

2020 VCE French written examination report

General comments

2020 was the first year this study was delivered according to the newly accredited *VCE French Study Design 2020–2024* and examination specifications. It is important that students and teachers familiarise themselves with the [specifications for written examinations](#), available on the French examinations webpage of the VCAA website.

High-scoring responses displayed the necessary analytical skills to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts in the first two sections.

It is important for students to use the reading time effectively to carefully read questions, look for key words in the dictionary and discover unknown vocabulary within semantic fields. Once the writing time commences, students are encouraged to highlight key words.

Although often neglected by students, note-taking is a very important skill. Detailed notes help students to formulate responses that are more comprehensive and accurate.

In Section 1 Part B, some students used bullet point or phrases as part of their answers. Students are reminded that they are expected to write in full French sentences, using well-linked sentences and paragraphs.

Students are also advised to thoroughly plan their responses for Section 2 Part B and Section 3. In many responses, ideas did not flow and the structure of the writing was often confused.

Students are encouraged to prepare for the examination by regularly writing extensive responses covering a broad range of topics dealing with different kinds of writing in various timeframes and moods.

It is also important for students to listen to authentic French aural texts and to practise extracting information delivered at a native speaker pace.

Specific 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

Text 1 proved to be challenging for a large number of students.

Part A – Listening and responding in English

Question 1a.

Correct responses were all of:

- It was free.

- He enjoyed his lunch.
- He liked the exhibition / exposition about agriculture, or the exhibition / exposition reminded him of his childhood / grandparents / holidays at his grandparents' place.

Question 1b.

Correct responses were:

- Marseille was the European capital of culture in 2013.
- The museum exhibits/presents Mediterranean life/culture.

2013 and Mediterranean were both needed to be awarded full marks.

Question 1c.

Correct responses were all of:

- links the past and present / old and new
- the two sections/buildings are connected (by a bridge)
- old (ancient) section to represent the past
- modern section to represent the present
- the visitors will experience the feeling of travelling in time (by crossing the footbridge) / move from past to present (from present to past).

Part B – Listening and responding in French

Question 2

In this part of the examination students were assessed on their understanding of the listening text and their ability to accurately convey appropriate information from the text in French. The information presented in the response needed to be relevant to the question. Students were marked holistically according to the following criteria:

- the capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts
- the capacity to convey information and opinions accurately and appropriately.

They were not awarded separate marks for content and language. Responses that included the relevant information and were expressed clearly in French were awarded full marks.

High-scoring responses not only exhibited comprehension skills, but also were in full sentences, contained connectors and were logically organised.

Question 2a.

Correct responses were six of:

- *Elle n'a d'expérience / Elle manque de compétence technique.* (She has no experience / She lacks technical skills / rope access technician skills required.)
- *Elle doit travailler à de très grandes hauteurs.* (She has to work at great heights.)
- *Elle doit réussir un test après 5 semaines de formation / de travail.* (She must pass a test after 5 weeks of training/work.)
- *Elle doit pouvoir travailler avec un partenaire.* (She must be able to work with a partner.)
- *Le travail demande d'être (toujours) concentré.* (The work (always) requires a high level of concentration.)
- *Les architectes n'ont pas pensé aux cordistes (en dessinant leurs plans).* (Rope access technicians are not considered by architects (when designing buildings)).

- *Le temps peut changer rapidement.* (The weather can change quickly.)
- *Le travail peut être éprouvant.* (The work can be physically demanding.)

Question 2b.

Correct responses were all of:

- *Elle aime être dehors / Elle n'aime plus travailler dans un bureau.* (She likes being outside / She does not like working in an office anymore.)
- *Elle a déjà fait de l'alpinisme / Elle n'a pas peur du vide / des hauteurs / en tant que cordiste.* (She has already done mountain climbing / She is not scared of heights / because she's a rope access technician.)
- *Elle aime résoudre des problèmes.* (She is a problem solver.)
- *Elle aime l'imprévu.* (She likes the unexpected.)

Section 2

Many students struggled with this section of the exam. One common error was to write answers that belonged to other questions. It is essential for students to carefully read questions in order to answer and to select the appropriate response.

Part A – Reading, listening and responding in English

Question 3a.

Correct responses were all of:

- workforce needed in the cities
- new (types of) jobs offered / job creation
- life in the city looked more attractive (than life in the countryside) / country life offers fewer opportunities / city life offers more opportunities.

Question 3b.

Correct responses were all of:

- the population is getting older
- shops close / decrease in commerce / no butcher / no baker / no bar (no café) (with a tobacco licence)
- schools close
- reduced number of services is made available to the remaining population OR no public transport / no bank branch
- older people need to travel to get access to services.

Question 3c.

Correct responses were all of:

- start committees / associations/organisations
- advertise the villages on social media to tourists and possible new inhabitants
- organise fairs and fetes / festivals (or 'fairs/fetes' or 'fairs/festivals')
- offer cheaper accommodation/housing
- offer very good (work) conditions for certain professions (e.g. doctors)
- local councils help newcomers to learn new skills (e.g. trades/crafts people/artisans) to take up businesses.

Question 3d.

Correct responses were all of:

Marc's experience	Newcomers' experience
He and his wife were not immediately accepted in the village.	They are welcomed with open arms (in the villages).
Nobody in the village offered help or advice with their farm / they did not know anything about farming / worked hard.	(A group of) farmers in the village who offer help / advice on farms (to newcomers in farming).
The parents did not approve the move.	Now parents, children and grandparents / families move (together) to the countryside.

Part B – Reading, listening and responding in French

In general, students were comfortable with the text and were able to extract the key elements in order to write their response. High-scoring responses identified the main elements of the texts. They used logical arguments to justify their choices and were organised sequentially. They also adopted an emotive style of language that is required for a personal response, and demonstrated characteristics of the text type of a diary entry.

Question 4

Students were required to demonstrate an understanding of the stimulus text(s) and to address the requirements of the task by conveying the relevant information from the text(s) that was appropriate for the audience and the prescribed writing style and text type.

The reading text included a visual stimulus. High-scoring students were able to successfully incorporate information from the visual stimulus into their response.

Student responses were assessed holistically according to the assessment criteria and the expected qualities published in the examination specifications on the VCAA website. The criteria for this section were:

- the capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts
- the capacity to convey information and opinions accurately and appropriately.

Students were not awarded separate marks for content and language accuracy; however, language accuracy was an important expected quality that was considered in the assessment. A number of students provided lengthy responses beyond the scope of the task and some included additional information that was irrelevant.

Correct responses were all of:

- *L'île a une population très jeune, il y aura la possibilité d' avoir beaucoup de contact à l'école.* (The population of the Island is very young, there will be a possibility to get to know young people at school.)
- *Il y aura la possibilité d'apprendre une nouvelle langue / Il y a une inquiétude vu le nombre d'habitants ne parlant pas français.* (There will be the possibility to learn a new language / There are concerns about the number of people who do not speak French.)
- *C'est une région exotique, ce qui est mieux que d'habiter en France métropolitaine / On peut se réjouir du changement.* (It is an exotic region, which is better than living on the mainland / One can look forward to a change.)
- *Le climat est chaud et humide.* (The climate is warm and very humid.)
- *La cuisine est différente.* (The cuisine is very different.)

- *On peut se réjouir d'avoir des loisirs différents de ceux de la métropole.* (One can look forward to other leisure activities different to those found in metropolitan France.)
- *Il faudra peut-être retourner en France pour des études tertiaires.* (One may have to move back to France for tertiary studies.)

Section 3 – Writing in French

Questions 5–8

In this section, students were required to write an original text of 200–300 words in French on one of five questions, using the following criteria.

Criterion 1 – The capacity to demonstrate relevance, breadth and depth of content:

- relevance of content in relation to task set
- comprehensiveness and sophistication of content
- structuring and sequencing of ideas within and between paragraphs.

Criterion 2 – The capacity to demonstrate accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar:

- accuracy and range of vocabulary and grammar
- appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar for the context, purpose, style of writing, audience and text type
- cohesiveness of writing within and between paragraphs.

As Section 3 was worth 20 marks, it was important for students to give themselves enough time to fulfil the requirements of the task, while keeping in mind the above-mentioned criteria. Many responses lacked the appropriate syntax. Students often adopted anglicisms or resorted to direct translations from English to French. Many were able to apply idiomatic expression and complex grammatical features; however, they failed to adequately use basic, yet fundamental, grammatical rules such as gender, verb conjugations and agreements in general.

Question 5 was by far the most popular question, followed by Question 8 and Question 6.

Question 5

Students had to write an article for a youth magazine in which they evaluated the statement: 'Mobile phones can be very useful, but also invasive.'

Students' arguments were not always strong, and they did not always give examples or justifications for their opinions.

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

- two or more important aspects of an issue and the ability to discuss these rationally and objectively, using evidence to support the contrasting sides to reach a logical conclusion
- an objective style that appeals to reason and not emotion, creating an impression of balance and impartiality
- appropriate characteristics of an article (e.g. title, content, author, register, style, layout).

Question 6

Students had to write a blog post about the changes in reading habits of young people in recent years, in order to inform young readers.

Some students tended to explain why using computers, phones and tablets is more practical than reading from hardcopy books.

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

- facts, examples, explanations, analogies and sometimes statistical information, quotations and references as evidence
- objective style and impersonal expressions
- chosen language, structure, and sequence to make the message clear and unambiguous, so the sequencing of information is usually logical and predictable.

Question 7

Students were asked to write a short story about an encounter with a famous French person who has knocked at their door and whom they were surprised to see.

Students often wrote without explaining or describing the person in sufficient detail. They did not explain the person's achievements or why they were famous.

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

- use of creativity and imagination to entertain the reader
- references to the relevance (life/achievements/career) of the chosen French speaker
- a strong sense of context.

Question 8

As members of a debating club, students were asked to write a script for a debate in which they had to take the position that argued that one should eat less meat and seafood.

Students often mentioned only one of the foods in their scripts.

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

- facts about the consumption of meat and seafood
- consequences of the consumption of meat and seafood
- emotional language.