training
- physical training/activity
- responding to emergency calls.

Part B – Answer in French

In this part of the examination students were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of a text spoken in French by responding in French. Full sentences written in French were required for this section of the examination.

Text 3

Question 3a.

La France n'a pas remporté de médailles dans les sports de glace aux derniers jeux olympiques/en 2014. (France did not get any medals for ice sports at the last Olympics or in 2014.)

Question 3b.

Possible responses:

- *Les sports de glace ne font pas partie des 20 sports les plus populaires en France.* (Ice sports do not rank in the top 20 most popular sports in France.) / *Les Français n'aiment pas ce genre de sport.* (The French do not like ice sports.)
- *à cause des conditions climatiques* (because of the climatic conditions) (different from Nordic countries)
- *Il n'y a pas assez de patinoires.* (There are not enough ice-skating rinks.)

Question 3c.

Any six of:

- *N'y allez pas pendant les vacances de février.* (Don't go in the February school holidays.)
- *Les stations des Pyrénées sont meilleur marché que celles des Alpes.* (The resorts in the Pyrenees are cheaper than in the Alps.)
- *Pour votre premier séjour à la neige, louez votre équipement au lieu de l'acheter.* (For your first skiing holiday, hire your equipment instead of buying it.)
- *Réservez un appartement.* (Book an apartment.)
- *Préparez vos repas vous-mêmes.* (Prepare your own meals.)
- *C'est moins cher pour une famille d'y aller en voiture plutôt qu'en train.* (It is cheaper for a family to travel there by car than by train.)
- *Emportez votre nourriture.* (Take your own food with you.)

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Les conseils sont : tout d'abord, évitez surtout les vacances scolaires de février. Deuxièmement, à propos de la station de ski, essayez les stations des Pyrénées et pas ceux des Alpes parce que ceux des Pyrénées sont meilleurs marchés. En plus pour votre premier séjour, louez toute votre équipement. Quant au logement, réservez un appartement. Vous faites des économies aussi en préparant vos repas vous-même. Finalement, emportez de la nourriture que vous aurez acheter à l'avance.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

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

Students who scored highly in this section ensured that their responses were logical and grammatically sound. They paid particular attention to the key elements of the questions and responded adequately.

Part A – Answer in English

Text 4

Question 4a.

- French gourmet meals have been added to the (UNESCO) World Heritage List.
- Traditional French meals are losing ground/Takeaway food is becoming more popular.
- Fast food outlets are continuing to grow.

Question 4b.

- Lunch breaks have been reduced because people live further away from their workplace and spend more time commuting to work.
- In the past, people had 90 minutes for a traditional lunch.
- Now they only have 30 minutes.

- People eat on the run due to a modern lifestyle.
- A traditional lunch is seen as too rich.
- Three-course meals are not fashionable any more.
- A traditional lunch is too expensive/takeaway food is cheaper/the French want to spend less on lunch.

Question 4c.

- a sandwich with ham and butter
- French people love their bread/baguette
- it tastes good
- it is part of tradition

Question 4d.

- Bakeries had to diversify their products/meals.
- They offer hot dishes (to take away).

Question 4e.

- They offer home-made dishes.
- They sit just outside offices.
- They offer simple cuisine.
- They offer quality food.
- They offer good value.

Part B – Answer in French

In this section, students were asked to show their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the text and to convey information accurately and appropriately in French.

Text 5

Question 5

Any five of:

- *Malgré toutes ses activités, Pierre pourrait sûrement trouver le temps de faire du bénévolat pendant quelques heures de temps en temps. Et puis, il trouve quand même le temps d'aller en boîte.* (Despite all his activities, Pierre says he could surely find some free time to be a volunteer for a few hours from time to time. Furthermore, he finds the time to go to a nightclub.)
- *Pierre a déjà un peu mauvaise conscience, alors il devrait faire quelque chose pour aider. Sa contribution, même infime, peut avoir un impact positif.* (Pierre already feels guilty, so he should do something to help. His contribution, no matter how small, can have a positive impact.)
- *Il y a beaucoup d'associations qui ont besoin de bénévoles.* (There are many organisations that require volunteers.)
- *Un billet de train ou de bus n'est pas cher, de plus Pierre pourrait trouver une association dans son quartier.* (A bus or train ticket is not expensive and he can find an organisation in his area.)
- *Pierre pourrait demander à ces amis de faire du bénévolat avec lui.* (Pierre could ask his friends to also get involved.)
- *Pierre devrait essayer de faire de nouvelles connaissances car c'est très bien d'avoir de nouveaux amis.* (Pierre should try to meet new people, as making new friends is a great idea.)
- *Pierre devrait se rendre compte qu'aider d'autres personnes dans la vie est une noble cause.* (Pierre should realise that helping others is a noble cause.)

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Tout d'abord, j'encouragerais Pierre à faire du bénévolat parce qu'il y a un manque de bénévoles comme il a dit. Les associations ont besoins d'aide. Étant donné qu'il fait beaucoup d'activités extra scolaire, comme son petit boulot et le foot, je conseillerais qu'il sacrifie un peu de son temps pour aide les autres. Il pense que son travail est seulement une goutte d'eau dans un grand océan de misère, mais même les actes bénévoles les plus petits peuvent faire une différence. Bien qu'il doivent aller en ville et dépense un petit plus d'argent. Les avantages dépassent les inconvénients. Je conseillerais que pierre fait de nouvelles rencontres, et qu'il découvre une autre façon de vie au lieu de rester avec ses copain et copines. C'est en faisant du bénévolat à l'extérieur de votre zone de confort qu'on se développe et mûrit comme un humain.

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. Responses were assessed using the following criteria:

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

Although students seemed to be familiar with the text type, many students used memorised material without checking its relevance to the question, or they adapted it inadequately to a new situation. It is essential to take into account the vocabulary and structures required for each kind of writing in order to respond appropriately to the question. In order to score highly, students had to integrate complex structures and idiomatic expressions within their response, as well as demonstrate an excellent control of basic grammatical features such as gender, verb conjugations in the main tenses, prepositions, use of articles and spelling of words.

Question 7 was the most popular question, followed closely by Question 6 and Question 9.

Question 6

Students had to write an entry in their personal journal, in which they reflected on their experiences during two weeks of work experience at a local radio station and on their feelings about a future career in broadcasting.

High-scoring responses may have contained some of the following features:

- elements of personal language, such as: use of the first person; subjective/informal/familiar style register; emphasis on opinions, feelings and impressions rather than factual, objective information
- appropriate characteristics of a journal entry, such as: date, place and time; sequence of thoughts or events of importance; register; style; layout.

Question 7

Students were asked to write an article for a youth magazine, in which they had to evaluate the positives and negatives of reading ebooks as opposed to reading printed books.

High-scoring responses may have contained some of the following features:

- a rational and objective discussion supported with evidence about the positive and negative aspects of reading ebooks as opposed to reading printed books
- elements of evaluative language, such as: impersonal expressions; use of third person; expressions such as 'on the one hand', 'on the other'...
- characteristics of an article through features such as: topic; structure (introduction, body, conclusion); content, title, author (fictional name); register; style; layout

- The article must be appropriate for the audience – readers of a youth magazine.

Question 8

Students were asked to write an imaginative short story for children with the ending: ‘Phew, I would never have thought that we would make it.’

High-scoring responses may have contained some of the following features:

- a well-developed plot appropriate for children, with descriptions of people, surroundings, emotions, atmosphere, heightened drama, and a final resolution with the final statement: ‘Phew, I would never have thought that we would make it.’
- characteristics through which the piece of writing can be clearly recognised as a story, such as: title/topic; structure; content; author (fictional name); register; style; layout
- the story must be appropriate for the audience – children.

The following is an extract from a high-scoring response.

Matthieu Et la Télévision

Matthieu était un petit garçon de sept ans. Il aimait le foot et jouer dehors avec son chien, couscous, mais Matthieu aimait surtout la télévision.

Un jour, avant l'école, Matthieu était devant la télé, en train de regarder son film préféré : 'Jurassic Park'. Il était tellement absorber dans le film qu'il n'a pas entendu sa mère qui criait « Matthieu ! On y va ! Je dois te déposer à l'école, dépêche-toi » Soudainement, la télé a commencé a se secouer.

Question 9

Students were asked to write a speech for a panel to persuade them to award them a grant to carry out a project. In their speech, students had to include what they had accomplished so far and explain what they hoped to achieve in the future, in order to convince the panel.

High-scoring responses may have contained some of the following features:

- persuasive formal language to manipulate the reader's emotions and opinions, and use of evidence or quantitative statements to lend authority to the content
- characteristics through which the piece of writing can be clearly recognised as the script of a speech, such as: a title/topic; structure; content; correct address; register; style
- the formal speech must be appropriate for the audience – awarding panel.

Question 10

Students were asked to write a report for the school newsletter, in which they inform future Year 12 students of the advantages of participating in such a camp.

High-scoring responses may have contained some of the following features:

- appropriate information about a school study camp they attended earlier in the year and an explanation of why they found the study camp both interesting and enriching
- a clear informative and unambiguous message, with use of facts and examples
- characteristics through which the piece of writing is clearly recognisable as a report (factual), such as: topic; structure (introduction, body, conclusion); content; author (fictional name); register; style; layout
- the report must be appropriate for the audience – future Year 12 students.