

FRENCH

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PLANNING and preparing for the external examinations at Standard Grade, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher levels is essential and this guide aims to help you ready yourself for exam day. The general advice on preparation for Listening, Reading and Writing papers is applicable to all modern languages (French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish), however, examples are given in French only.

GENERAL ADVICE

1. Start revising in plenty of time and spread the load. Be sure you have a note of the date and exact times of your exams and plan how you will use your time between now and then. Remember that in any modern language you will be assessed in each language skill (Speaking/Listening/Reading/Writing). So when revising it's not enough to "Look and Learn", you will need to "Learn and Practise" each skill. So in particular, when preparing for the Writing exam, you will need to make time to practise writing in French some of ideas you'll want to include.

2. Be selective and focus your revision on the most useful topic areas. Remember that whatever exam you are sitting, there is a list of prescribed themes and topics that you are supposed to have covered and the examiners must use for the content of the exam.

STANDARD GRADE

3. Target your revision of vocabulary on the most common words and remember to distinguish

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Revise



Practise



Test



Review

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FRENCH

TOPIC	LANGUAGE AREAS
Self	Names, ages, physical descriptions, personality, emotions
Family	Family members, jobs, pets
Home	House, home area, amenities
Daily routine	Times, activities
School	Subjects, times, likes/dislikes, opinions
Leisure	Pastimes, hobbies, prices, sport
Holidays	Countries, nationalities, people, booking hotels/campsites/youth hostels, dates, weather
Food and Drink	Restaurants, shops, quantities, menus
Clothes and fashion	Colours, sizes, fabrics
Accidents and Emergencies	Transport, Emergency Services, parts of the body, phone numbers

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between words you need to memorise and spell correctly (for Writing) and others where it is enough for you to recognise the meaning (for Reading and Listening).

Try it out with this list of vocabulary about Healthy Living below (from Higher French Course Notes: Leckie and Leckie).

You'll need to spend longer learning those words you will want to write, as you will need to memorise the spelling, accents and gender. So for these words cover over the French column and try spelling the French word. For the words you only need to recognise, cover over the English column and see if you can remember what the French word means.

4. Keep the "Quick Grammar Refresher" handy and make sure you can use the most common verbs accurately in the present, past and future tenses.

5. Don't panic. Remember you have done lots of work on a variety of themes and topics and have done lots of practice exercises on Listening, Reading and Writing.

6. Remember that you have already done your Speaking assessment (and those of you sitting Standard Grade your Writing assessment) and therefore, hopefully, you have already a good mark(s) or grade(s) "in the bank". Remember also that a lot of what you prepared for the Speaking assessment will also be useful in preparing for Listening and Writing (particularly at Higher level: Paper 2).

7. Remember also that if you are doing Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher, you will have already attempted and passed the internal assessments. It is worth looking over these again as

they will help prepare you for the external exam, and remember, you've already passed these internal assessments and achieved the unit awards and these won't be affected whatever happens in the external exams.

8. You will also have done a "Prelim" exam and some other past papers, so you should be familiar with the timings, layout and help allowed (for example, dictionary) when attempting Listening/Reading and Writing papers under exam conditions.

READING AND TRANSLATION
Tips for reading

1. Progression in the Reading exams across the different levels is determined by the length and complexity of what you have to read and by how much support you are given in the questions. Examiners make a reading (or listening) text easier or harder by varying the level of support given in the questions. Supported questions require you to tick correct information, choose the correct alternatives, decide if a statement is true or false or complete a sentence by supplying the missing words. More open questions require you to answer questions such as Why? How? To what extent? by finding the relevant information in the text and by writing a correct answer in English in your own words.

In Standard Grade Reading there is a progression from supported to open questions as you move from Foundation to General and to Credit. (See examples from the 2005 Papers.)

In Intermediate 1 and 2 Reading there is progression at each level, from three shorter texts (with some supported questions) to one long text (with open questions). At Higher and Advanced Higher only open questions are used although you are normally given some indication of where to look for the information in the text. At Advanced Higher you are also required to "infer" something of the author's purpose in writing the text the way he/she did and to justify your views by referring to aspects of the text.

2. Always read the introduction to the passage and the questions before trying to work out the meaning of the text. The introduction and questions are in English and they give important information as to what the different parts of the passage are about and the type of information you need to find.

3. When reading longer texts, keep your use of the dictionary to a minimum. You won't have time to look up every word and the dictionary is not a substitute for learning key vocabulary. Remember to check if the meaning of any unusual word is given at the foot of the text in the glossary. Use your knowledge of English, French vocabulary and French grammar to work out the meaning of any words that you don't at first understand.

Before reaching for the dictionary, ask yourself: Does the word look like an English word? Or does it look like a French word you know but is being used for a different grammatical purpose?

Look at this extract from last year's Higher French Reading passage:

"Des informations pratiques sur les droits du travailleur, et des offres d'emploi qui correspondent à vos intérêts."

The first part is very like English "some practical information". The second part can be worked out from French you know (à droite and travailler) "on the rights of the worker". The third section is a mixture of both "and the offers of employment that correspond to your interests".

4. Always be guided by the number of points available for each question as this will guide you as to how much information to include in your answers. Beware of guessing or including more items of information than you're asked for – only include information you are sure of or you might be penalised under the "extraneous rule". This only applies at Standard Grade and Intermediate 1 and 2 and is intended to discourage you from simply trying to guess the answer to a question. If you introduce into your answer wrong information that is not in the French text, not only will it be marked wrong but it will cancel out a mark you would have been given. (Ask your teacher for further examples of this.)

5. When answering "open" questions try to answer in clear and comprehensible English. Don't translate word for word the passage and end up with nonsensical English sentences. When you read over your answers, make sure they make sense to you. Don't rely on the marker to "work out" what you meant.

In the 2005 Higher French Reading Paper, there is the sentence:
"Internet est devenu la plus grande agence d'emploi du monde."

If you translate this word for word into inaccurate English and end up with an answer such as this: "Internet is become the most big agency of employment of the world", you will certainly not have convinced the marker that you have understood what the author had intended!

TIPS FOR TRANSLATION
(HIGHER AND ADVANCED HIGHER)

1. Only attempt the translation once you have answered what you can of the reading comprehension questions. The passage for translation, which is underlined, is an important part of the text that you are being asked to look closely at, so it is important that you have read and understood the rest of the text.

2. Be very accurate when working out the meaning of each section, as candidates often lose marks for translating carelessly as "the", words such as "son/sa/ses" (his/her), "ce/cette/ces" (this/these) or of verb tenses, for example, translating a conditional tense "j'irais" (I would go) as the future "I will go".

3. Having worked out what exactly each section means, then decide how best to translate this into English which is accurate but not awkward. Each section of the translation (5 at Higher and 10 at Advanced Higher) is worth two marks for an accurate translation into acceptable English. You will score one mark if your translation conveys the meaning correctly but is imprecise or inaccurate or contains "awkward use of English". You will not score any marks if your translation contains a serious error or if you fail to translate any of the words in a section.

For more concentrated practice of this difficult skill at Higher Level, see Higher French Course Notes (Leckie and Leckie) which encourages you to translate accurately the key phrases for each topic and provides you with correct versions against which you can check your answers.

READING FOR PRACTICE

(i) Standard Grade, Intermediate 1 and 2

Try these extracts from the 2005 Standard Grade Reading Papers and notice how the texts and the style of questions become more demanding as you move from Foundation to General (equivalent of Intermediate 1) to Credit (equivalent of Intermediate 2)

Foundation 2005

You read an article about a boy called Sebastian.

Bravo Sebastian!

A quinze ans, Sebastian Clover est la plus jeune personne à traverser l'Atlantique en solitaire. Il a mis vingt-quatre jours pour aller de l'île de Ténérife près de l'Afrique à l'île d'Antigua près des Etats-Unis tout seul sur son voilier.

Tick the three sentences which give the correct information.

Sebastian is 15 years old.

He is in the navy.

He travelled alone.

The journey took 24 days.

The journey ended in Tenerife.

He crossed the Atlantic by plane.

Answers: Sentences 1, 3 and 4

General 2005

There is an article about a chef.

Chef cuisinier et patron de restaurant! Louis Picard raconte sa journée!

Alors, chaque matin je vais choisir mes poissons et ma viande au marché. Quand je reviens, je prépare la carte du jour et on commence à travailler dans la cuisine. Il y a deux services, à midi et à dix-neuf heures. Le soir, je fais les comptes avec ma femme.

J'ai commencé à quatorze ans. J'aidais mon père dans son restaurant. Puis, comme apprenti, j'ai travaillé dans les grands restaurants de plusieurs villes. J'ai appris à préparer les spécialités de toutes les régions.

Ensuite, j'ai ouvert mon propre restaurant, et maintenant j'ai trois jeunes apprentis qui travaillent chez moi.

Complete the sentences.

In the mornings, Louis goes to the market to buy ...
(Answer: fish and meat)

Then he prepares the day's ...
(Answer: menu)

In the evening his wife helps him with ...
(Answer: the accounts)

As an apprentice chef he worked in restaurants in ...
(Answer: several towns)

Now he has ...
(Answer: three young apprentices (who work for him))

Credit 2005

You come across this article about Robbie Williams.

Robbie Williams ... une drôle de vie! Robert Peter Williams est né le 13 février 1974 à Newcastle. Ses parents ont divorcé quand Robbie avait trois ans et après, il a vécu avec sa mère, Theresa. Il a aussi une sœur aînée Sally.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

être en bonne santé	to be in good health
être en pleine forme	to be on form
se tenir en pleine forme	to stay in good form
rester en bonne santé	to stay in good health
manger équilibré	to eat a balanced diet
une alimentation équilibrée	a balanced diet
manger une nourriture saine	to eat healthy food
une alimentation saine	a healthy diet
une vie saine	a healthy lifestyle
de la nourriture grasse	fatty food
grignoter entre les repas	to eat between meals
sauter les repas	to skip meals
surveiller son alimentation	to watch one's diet
garder la ligne	to keep your figure
les courbatures	aches/stiffness
être nuisible	to be harmful
digérer	to digest
faire du sport	to do sport
faire de l'exercice	to do sport/exercise
pratiquer un sport	to do a sport
prendre du poids	to gain weight
perdre du poids	to lose weight
faire un régime	to go on a diet

C'est un neveu de sa soeur qui a trouvé pour Robbie son premier emploi: vendeur de fenêtres à double vitrage.

Les premières années de sa vie, il habitait une maison tout près d'un stade où s'entraînait Port Vale FC, son équipe préférée. A l'école, il était plutôt bon élève; il avait toujours de bonnes notes dans la plupart des matières.

Comme son père, Robbie se destinait à la comédie, mais à l'âge de 16 ans, il a été engagé pour former le groupe Take That. Après avoir quitté le groupe très fâché contre le producteur, il s'est lancé dans une carrière solo qui a mis plusieurs années à démarrer. Voilà pourquoi il a sombré dans l'alcool et la drogue.

Libéré de ses démons, Robbie a signé avec sa maison de disques un énorme contrat qui l'abritera du besoin d'argent jusqu'à la fin de ses jours.

a) What was Robbie's first job and how did he get it?
(Answer: sold double glazed windows/nephew of his sister found it for him)

b) How did he become a fan of Port Vale FC?
(Answer: his house was near the stadium)

c) What are we told about his schooldays. Mention one thing?
(Answer: was good pupil / good marks in most subjects)

d) According to the article, why did he have problems with alcohol and drugs?
(Answer: his solo career was slow to take off)

e) What will be the outcome of his new recording contract?
(Answer: he won't have to worry about money for rest of his life)

HIGHER

Reading And Translation

Look at the following extract from the 2005 French Higher Reading passage and answer the question in English.

Alice n'est pas un pauvre sans-domicile qui passe des nuits froides à l'entrée d'un immeuble. Non, cette jeune femme gâtée, de famille assez riche, nous parle par Internet, du confort de sa chambre.

Question: Alice is not a typical beggar. In what ways is she different? (2 points)
Answer: she is NOT a poor homeless person (who spends night sleeping outside) /she is spoiled from fairly rich family/she 'begs' or uses the internet from the comfort of her bedroom (Any two from three points)

Notice how there are three possible points of which you must give two. However, the extraneous rule does not apply at Higher, therefore, once you have found the part of the text that contains the answer to a question, you should include all the details you have understood in case they are required.

TRANSLATION

Look at the passage for translation in the same 2005 paper and write out your own translation into English.

Encouragés par le succès de cette jeune New-Yorkaise, des centaines de "Mendiant d'Internet" ont créé des sites simplement pour faire appel à la générosité des autres. Chacun a une histoire à raconter qui a pour but d'attirer notre compassion.

Now compare it with this correct version.

Encouraged by the success of this young New Yorker/girl from New York, (some) hundreds of 'Internet Beggars' have created sites simply to appeal to the generosity of others. Each has a story to tell which has the aim of attracting our compassion.

TIPS FOR LISTENING

1. Progression in the Listening exams across the different levels is determined by the length and complexity of what you have to listen to and by how much support you are given in the questions.

At Standard Grade: Foundation (short and supported questions) > Credit (longer and open questions)

At Intermediate 1: 10 short items and mainly supported questions (20 points)

At Intermediate 2: Three longer passages with mainly open questions (20 points)

At Higher: One discussion between male and female speakers with open questions on what is said by the main speaker (20 points)

Advanced Higher: Part A is a presentation on a topic by one speaker with open questions (10-15 points). Part B is a discussion by two speakers normally expressing opposing views on the topic with open questions on what is said by both speakers. (15-20 points)

Preparation

2. Don't fall into the trap of thinking "I can't revise much for Listening", because a lot of what has been said about preparing for the Reading exam also applies to the Listening. Again it is important to have revised vocabulary from the key prescribed themes and topics, such as school subjects, places in town, things to eat and drink.

When revising vocabulary for the Listening exam, be sure to read aloud the words so you match the sound to the word. It is worth checking your pronunciation is accurate because if you are pronouncing the word wrongly, you won't recognise it when pronounced correctly. (Higher French Course Notes by Leckie and Leckie has a CD with vocabulary and phrases at higher level so that you can listen to example topics and also practise your pronunciation.)

It's also worth spending time revising numbers (times and prices), dates (days and months) and weather expressions and seasons, as they feature at all levels and should be easy to pick out from any listening text. (See extracts from 2005 papers.)

Before the recording starts

3. Before you hear the listening text for the first time, you'll have time to look at the question paper and this will give you an indication of what you are about to hear. Use this time to anticipate the sort of French you might expect to hear given the context. In particular look at each question and see what sort of information you will need to find, for example, When? – time phrase/date etc. Where? – directions/preposition and place, for example, en face de la poste.

Use the number of points available as a guide as to how much information you will need to find. Don't give more information than is required, don't guess and don't add information that you have not heard. (Remember the extraneous rule.)

When the recording is playing

4. Don't panic once the recording starts to play. Don't expect to understand everything first time and remember you will hear the recording at least twice (Intermediate 1 and

2, Higher and Advanced Higher) and three times at Standard Grade. Remember that not all the information is of equal importance and it is the details related to the questions that you must find. Only write short notes or key words while the recording is playing. You'll have time to write answers later so use this time to listen rather than write.

Between playings

5. Write down beside each question the information you are sure you have understood, the information you think you have understood but will need to check again and identify any information you have missed completely (but hopefully you now know where it comes in the recording).

After the recording finishes

6. Complete your answers (they don't need to be in complete sentences but they must be clear and comprehensible). Be sure to score out any earlier notes and don't leave alternative answers because if one is right and one is wrong, you will end up with no points.

Examples of numbers and time phrases in Listening

The following extracts from the 2005 papers show some of the ways that numbers and time phrases appear in Listening at the different levels. Make sure that you would have picked up these points and spend some time revising numbers and time phrases such as *"avant (before) / après (after) / depuis (since) / il y a (ago) / la semaine dernière (last week) / l'été prochain (next summer)"*. Look at the extract in French from the listening paper, read it aloud, then write down in English what you think it means and compare your answer with the answer given.

Examples of numbers and time phrases in Listening Papers

Foundation 2005
(Extract from Transcript)

Notre ville est située à la montagne, et il y a vingt mille habitants.
(Our town is in the mountains and there are 20,000 inhabitants)

Et le mercredi matin, il y a un marché.
(And on Wednesday morning, there is a market)

Je m'appelle Paul et j'ai quinze ans.
(I'm called Paul and am 15)

Il y a neuf cents élèves.
(There are 900 pupils)

A midi, je mange à la cantine et on finit à cinq heures.
(At midday I eat in the canteen and we finish at 5)

General 2005
(Extract from Transcript)

Tous les ans, on se voit pendant les vacances.
(Every year we see each other during the holidays)

Je travaille pour France Telecom depuis deux ans.
(I have been working for France Telecom for two years)

Je retourne en Ecosse tous les deux ans
(I return to Scotland every two years)

J'ai même une bouteille qui date de dix-neuf cent cinquante-sept.

(I even have a bottle that dates from 1957)

Demain après-midi il y aura un concours de natation et le soir il y aura un festival de danse.

(Tomorrow afternoon there will be a swimming competition and in the evening a dance festival)

Il y a cinq ans je travaillais comme assistante de français en Ecosse.
(Five years ago I worked as a French language assistant in Scotland)

Credit 2005
(Extract from transcript)

Je dois rester à l'hôpital jusqu'à la fin de la semaine.
(I have to stay in hospital till the end of the week)

Marc et Gerard se connaissent depuis onze ans.
(Marc and Gerard have known each other for eleven years)

On se voyait tous les jours.
(We saw each other every day)

Après le repas du soir.
(After the evening meal)

Nous avons passé un mois à la montagne.
(We spent a month in the mountains)

Il y avait au moins douze orchestres avec trois personnes de mon âge.
(There were at least twelve bands with three people my age)

Intermediate 2: 2005
(Extract from Transcript)
Ça fait trois ans que je fais du travail saisonnier.
(I have done seasonal work for three years)

On reçoit mille euros par mois
(We get 1000 euros per month)

Et à dix heures précises.
(And at exactly ten o'clock)

Puis à midi on a une coupure de deux heures et demie.
(Then at midday we have a break of two and a half hours)

Les écoles ferment tous les jours à deux heures de l'après-midi.
(The schools close every day at 2 pm)

Un garçon de treize ans avait disparu hier.
(A thirteen year old boy had disappeared yesterday)

Plus d'une dizaine de kilomètres.
(More than ten kilometres)

Higher 2005
(Extract from Transcript)

Depuis l'âge de seize ans
(From the age of 16)

C'était mon père qui se levait à cinq heures du matin pour m'emmener au gymnase ou au stade et qui attendait jusqu'à la fin de mon entraînement.

(It was my dad who got up at 5 in the morning to take me to the gym or to the stadium and who waited till the end of my training)

J'aime passer la soirée dans mon appartement avec mon fiancé, Jacques. On loue une vidéo

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FRENCH

pour la soirée.

(I like to spend the evening in my flat with my fiancé Jacques. We rent a video for the evening)

Be sure to practise numbers that are easily confused: deux, dix, douze; six, seize; etc.

TIPS FOR WRITING

1. Progression in writing exams across the levels is determined by how predictable the task is, how much you have to write in French, the complexity of what you are writing about and the accuracy and range of vocabulary and grammatical structures you can use: (Remember if you are sitting Standard Grade you will already have submitted a Folio of 3 pieces of Writing.)

(a) **At Intermediate 1** the task is entirely predictable and you will need to write accurately in French at least three sentences under each of the following headings: *Famille / La Région où vous habitez / École ou Travail / Loisirs*. If you practise writing accurately what you want to include and can reproduce it on the day of the exam, it is quite possible to score full marks for this task (15 marks). Just practise writing out your sentences in French and check the spelling, accents, verb endings and whether the nouns are masculine or feminine.

(b) **At Intermediate 2** the task is entirely predictable in that you must write in French a letter of application for a job in France (120-150 words). The details of the job will change from year to year but what you are asked to include in your letter will not. You must include the following:

- Name, age, where you live
 - Leisure interests
 - School/college career – subjects studied
 - Reasons for application
 - Request for information about the job
- You will be penalised if you fail to write something on each of these areas, so be sure you have practised writing on each area and, in particular, make sure you can spell the school subjects correctly and know how to write some relevant questions. For example: *Combien d'argent est-ce que je vais gagner par semaine?* You can also include information on:
- Any previous links with France
 - Work experience if any

You do not need to include this information and you will not be penalised if you do not. However, if you have learned a few sentences on having been to France (on holiday or a school trip/exchange) and on part-time jobs and the type of person you are (reliable, trustworthy etc), then you should include them as this will “impress” the examiner provided you can write this information accurately.

You are also provided with the correct ways of starting and finishing a formal letter, so make sure you copy this help correctly and complete the opening sentence appropriately, for example, *“Suite à votre annonce, je me permets de poser ma candidature pour le poste que vous proposez?”* Again, if you practise hard and make sure you can write accurately on each area, it is quite possible to achieve full marks for this task (20 marks).

(c) **At Higher level** both pieces of writing are less predictable than at Intermediate 1 and 2 but will still allow you to make use of well-learned material.

Paper 1(b) Direct Writing (150-180 words). The format of this test is predictable but the

QUICK GRAMMAR REFRESHER

PRESENT TENSE ENDINGS

ER Verbs* e, es, e, ons, ez, ent
 IR Verbs* is, is, it, issons, issez, issent
 RE Verbs* s, s, -, ons, ez, ent

THE PERFECT TENSE

For most French verbs you need to use part of the verb “avoir”

j’ai, tu as, il/elle/on a, nous avons, vous avez, ils/elles ont

For ER verbs, the Past Participle is é, for MOST IR* verbs, the ending is i and for MOST RE* verbs, the ending is u (regarder > regardé; finir > fini; vendre > vendu)

For 13 important French verbs you need to use the verb “être”

je suis, tu es, il/elle/on est, nous sommes, vous êtes, ils/elles sont

I have always found a particularly Dutch sounding name helps me to remember these 13 verbs (there are more than 13 including the group of verbs called “reflexives”, as you probably know already). The first letter of each of these verbs makes up the name **Mr Van Der Stamp**: *Monter, Rester, Venir, Aller, Naître, Descendre, Entrer, Retourner, Sortir, Tomber, Arriver, Mourir, Partir*. When you use these verbs, you have to try to remember to add an extra “e” or an “s” or “es” to the Past Participles.

THE IMPERFECT TENSE ENDINGS ARE:

ais, ais, ait, ions, iez, aient

THE FUTURE TENSE ENDINGS ARE:

ai, as, a ons, ez ont (these are added to the infinitive of the verb you are going to use*)

THE CONDITIONAL TENSE

ais, ais, ait, ions, iez, aient (these too are added to the infinitive of the verb you are going to use*)

***Remember! The exceptions (aller > j’irai; être > je serai; avoir > j’aurai; vouloir > je voudrai etc.) have already been pointed out to you in class and may be listed in a table in whatever course book(s) you have been using. Most dictionaries will also have a reference section for French verbs. It might be worth asking your teacher how to use this section if there is one in the dictionary you will be using in the exam.**

scenario will change from year to year as will the wording of the six bullet points of information that you must include. The first two bullet points are very predictable and will require you to set the scene by giving details of what the journey was like, where you stayed, how many were in the group etc. The other bullet points are less predictable but are likely to focus on the purpose of your visit, what you did during your visit, what you thought of it and what future benefit you will get from it.

Therefore you need to have a confident command of past tenses (imperfect and perfect) and future and conditional tenses. (There is a very comprehensive section on Directed Writing and how to prepare for the different types of bullet points in Higher French Course Notes by Leckie and Leckie.)

Paper 2 Listening/Writing (120-150 words).

This writing task is related to the topic of the listening and you must write a personal response based on a stimulus in French, which asks questions that you must use to structure the content of your response. What you write must be relevant to these questions so don’t try to reproduce an entire pre-learned essay (unless you are very lucky!) but try to select and re-combine material that you have learned and practised throughout the year.

Remember that at Higher level you will have done writing tasks throughout the year as part of internal assessments, in preparation for your speaking assessment and as homework and you will have lots of good ideas and phrases from them that you should seek to re-use in the exam. You should not need to invent anything new on the day of the exam but should try to reuse learned material that you are confident in and only use the dictionary to check the accuracy or spelling not to invent and translate sentences from English to French.

2005 Higher Paper 2: Listening/Writing

Let’s look at last year’s essay stimulus!

Annick nous parle du sport.

Est-ce qu’il y a assez de possibilités sportives là où vous habitez?

Est-ce que le sport est important pour vous?

A votre avis est-ce que les jeunes devraient faire plus de sport?

Ecrivez 120-150 mots en français pour exprimer vos idées.

Before writing anything in French, think of what you have practised throughout the year that would be relevant! For example:

- Description of home town / home area
- What there is to do there for teenagers / for tourists
- Leisure activities and healthy living
- Sports you do at school / on holiday
- Healthy and unhealthy lifestyles and diet

Now try writing accurately in French, two or three sentences on each of these topics and you’ll easily have reached the minimum target of 120 words and you won’t have made any of the nasty errors that can happen if you think in English and rely on the dictionary.

(d) **At Advanced Higher:** The Discursive Essay is a very demanding piece of writing, which, as the name suggests, requires you to discuss a topical issue of personal, social, cultural or environmental interest. As such, this is the least predictable writing task, although the essay titles, from which you will have to choose, will relate to the prescribed themes and topics at Advanced Higher Level.

Also you will have done pieces of writing throughout the year in preparation for this task and again you should look to select and recombine as much of this learned material as is relevant to the essay title. You will normally have six titles from which to choose. Having chosen the title for which you are best prepared, you must “discuss” the topic, which means having a variety of phrases for presenting ideas, advantages / disadvantages and for agreeing and disagreeing. Again you will have built these up throughout the year, so be sure to practise using them accurately.

2. Preparation: The Writing papers are the ones, which show most clearly how well you know the key rules of French Grammar and how accurately you have learned the really important vocabulary. So when revising vocabulary for this activity you must know how to spell it correctly and whether it is masculine or feminine. You also need to be able to structure your piece of writing and link your ideas, so be sure to use accurately the phrases you will have practised throughout the year. Above all you will need to be able to “handle tenses” and make it clear to the reader whether you are writing in the present, past or future tense.

3. Assessment of Writing: All of the writing is done by “impression” marking and your teacher will have explained what you must do to achieve the different marks available.

Basically the examiner will read all that you have written and will form an “impression” of your performance in writing on the basis of criteria and will place you in a category from Very Poor to Very Good. To be at least “Satisfactory” your writing “must convey meaning clearly” which means you must be able to handle verbs accurately enough so that it is clear if the action is happening in the present, past or future. So be sure to be able to handle the common verbs in these tenses. (See the Quick Grammar Refresher above)

To gain a higher mark you’ll need to maintain a high level of grammatical accuracy and begin to write more complex sentences and use a greater range of vocabulary and structures. What you must avoid is making “serious basic errors” and introducing “mother tongue interference” through thinking in English and missing the dictionary.

FRENCH EXAM TIMETABLE	
Level/Paper	Time
Tuesday, May 9	
Foundation Reading	9am-9.45am
General Reading	10.05am-10.50am
Credit Reading	11.10am-12.10pm
Foundation Listening	1pm-1.25pm
General Listening	1.45pm-2.10pm
Credit Listening	2.30pm-3pm
Tuesday, May 16	
Intermediate 1	
Reading	9am-9.45am
Listening	10.05am-10.25
Writing	10.45am-11.15am
Intermediate 2	
Reading	9am-10.10am
Listening	10.30am-11am
Writing	11.20am-12pm
Higher	
Reading and Directed Writing	9am-10.40am
Listening/Writing	11am-12pm
Advanced Higher	
Reading and Translation	9am-10.20am
Listening and Writing	10.40am-12pm