

# 2021 ASSESSMENT REPORT

## FRN315114 - French

### Oral Assessment

As in 2020, about two thirds of students achieved results in the A-B range which highlights how much teachers and students value the art of conversation in any language. The more successful students needed little direction once the conversation exam was under-way and they moved easily between predictable types of questions and impromptu questioning. They spoke with good fluency, self-corrected and had very good accents.

All students had a good degree of self-confidence and showed that they were keen to speak in French. The less successful students were set on communicating with the examiners but at times struggled with the everyday questions because they did not have some of the basic vocabulary required for their answers. This is entirely understandable as the oral exam can be challenging for some students especially those who are anxious. Examiners were very aware of students' level of nervousness and took this into account during the examination process where they felt it was necessary to do so.

Overall, the conversations had good flow and the grammatical problems some students experienced when speaking did not prevent communication. Tenses are the main challenge for students. Whilst the more successful students had few problems switching tenses, others struggled with matching the tense to the question they were hearing. This is an age-old issue and stems from the fact that students often have trouble differentiating between tenses in English - especially between the compound past and the imperfect. Future students are encouraged to work on this aspect.

### Written Examination Paper

#### Part I: Listening and Responding

The marking examiner for the listening section was pleased with the overall performance by students this year and said that students appeared to have developed some very good listening strategies. The major challenge across the whole of this section remains vocabulary knowledge.

#### Spoken text 1 - Question 1

Students handled this text well with only the following words causing them problems: *location, le camping sauvage, les auberges de jeunesse* and oddly enough *femme*.

## Answers

- a) In Pierre's first speech, how does he compare the three types of accommodation he mentions? (4 marks)  
Hotels are almost always more expensive (1/2) than camping (1/2)  
Renting an apartment (1/2) offers more freedom (1/2) and independence (1/2) than other options (1/2)  
Camping is less comfortable (1/2) than a hotel (1/2)
- b) Which type of holiday accommodation does Céline prefer? (1 mark)  
Camping (1)
- c) Which reasons does she give for her choice? (4 marks)  
It's more convivial (1/2) if you are well equipped. (1/2)  
It can be as comfortable as an apartment. (1)  
It's good for making new friends. (1)  
Wilderness camping is a real adventure (1)
- d) Which is Pierre's preferred type of accommodation? (1 mark)  
Renting (1) OR an apartment (1)
- e) Describe his family (2 marks)  
There are 4 in the family (1) his wife, 2 children and himself (1)
- f) Which three (3) reasons does he give for his choice? (3 marks)  
You spend less money (1)  
And can stay longer on holidays (1)  
The children much prefer an apartment to a hotel. (1)
- g) What is Céline's second choice of accommodation? (1 mark)  
Youth hostel (1)

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## Spoken text 2 – Question 2

This question saw students struggling with the time given in the passage and forgetting to add the word “*vieux*” in their answers. In question (C), some students mistakenly answered, “*je me douche*” and few students understood the term “*la vie mondaine*”.

### Answers

- a) **What is Jean-Luc’s profession ?** (1 mark)  
Actor
- b) **At what time does he get up each morning?** (1 mark)  
6:45 am
- c) **What does he do immediately afterwards?** (2 marks)  
Spends two hours (1/2) in the gym (1/2) with his personal trainer (1)
- d) **Why does he undertake this activity?** (2 marks)  
He believes an actor (1) should always be fit (1)
- e) **What does he do after breakfast?** (1 mark)  
Walks around (1/2) in town (1/2) or  
Has lunch (1/2) in a restaurant (1/2)
- f) **How does he spend his afternoons?** (2 marks)  
He studies scenarios/scripts (1) or has rehearsals (1)
- g) **What does he often do before dinner?** (2 marks)  
Meets up with (1) friends (1/2) in a bistro (1/2)
- h) **Explain why he spends his evenings at home.** (2 marks)  
Society life (1) doesn't appeal to him (1) or prefers to stay at home/doesn't like going out
- i) **Which two activities does he mention that he likes to do in the evenings?** (2 marks)  
Reading (1/2) or watching (1/2) old films (1/2) on Netflix (1/2)

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### Spoken text 3 - Question 3

Students had issues with the following words in this passage: *devine, cousine, devant* and *pompier*. *La caserne (des pompiers)* was largely translated as “barrack” instead of station as in the fire station. It seems that the smaller English French dictionaries may have only given the translation barrack and not station. The most notable problem in this passage was the phrase “*une femme du 21e siècle*” which often became a 21-year-old woman. Some students also missed “*par mail*” in their answers.

#### Answers

- a) **Why is Louise phoning Paul?** (2 marks)  
To tell him she bumped into (1) his cousin Catherine (1/2) this morning (1/2)
- b) **Where did Louise meet the person she is phoning about?** (2 marks)  
In front of (1) the fire station (1)
- c) **What was this person wearing?** (1 mark)  
A firefighter’s uniform (1) accept simply “uniform”.
- d) **Why is Paul surprised?** (1mark)  
Catherine is a teacher (1)
- e) **Why had the person taken such a big step?** (2 marks)  
Catherine had dreamed of becoming (1) a firefighter (1/2) for a long time (1/2).
- f) **How long did the training last?** (1 mark)  
8 months (1)
- g) **How long has the person been in this new position?** (1 mark)  
One week (1)
- h) **Is Paul impressed? Justify your answer.** (2 marks)  
Yes (1/2) His cousin is a real 21<sup>st</sup> century woman (1). A female firefighter. (1/2)
- i) **What is Paul’s final hope?** (2marks)  
That Catherine will email him (1) a photo (1/2) of herself (1/2)

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## Spoken text 4 - Question 4

The marking examiner reported that students found this to be the most challenging passage of the four. This could be in part because the topic used some subject specific vocabulary that may not have been familiar to the average student. The following vocabulary items and phrases were problematic: *apprentissage, compromis, rêve, défi à surmonter, des cours intensifs de français*. The *école des Beaux-Arts* had some students writing the Art school while others simply did not answer the question.

### Answers

- a) **How long has Maria been at her new place of learning?** (1 mark)  
5 months
- b) **What type of educational facility is it?** (1 mark)  
School of Fine Arts
- c) **Explain why she has not sent an email to Corinne earlier.** (2 marks)  
She is studying (1/2) during the day (1/2) and going out almost every evening (1/2) with friends (1/2)
- d) **What was Maria's dream?** (1 mark)  
To continue her artistic studies (1/2) in France (1/2)
- e) **What was her major challenge?** (1 mark)  
Learning French
- f) **Explain why Maria chose this educational facility.** (3 marks)  
The school lets her deepen her knowledge (1) of art (1/2) and design or drawing (1/2), while following intensive (1/2) French courses (1/2)
- g) **Why is she writing in French?** (2 marks)  
She grabs every opportunity (1/2) to speak (1/2) and write (1/2) in French (1/2)
- h) **How do we know she is somewhat concerned about her French (2 marks)**  
She says she hopes (1/2) not to make (1/2) too many (1/2) grammatical mistakes (1/2)
- i) **Who make up the "hub" at her learning place?** (2 marks)  
Students (1/2) and professionals (1/2) of all kinds (1) / a wide variety of students and professionals

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## Part 2: Reading and Responding

This section of the paper was handled well by students and was suitably challenging.

### Question 5:

Students did not experience major issues with this passage and would have enjoyed the reference to Harry Potter. The topic was engaging for young people and was an issue they could easily relate to. The following points arose from student answers. To question (d), some students simply wrote the French word *ouvrage* or left the answer space blank or used the word work. In question (e) markers provided some additional ways to express “devourer of novels” as reflected in student answers. In question (g) a fourth possible answer was added (jogging) and in question (i) the answer was expanded after discussion with the marking team.

### Answers

- a) **According to the article, when did the trend take off?** (1mark)  
5 years ago
- b) **In France, what percentage of the book market is comprised by audio books?** (1 mark)  
2%
- c) **In which two other countries is the trend higher?** (1 mark)  
USA and Germany
- d) **What did eight million French people do last year according to the article?** (1 mark)  
Listen to a book
- e) **How is Adeline described?** (2 marks)  
A devourer /lover of books/ avid reader or other words of similar meaning (1) and very sporty (1)
- f) **Explain how Adeline was introduced to audio books.** (3 marks)  
Her sister (1) bought/gave her an audio book (1) for her 35<sup>th</sup> birthday (1)
- g) **Where does Adeline read?** (3 marks)  
Any three of the following:  
In the car (1) on the Metro/ subway (1) in bed (1) jogging (1)
- h) **Explain how Simon was introduced to audio books.** (2 marks)  
On the advice of his teacher (1), his mother (1/2) bought him an audio version of a best-seller (1/2)

- i) **Why is Harry Potter mentioned?** (2 marks)  
A combination of any of the following pieces of information:  
Listened to a 7 hour CD of Harry Potter (1/2) in a week (1/2)  
He is proud (1/2) of having read Volume V of Harry Potter (1/2) which lasted 31 hours (1/2)
- j) **Under which heading of *Le Parisien* magazine would this article be found?** (2 marks)
- i. Culture & leisure - correct
  - ii. Politics
  - iii. School facts
  - iv. Sport
- k) **According to the article, audio books can be:** (2 marks)
- i. expensive
  - ii. boring
  - iii. worrying
  - iv. life-changing - correct

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### Question 6:

This passage was well received by students. It also produced some amusing answers that could alarm French males around the world. In question (c), the marking team made additions so that marking scheme remained valid. In answer to question (d) one student wrote that French woman did not put on weight because they ate a great deal of cake(!) and in question (e) several students had Frenchmen putting scent on in the shower or not showering at all and smelling badly.

### Answers

- a) **Explain the contradiction contained in the first paragraph.** (3 marks)  
Even though France is the main tourist destination in the world (1) It can't get rid of (1) several less than complementary stereotypes.(1)
- b) **Where is the expression "so French so chic" used?** (2 marks)  
In the four corners (1) of the world (1)
- c) **What do we learn about Agnès?** (3 marks)  
A French expatriate (1) for 11 years (1) lived in Ireland (1/2) and Australia (1/2)
- d) **Explain why American women are puzzled by French women.** (2 marks)  
American women wonder why French women don't get fat (1) even though they eat cheese (1/2) and lots of cakes (1/2).

e) Which negative traits of the “typical Frenchman” are mentioned in the third paragraph?  
Any three of the following: (3 marks)

- They are lazy (1).
- They put on scent rather than having a shower (1).
- They don't like working much (1)
- they are always on strike (1).

f) Explain why the French language is popular in Asia. (3 marks)

In Asia, French is seen as a prestigious language (1). Asians want their children to learn French (1) to show their social status (1).

g) Why do Africans like the French language? (2 marks)

French is considered one of the most beautiful languages (1). They like the tone of the words (1).

h) Which sentence best summarizes the article: (2 marks)

- i. The article gathers and summarizes accounts from French people living abroad. - correct
- ii. The article talks about a French person who is researching foreign countries.
- iii. The article introduces foreigners who are learning French.
- iv. The article shows a one-sided view of the French.

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## Question 7

This was the most challenging of the reading comprehension passages for students. Students had problems with questions (g), (h) and (j) and so appropriate adjustments were made by the marking team that did not affect the integrity of the marking tool but allowed for an expanded set of answers.

## Answer

a) À qui Lucie adresse-t-elle cette lettre ? (2 marks)

- i. Les étudiants de Toulouse
- ii. Les conducteurs de train - correct
- iii. Ses parents
- iv. Le rédacteur d'un journal

b) Qui est Lucie ? (1 mark)

Une étudiante

- c) **Est-ce qu'elle travaille ? Comment le savons-nous ?** (1 mark)  
 Oui, (1/2) elle dit qu'elle a un petit boulot (1/2)
- d) **À quel spectacle veut-elle assister ?** (3 marks)  
 Un grand concert (1) de son groupe préféré (1), Paradis (1/2), à Paris (1/2)
- e) **Quand aura lieu ce spectacle?** (1 mark)  
 Vendredi (1/2) 19 octobre (1/2)
- f) **Quel évènement a poussé Lucie à écrire cette lettre ?** (2 marks)  
 Une grève (1) de conducteurs de train SNCF (1)
- g) **Pourquoi Lucie est-elle fâchée ?** (2 marks)  
 Any 2 of the following :  
 Elle n'a pas d'autres moyens de transport (1), pas de voiture (1) elle a fait des économies (1)  
 Elle en a marre de leur égoïsme (1), ils ont fait grève le jour du concert (1)
- h) **Quelle suggestion n'accepte-t-elle pas et pourquoi ?** (2 marks)  
 On doit utiliser d'autres moyens de transport (1) les étudiants sont pauvres (1/2) et sans voitures (1/2)
- i) **Comment savons-nous que les jeunes Français attendent le spectacle avec impatience?** (3 marks)  
 Depuis des mois ils économisent de l'argent (1) C'est un concert de rêve (1)  
 Ils parlent du concert sans cesse à chaque instant (1)
- j) **Que pense Lucie des actions de ceux auxquels elle écrit ?** (1 mark)  
 Either one of the following :  
 Stupides/ils devraient avoir un peu plus d'égard pour le public
- k) **Lucie est très .....** (2 marks)
- i. heureuse
  - ii. déçue - correct
  - iii. impatiente
  - iv. égoïste

## Part 3: Writing in French

	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
Number of students attempting the question	10	2	4	11	6

This year's students selected essays across the full range of topics on offer, with questions 8 and 11 being the clear favourites. Whilst students largely followed the instructions to the letter, question 11 directed students to ask questions of the person they were writing to but not all students did so. In some cases, the questions seemed to be hastily added at the last minute. The more successful students clearly integrated their questions, so they were more connected to the overall direction of the essay.

Overall, students produced a fine set of essays in which the writing had good flow and the meaning was clear. A few students struggled with register and wrote as they speak without realising that written and spoken grammar can be quite different. In this year's essays, tense endings and the phonetic spellings of French words were problematic. Moreover, the infinitive form of verbs seemed to be the solution to many major problems e.g., j'avoir faim. The marking team wondered if some students may have run out of time to proofread their work.

The team also recognised that an individual's literacy level in his/her first language is often mirrored in any subsequent language he/she studies. One common error is based on the use of 'tu' and 'vous'. Some students would start off using the "tu" form and, in the same sentence, use the "vous" form of the possessive adjective e.g., est-ce que tu as votre voiture? This said, the essays were a delight to read and a true testimony to the hard work students and teachers had put in during the year. Many students displayed a fine sense of humour and obviously enjoyed writing in French.