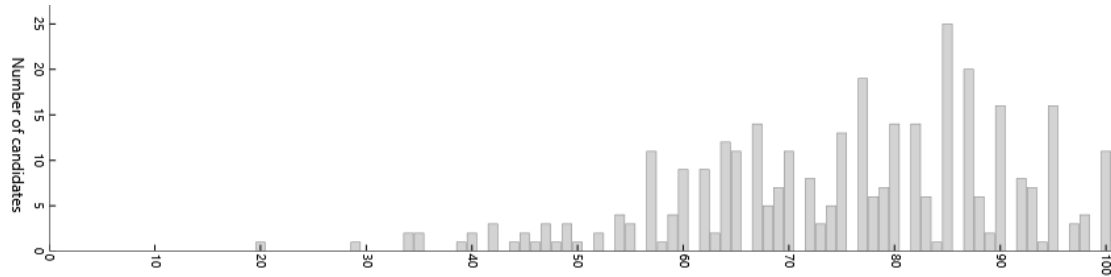




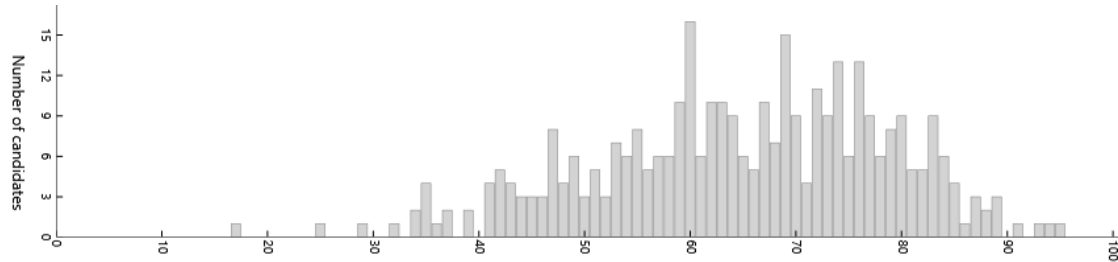
Summary report of the 2018 ATAR course examination report: French: Second Language

Year	Number who sat all examination components	Number of absentees from all examination components
2018	344	0
2017	343	1
2016	419	1

Examination score distribution—Practical



Examination score distribution—Written



Summary

Practical examination

Attempted by 344 candidates Mean 75.21% Max 100.00% Min 20.00%

Section means were:

Part B: Discussion of stimulus Mean 77.46%
Attempted by 344 candidates Mean 27.11(/35) Max 35.00 Min 7.00

Part C: Conversation Mean 74%
Attempted by 344 candidates Mean 48.10(/65) Max 65.00 Min 13.00

Written examination

Attempted by 347 candidates Mean 64.76% Max 94.64% Min 17.14%

Section means were:

Section One Response: Listening Mean 63.83%
Attempted by 347 candidates Mean 19.15(/30) Max 30.00 Min 3.87

Section Two Response: Viewing and reading Mean 63.62%
Attempted by 347 candidates Mean 19.09(/30) Max 28.52 Min 4.43

Section Three Written communication Part A: Stimulus response Mean 66.51%
Attempted by 347 candidates Mean 13.30(/20) Max 20.00 Min 4.00

Section Three Written communication Part B: Extended response Mean 66.28%
Attempted by 346 candidates Mean 13.26(/20) Max 20.00 Min 4.00

General comments

Practical examination

This year the majority of candidates were well prepared for the practical examination and many used complex language and extension in their answers. Most candidates could speak about every topic and were able to respond to all questions asked using a variety of tenses. While a few candidates needed to speak more clearly and loudly, many spoke confidently and at great length. In general, candidates seemed comfortable and familiar with the process of the examination.

Advice for candidates

- Be sure to arrive on time and bring the correct identification information to the examination.
- To see how to gain maximum marks read the marking key carefully and note the differences between each mark.
- Talk about your actual stimulus item and refer to it throughout this part of the interview
- Choose your stimulus carefully, so that you can describe it in detail and explain why you chose it.
- Try not to sound as though you have rote learnt your work.
- Learn the irregular future and conditional forms.
- Avoid errors such as *beaucoup des*, mispronouncing *l'alcool* and *les jeunes/les gens, la guerre/la gare, la femme*. Ensure the pronunciation of the auxiliary verb in the passé composé is very clear. (Sometimes sounds like **Je regardé**, not **j'ai regardé**.)
- Adjectival agreements need work – *les vacances* are feminine plural, so it is important to hear the feminine ending of *prochaines*, for example.
- Practise pronunciation, to avoid anglicising words. (eg words with -tion at the end, correct ou or u sound, famille etc)
- The negative was often poorly dealt with. Ensure that the *ne...pas/plus* etc go around the verb.
- Use the full range of tenses that are in the syllabus, including subjunctives.
- It is important to respond to a question about the future, using the future tense.
- If a *si* clause question is asked by the marker, that marker is expecting a response with the same sequence of tenses – eg imperfect/conditional.
- There was a lot of repetition of phrases such as *Je pense que*. Try to use a range of opinion expressions and avoid using *je ne sais pas*.
- Answer questions in depth rather than give short answers, which will bring the marks down in the response section, even if correct. If a closed question is asked, be prepared to answer at length, rather than just answering *oui* or *non*.
- Listen carefully to the question and take a little extra time before rushing in with a response.
- Grammar issues such as *Je vais fais* and *Je vais prends* were noted, along with *à* or *au* France instead of *en* France. Accuracy is important and it is essential that candidates know their tenses.
- It is important to speak clearly and loudly so that both markers can hear what is being said.
- *La publicité* is relevant only if it relates to the topic: In the Media.

Advice for teachers

- Practise school-based orals using the marker script and marking keys.
- Ensure that students know they will be asked open-ended questions and are prepared to expand their answers.
- Ensure that in the topics relating to French speaking communities students do not refer to other countries; e.g. in 'Migrant Experiences', a personal experience, such as migrating to Australia is not part of the syllabus.
- Remind students not to wear anything that can identify them with their school.
- Ensure that 'candidate stimuli' relate to the topics – body image/issues are not part of the syllabus.

- Encourage and support each student with their choice of stimulus, to ensure they can talk about it specifically and in depth rather than discuss the topic it refers to in general.

Written examination

The examination was a fair and well-constructed paper which provided the majority of candidates with the opportunity to display their level of achievement in the language and demonstrate their knowledge of Unit 3 and Unit 4 topics. Very few candidates ran out of time. As a result, candidates gave more substantial responses within the Written Section, and fewer Reading questions were left unanswered than in previous years.

Advice for candidates

- Work on writing clear, concise English in listening and reading responses.
- Read over your answers to check that they make sense.
- Avoid translating chunks of text literally.
- Always look at the mark allocation for each question carefully in listening and reading and answer accordingly.
- The space provided for each answer is generally a good guide to how much you need to write. Overly long answers that don't fit in the required space are rarely accurate.
- If a question requires you to tick the correct statements, and the mark allocation is four, you should only tick four statements.
- If more detail is required, this can still be provided in brief answers of a few words, rather than long winded sentences. Again, use the amount of space provided as a guide.
- Avoid using chunks of memorised answers in the written response in the hope that they will fit the question.
- Use the information provided in the written stimulus fully and refer to it very clearly in your answer.
- Try to show some originality and imagination in your written answers. It is always refreshing to read something a bit different.
- Read the marking keys for previous years carefully so that you know what markers are looking for and see how you can maximise your marks.

Advice for teachers

- Train candidates to use succinct English in listening and reading responses and avoid clumsy literal translations.
- Spend time on *faux amis* (false cognates) – especially on those most commonly encountered in French ATAR contexts and topics.
- Have your students practise answering written questions in the correct amount of words, particularly in the stimulus section – there is little or no gain in going way over the word count. In fact, it is often detrimental as it usually indicates a rambling, repetitive response.
- Have your students practise and model written answers that are structured and clearly sequenced.
- Spend time building up students' vocabulary base beyond the individual topic so that common words are easily understood.
- Encourage students to show some originality and imagination in written responses.
- Emphasise the importance of verb conjugation and using a range of tenses.
- Provide guidance and training on how to make effective use of the information provided in the stimulus response questions. Most candidates did not relate answers 'strongly to the stimulus' as outlined in the marking key.
- Spend class time going through previous marking keys to help students understand what is required.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Practical examination

Part B: Discussion of stimulus (20 Marks)

Most candidates were well prepared and there was evidence of excellent teaching. The majority of candidates showed a sound knowledge of the course content. Some demonstrated not only competent language skills, but also the ability to engage in detailed discussion of the topics.

All candidates attempted this section. Nearly all candidates presented a stimulus related in some way to one or more of the Unit 3 or Unit 4 contexts. A few candidates presented stimuli not related to the topics. It is vital that candidates and teachers understand the syllabus.

It is pleasing to note that most candidates were generally only adding a pertinent point at the end of their stimulus when asked, rather than trying to recite all the things they had not previously said. There are only a few seconds available to do this before the examiner will move on to the conversation.

Markers felt that all candidates were well prepared for the stimulus, although some had difficulty answering questions if they could not use rehearsed speech. It is important that teachers give students the opportunity to practise and prepare with a large variety of questions related to both their stimulus and the topic area. Candidates need to demonstrate that they can have a conversation with the marker without relying on rote learning.

A few candidates were not thoroughly familiar with the marking script and misunderstood the question: "*Avez-vous quelque chose d'autre à rajouter?*"

Part C: Conversation (20 Marks)

Candidates' understanding of the topics in relation to the correct learning contexts was much better this year, with the occasional exception. As a reminder, 'Migrant Issues' refers to the accounts of French speaking migrants to and from French speaking communities, 'Film and Music' refers to French speaking communities. 'Technology and me' is about individual use of technology, while 'In the Media' refers to the 'Changing World'. The topics in 'Youth Issues' are stress, drugs and alcohol and nothing else.

There is a large range of understanding as to what: 'In the Media' is about. This topic refers to the impact of media on the global community. Questions such as: *Quel rôle joue les médias de nos jours? Comment est-ce que les médias influencent la société aujourd'hui ?* are relevant to this topic.

In both the stimulus and the conversation, it is important that candidates understand that the examination is a conversation. Candidates who recite memorised text will not score as highly as those who can hold a free-flowing conversation. The marker aims to ensure that they are sharing a conversation and not just reeling off a series of questions.

Candidates ranged from those having excellent knowledge of each topic area to those who could not articulate past their rehearsed speech.

Written examination

Section One Response: Listening (31 Marks)

The questions in the Listening section were in an accessible and varied format, including tick box, true/false, completing a table and brief one or two word answers, which most candidates navigated with little difficulty. However, where more detail and information were required, many candidates found it difficult to provide the response in clear, concise English. Only a few candidates seemed to use the notes section effectively. Given the higher than usual mean for this section, it was clear that candidates did not find the listening as challenging as in previous years.

Section Two Response: Viewing and reading (61 Marks)

The main issue with the answers in this section was the inability of some candidates to cope with more complex texts and their tendency to translate whole paragraphs in the hope of including the correct answer. This made it difficult for markers to ascertain whether or not the candidate had actually understood the text. Candidates found Text 4, on the topic of future plans, the most challenging. The vast majority of candidates were able to attempt all questions; very few ran out of time.

Section Three Written communication Part A: Stimulus response (20 Marks)

The five questions in the written section covered all the syllabus topics, with the exception of Film and Music, giving candidates a wide range from which to choose. The majority of candidates produced satisfactory responses and there was a good spread of questions answered.

Interestingly, candidates seemed to write nearly as much on the short answer stimulus as in their extended answer, which may have taken valuable time away from the latter. It was pleasing to see better structuring of the written answers and in many cases, evidence of careful planning. Many answers did however, lack originality and as in previous years the level of grammatical accuracy was often poor, especially the conjugation of verbs, even in the present tense.

Overall, although the standard of writing was higher than in the past, the Accuracy and Style criteria continued to indicate the grammatical weakness and lack of stylistic effectiveness of a significant number of candidates. These criteria are a good discriminator when assessing the overall quality of the writing. Here is a list of common errors encountered in the candidates' writing:

- inaccuracies with the present tense
- poor understanding of the imperfect tense: "Quand il est 13 ans"
- poor use of the perfect tense especially with 'être': "il gagné, il a devenu, il a arrive"
- poor use of future tense: "je serai aller"
- poor understanding of agreements: "son bon paroles"
- misuse of article/pronoun with cities/countries: "il a traverse à la France"
- frequent basic errors: "beaucoup des, que + vowel, à les, de les, sur le weekend", etc.
- jarring use of idiomatic expressions or complex grammar which did not gel with the rest of the writing, especially in a response that was riddled with basic errors
- "tu" versus "vous": some candidates went between the two (even in the same sentence) or used "tu" rather than "vous".

Section Three Written communication Part B: Extended response (20 Marks)

Question 29 was the most popular, with a wide variety of responses. Question 28 was the least popular choice. Question 27 gave candidates every opportunity to use the vocabulary and expressions learned in class to evaluate the positive and negative effects of the media. It produced some very good answers.