



COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION
COMMON ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION
FRENCH SYLLABUS

(revised for first examination in Autumn 2019)
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INTRODUCTION

The revised Common Entrance French syllabus for examination at 13+ and/or Scholarship Level has been devised with reference to the statutory programmes of study for languages for key stage 2 and key stage 3 respectively of the National Curriculum (2013). In preparing pupils for Common Entrance and beyond, teachers should focus on broadening and strengthening their pupils' competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing, through knowledge and understanding of key grammar constructions and vocabulary.

There are tiered papers: Level 1 and Level 2. Level 1 is aimed at candidates who have studied French for between 30 and 40 hours, or who find the language very difficult. At Level 1, the past tenses are not required in any paper.

AIMS

A course leading to this examination should:

- (i) develop the skills which will enable candidates to understand the written and spoken language and use the language effectively for purposes of practical communication;
- (ii) give candidates opportunities to take part in a broad range of linguistic activities;
- (iii) provide a basis for continuing study of the language and encourage independent learning, including the use of dictionaries, glossaries and ICT;
- (iv) give candidates opportunities to work with authentic language materials;
- (v) encourage interest in the target countries;
- (vi) provide enjoyment and stimulation;
- (vii) encourage positive attitudes towards the use of foreign languages and towards speakers of foreign languages.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The examination will test candidates' ability to:

AO1 show an understanding of the spoken language dealing with a range of familiar topics, and identify and note main points and specific details, including opinions;

AO2 take part in short conversations, giving and obtaining information and opinions;

AO3 show an understanding of a number of printed items, ranging from short, simple phrases to longer, more complex texts and identify and note main points and specific details, including opinions;

AO4 produce pieces of writing, ranging from short phrases to longer passages, in which they seek and convey information and opinions.

SYLLABUS CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

- (i) The examination is based on the topics set out below. An asterisk denotes a topic which is not required for Level 1.
- (ii) The grammar section lists all the material which candidates for the examination should cover.

TOPICS

- language of the classroom
- house, home, daily routine and chores
- life and work at school
- time, dates, numbers and prices
- personal description
- family, friends and pets
- meeting people
- free-time activities
- holiday activities
- visiting a café or restaurant
- simple health problems
- description of a town or region
- finding the way and using transport
- shopping (e.g. for food, clothes, presents)
- weather
- pocket money*
- understanding tourist information*

GRAMMAR (*for recognition only OR where appropriate to candidate's ability OR senior school requirements)

Please note, Level 2 requires all items in Level 1 (including those *) as well as those listed.

	Level 1	Level 2
Verbs	<p>present tense:</p> <p>(i) regular and common irregular</p> <p>(ii) common reflexive</p> <p>future tense with <i>aller</i></p> <p>two conditional forms (<i>je voudrais, j'aimerais</i>)</p> <p>*imperative forms</p> <p>infinitive after <i>aller, aimer, détester, préférer, je voudrais</i></p> <p>*infinitive after <i>vouloir, pouvoir, devoir</i></p> <p>interrogative using <i>est-ce que</i></p>	<p>passé composé with <i>avoir/être</i>¹</p> <p>*passé composé of reflexives</p> <p>imperfect (use of <i>c'était, il y avait</i>)</p> <p>*imperfect</p> <p>infinitive after <i>il faut</i></p> <p>*interrogative using inversion</p> <p>¹ Please note, to access the top bands in the Speaking and Writing tests, candidates will be required to show ability to use the passé composé in open-ended tasks.</p>
	<p>negative expressions: <i>ne ... pas; *ne ... jamais, *ne ... rien</i></p> <p>idiomatic expressions: e.g. <i>avoir chaud/froid/faim/soif/mal, faire + weather</i></p>	<p>negative expressions: <i>ne ... plus, *ne.....personne</i></p>
Nouns	<p>genders and plurals of common nouns including irregulars</p> <p>definite and indefinite article</p> <p>partitive article (and <i>de/d'</i> with quantity/negatives)</p>	
Adjectives	<p>agreement and position of regular adjectives</p> <p>agreement of common irregular adjectives (e.g. <i>blanc, beau, nouveau, vieux</i>)</p> <p>possessives</p> <p>*comparatives</p>	<p>agreement of irregular adjectives</p> <p>superlatives</p> <p>demonstrative adjectives</p>
Adverbs	<p>common adverbs</p> <p>*adverbs ending in <i>-ment</i></p>	

Pronouns	subject personal pronouns, including <i>on</i> reflexive pronouns relative pronoun: <i>qui</i> disjunctive pronouns: <i>moi, toi</i>	relative pronouns: <i>qui & que/qu'</i> direct and indirect object pronouns disjunctive pronouns
Prepositions and Conjunctions	common prepositions and conjunctions * <i>depuis</i> and present tense	
Numerals	cardinal numbers: 0–1000 *ordinal numbers: 1–10 dates and time: 12-hour and 24-hour clock	

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

Regulations for the conduct of the listening and speaking components are in the Schools area of the ISEB website.

LISTENING (25%; about 25 minutes)

This will be based on a number of short passages recorded on a CD. Instructions will be given in English. There will be 25 questions, usually arranged in five sections. There will be a range of test-types in English: these might include multiple choice, true/false, table/grid completion, putting symbols on a map/plan, box-ticking, matching the recording with visual/verbal options, completing sentences/pictures, linking opinions with speakers, correcting a passage with mistakes highlighted, choosing correct answers or answering questions in English.

SPEAKING (25%)

The teacher-examiner will assess the candidate's performance and will submit recordings of all candidates for moderation. Instructions will be printed in English.

Level 1 (about 4 minutes)

There will be a discussion of two prepared topics, each lasting about 2 minutes and chosen by the candidate from the list below:

- house, home, daily routine and chores
- free-time and holiday activities
- life and work at school
- personal description, family, friends and pets

For each topic, candidates should speak uninterrupted for approximately 30 seconds and then answer some specific, spontaneous questions (approximately 3-4 questions), bringing the time for the discussion of both topics to a total of 4 minutes.

Credit will be given for relevant communication, appropriate response to the questions and quality of language (see Appendix I).

Level 2 (about 6 minutes)

There will be three sections: a role-play situation; a discussion of one prepared topic and an open, unprepared conversation.

Section 1: Role-Play situation (about 2 minutes; 9 marks)

Ten minutes before the test, the examiner will give each candidate, at random, one situation from the three which are set, ensuring that all the situations are used equally. The candidate will be required to carry out six tasks in the target language which have been given in English. Past tenses will not be required in this exercise. One of the tasks will be unpredictable and will require the candidate to respond, unprepared, to the examiner's question. The role plays may be based on any area of the syllabus, and will be of a transactional or social nature, such as conversations in a shop, at the station, in a café/restaurant etc., or discussing hobbies, school or family etc. with a French friend.

The examiner will give a mark (maximum of 6 marks) for completion of the tasks and a mark (out of 3) for quality of language (see Appendix II). A bilingual dictionary will be provided for candidate use during the preparation time, but no written notes may be taken into the room, nor may any written notes be made during the preparation time. Candidates should have a quiet place in which to prepare and no access should be given to reference materials, notes or other candidates.

Section 2: Prepared topic (about 2 minutes; 8 marks)

Discussion of one topic, chosen by the candidate, from the same list as Level 1 or a topic in connection with a country where the target language is spoken:

- a town or region
- a regional or national celebration
- an artist (painter, sculptor, writer, composer etc.)
- an historical figure
- a sportsman/sportswoman

The examiner will ask the candidate to introduce the topic in the target language. After about 30 seconds, the examiner will intervene to ask at least four questions during the course of the two minutes. Credit will be given for relevant, spontaneous communication, appropriate response to the questions and quality of language, including pronunciation and an ability to use a range of tenses. The examiner should ensure candidates are given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of the passé composé, as well as the present and near future tenses (see Appendix II).

Section 3: Open conversation (about 2 minutes; 8 marks)

An open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion of any/all of the topics listed in Level 1, which should not overlap with the prepared topic. Examiners are encouraged to enable candidates to demonstrate a range of vocabulary and grammar and to develop their responses, to show their fluency and knowledge of the language (including passé composé, as well as the present and near future tenses for the highest marks).

READING AND WRITING (50%; 60 minutes)

Part A: Reading

Levels 1 and 2

Instructions will be given in English. There will be 25 questions on a number of short passages, arranged in five sections. There will be several exercises of differing length, covering a range of different approaches to the development of reading skills, e.g. gap-filling, multiple choice, matching headings to texts, matching pictures to descriptions, matching two halves of a sentence, matching questions and answers, matching people and opinions, choosing a number of correct answers.

Part B: Writing

Instructions will be given in English.

Level 1

There will be four sections worth a total of 25 marks. In Section one, candidates will be required to write single words based on one of the Level 1 topics. Visual prompts will be provided, but any words relevant to the topic will be accepted. This section is worth 5 marks. Section two will contain five sentence-completion questions designed to test Level 1 verbs and/or adjectives. There will be a choice of answers. This section is worth 5 marks. The third section will require candidates to write short sentences about five pictures and will be worth 10 marks. The final section will ask candidates to write five sentences on a given topic from the syllabus (see Appendix III) and will be worth 5 marks.

Level 2

There will be two written exercises:

Section One: Grammar (10 marks)

Candidates will be required to translate five sentences worth 2 marks each, designed to test Level 2 grammar. Nouns and their gender will be given, as well as the infinitive of verbs and the masculine singular of adjectives. The verbs *avoir* and *être* will not be given and candidates will be expected to insert other words as necessary. The passé composé and imperfect will not be required in this section.

Section Two (15 marks)

The question will require 80-120 words of continuous writing in the form of an email, in which candidates need to show a knowledge of past, present and near future tenses in order to access the top marks. Five bullet points will be given in English and French, of which candidates will be expected to choose at least four. Candidates will be credited for the accurate use of a wide variety of vocabulary and grammar, and the ability to demonstrate the full range of their knowledge of the linguistic features contained in the syllabus (see Appendix IV).

SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship papers in Listening (approximately 30 minutes) and Reading and Writing (60 minutes) are based on this syllabus. Senior schools will conduct their own Speaking tests. All candidates will be required to show knowledge of all the tenses listed on page 3, as well as the future, conditional and pluperfect tenses, and a wide range of vocabulary. The listening/reading exercises may include multiple choice, box-ticking, table/grid completion, choosing correct answers, true/false, gap-filling, linking opinions with speakers.

APPENDIX I

LEVEL 1

SPEAKING: PREPARED TOPICS

Both discussions are marked out of 10, according to the following descriptors.

Mark	Communication
5	Very good: information presented with confidence.
4	Good: a good amount of information conveyed.
3	Satisfactory: a reasonable amount of information conveyed.
2	Limited: very simple information conveyed.
1	Poor: very little information conveyed.
0	No relevant information conveyed.

Mark	Accuracy and Quality
5	Good accent and range of vocabulary; possible errors in more complex language, but generally accurate.
4	Some errors, but clear message and generally good pronunciation.
3	Generally simple answers and frequent errors, but language more accurate than inaccurate.
2	Very limited vocabulary; short, simple sentences; errors very frequent; comprehension somewhat delayed.
1	Occasional, short phrases; communication often hindered by errors; pronunciation barely understandable.
0	No language produced worthy of credit.

NB: the final mark out of 20 should be scaled up to be out of 25, to have equal weighting with the Listening, Reading and Writing papers, in accordance with the following scale:

20 = 25	16 = 20	12 = 15	8 = 10	4 = 5
19 = 24	15 = 19	11 = 14	7 = 9	3 = 4
18 = 23	14 = 18	10 = 13	6 = 8	2 = 3
17 = 21	13 = 16	9 = 11	5 = 6	1 = 1

APPENDIX II

LEVEL 2

SPEAKING

Section One: Role Play

The role play is marked out of 9, according to the following descriptors. There is a total of 6 marks for the tasks and up to 3 marks for the quality of language throughout the role play.

Mark (per task)	Completion of tasks
1	Full communication.
½	Task partly carried out; there may be considerable hesitation.
0	Failure to communicate.

Mark (overall impression)	Quality of language
3	High level of accuracy with no significant errors.
2	Level of language generally good but with a number of errors.
1	Marked weaknesses in the use of language.
0	Little or no effective use of the target language.

Section Two: Prepared Topic

The discussion of the prepared topic is marked out of 8, according to the following descriptors.

(A best fit policy should be used and ½ marks may be awarded.)

Mark	Descriptor
8	Excellent: a lot of information communicated; good pronunciation and at least a reasonable attempt at intonation; a high level of accuracy; a range of tenses attempted, including accurate use of the passé composé, as well as the present and near future tenses; opinions and justification offered; errors may exist but only in the most ambitious language.

7	Very good communication: ready responses, mainly accurate including some successful use of the passé composé and near future, as well as very good use of the present tense; a wide range of vocabulary; good pronunciation.
6	Good communication: generally ready responses, though with some hesitation and a number of errors; a good range of vocabulary; a reasonable attempt at pronunciation. NB a range of tenses is not required.
4-5	Satisfactory communication: adequate responses; some hesitation; some significant errors.
3	Limited communication: hesitant and probably with serious errors; prompting required.
2	Very limited communication: very hesitant, with prompting needed; relatively little accurate usage.
0-1	Very weak: little or no communication; not easily understood; much prompting needed.

Section Three: Open Conversation

The open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion is marked out of 8, according to the descriptors above for Section Two.

APPENDIX III

LEVEL 1

WRITING

Section One

One mark per correct item of vocabulary, up to a maximum of 5 marks.

Total 5 marks.

Section Two

One mark per question.

Total 5 marks.

Section Three

Up to two marks per sentence, awarded as appropriate.

Total 10 marks.

Section Four

One mark per sentence, awarded as appropriate.

Total 5 marks.

APPENDIX IV

LEVEL 2

WRITING

Section One:

Up to two marks per sentence, awarded as appropriate.

Total 10 marks.

Section Two:

This section is marked out of 15, according to the following descriptors. (A 'best fit' policy should be used when deciding which band, and ½ marks may be awarded.)

Total 15 marks.

Marks	Content and Communication
5	Responds fully to the task and communicates with no ambiguity in a coherent and detailed way.
4	Communicates relevant information clearly and elaborates all points.
3	Reasonable communication, but either one point not covered or the general coverage of the points lacks detail.
2	Communication takes place, but with limited coverage of the required points and there may be instances of repeated or irrelevant material.
1	Partial communication and some attempt to respond to the task.
0	Communicates no relevant information.

Marks	Accuracy and Quality of Language
9-10	Excellent: a good range of grammar, vocabulary, idiom and structures, used confidently and accurately to include accurate use of the passé composé, as well as of the present and near future tenses; fluent, controlled and varied; errors may exist, but only in the most ambitious language.
7-8	Very good: a good level of accuracy, fluency, range of vocabulary and grammar, including some successful attempts at using the passé composé.
5-6	Good: uses a range of straightforward structures and vocabulary, which may include different tenses; more right than wrong; reasonably coherent and accurate.

3-4	Satisfactory: some awareness of verbs, but inconsistent overall; some range and variety of idiom, vocabulary and structures, but generally a weakness in application and accuracy.
1-2	Weak: inaccurate, very simple sentence structure and very poor range of vocabulary; much repetition; limited knowledge of the language; only a few phrases or short sentences accurate enough to be recognisable.
0	Little of merit: nothing coherent or accurate enough to be comprehensible.