

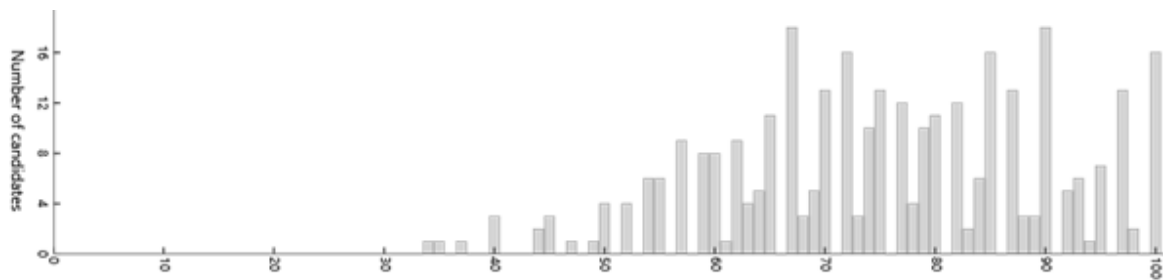


## 2020 ATAR course examination report: French: Second Language

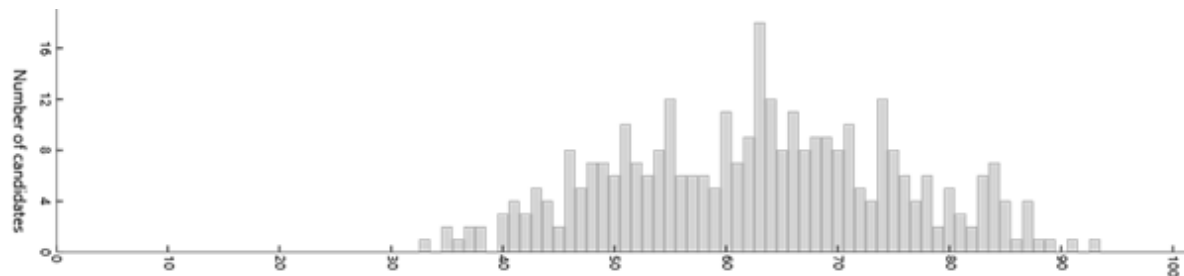
Year	Number who sat all examination components	Number of absentees from all examination components
2020	327	2
2019	372	0
2018	344	0
2017	343	1

The number of candidates sitting and the number attempting each section of the examination can differ as a result of non-attempts across sections of the examination.

### Examination score distribution–Practical



### Examination score distribution–Written



### Summary

The examination consisted of a Practical examination and a Written examination, with each contributing to half the total score of the examination. Candidates performed better in the practical component than the written component.

#### Practical examination

Attempted by 329 candidates      Mean 75.15%      Max 100.00%      Min 33.50%

Section means were:

Part B: Discussion of stimulus	Mean 77.99%		
Attempted by 329 candidates	Mean 27.30(/35)	Max 35.00	Min 12.25
Part C: Conversation	Mean 73.62%		
Attempted by 329 candidates	Mean 47.85(/65)	Max 65.00	Min 19.50

## Written examination

Attempted by 331 candidates                      Mean 62.68%              Max 92.89%              Min 32.80%

Section means were:

Section One Response: Listening                      Mean 56.37%

Attempted by 331 candidates                      Mean 16.91(/30)              Max 25.86              Min 7.24

Section Two Response: Viewing and reading                      Mean 68.43%

Attempted by 331 candidates                      Mean 20.53(/30)              Max 29.06              Min 9.38

Section Three Written communication Part A: Stimulus response

Mean 62.73%

Attempted by 331 candidates                      Mean 12.55(/20)              Max 19.50              Min 5.50

Section Three Written communication Part B: Extended response

Mean 63.47%

Attempted by 331 candidates                      Mean 12.69(/20)              Max 19.50              Min 4.00

## General comments

### Practical examination

The majority of candidates were prepared well for the practical examination. Many used the full range of tenses in their answers, as well as responding in some depth. All candidates understood the process of the examination and all brought a stimulus item with them. Most candidates could speak about every topic and could respond to all questions asked. A few candidates needed to speak more clearly, more audibly and sometimes slower, but many were very confident and spoke at great length.

### Advice for candidates

- The examination is a meaningful conversation. Hold a free-flowing conversation rather than reciting memorised text.
- Do not rush the first part of the stimulus, using rehearsed speech, so the flow is maintained when the marker asks questions.
- Be prepared to speak at length on your stimulus without waiting for the first question.
- Refer to your stimulus during the interview and expect open-ended and explicit questions about the stimulus item, describing it and explaining why you chose it, as well as the related topic as a whole.
- Give comprehensive answers relevant to each topic. Use a wide range of contextually, relevant vocabulary and expression, varied tenses, as well as good sentence starters and rich expressions.
- Avoid saying *oui* or *non* or *je ne sais pas*.
- Listen carefully to the question and take your time before rushing in with a response.
- Know your verbs and tenses.
- Respond to the question using the correct tense, and be strategic in responding and using a range of tenses.
- It is important to expand and give detailed answers that are relevant to the topics.
- Answer by using an imperfect/conditional response to a *si* clause question.
- Learn the irregular futures/conditionals.
- Work on verb agreement.
- Work on adjectival agreement – for example, *les vacances* is feminine plural, so it is important to hear the feminine ending of *prochaines*.
- Avoid errors such as *beaucoup des, de le*.
- Be careful of *en France* but *à Paris*.
- Practise pronunciation and intonation to avoid anglicising words, especially words ending in 'ion', such as *la situation*, and usual words, such as *l'alcool, les gens/les jeunes, la guerre/la gare, la femme*, and *étrange* instead of *étranger*.
- Do not sound the end of consonants if not required.

- Articulate clearly and speak audibly so that both markers can hear you.
- Maintain a consistent, moderate speed from the beginning of the interview, otherwise it is very apparent to the marker that the speech for the stimulus is completely rehearsed.
- Avoid the habit of ending statements with a rising inflection.
- Remember that the practical examination is a formal interview.
- Bring the correct documentation and identification to the examination with you.
- Remember that handwriting or adding any notes to the stimulus item is not permitted.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Nothing should identify you with any particular school.

#### *Advice for teachers*

- Remind your students that *Les médias* and *La technologie et moi* are topics that must be dealt with very differently from each other.
- Assist students to avoid confusion about the correct contexts for their topics. Youth issues, needs to be dealt with in the general form rather than the personal. It also only deals with the topics 'stress', 'drugs' and 'alcohol'.
- Ensure that in the topic relating to French-speaking communities, candidates do not refer to other countries. For example, in 'migrant experiences', a personal experience of migrating to Australia is not in the syllabus.
- It is expected that your students have knowledge of the Music topic and of a Francophone festival.
- Remind students that 'advertising' as a topic is not part of the syllabus.
- Provide students with opportunities to study the marking key so that they have an explicit understanding how marks are awarded.
- Ensure that students' stimuli relate to the topics and that they can discuss their stimulus item as well as the wider topic.
- Ensure that students are prepared to answer open-ended questions.

#### **Written examination**

The examination provided a good balance of content between Unit 3 and Unit 4. All topics were covered. Most candidates completed the examination paper and demonstrated a sound overall understanding of all texts and questions. In the Written communication section, very few candidates ran out of time. This section required candidates to demonstrate their proficiency in writing in the French language, including their knowledge of grammar, rather than relying on rote learning. They could not simply use prepared scripts without running the risk not addressing the topic. While the range of 'sophisticated' tenses used by candidates may have been more limited than in previous years, their writing was more natural and their answers were more authentic/genuine. A few candidates cleverly used some vocabulary from the Listening or the Viewing and reading sections, or the text type conventions from the Reading section to improve their responses. A few candidates even enjoyed appropriating and using new words learnt in the examination, such as '*les flammes*'. Surprisingly, some candidates were not able to use the key conventions of the most frequently used text types, such as the letter, blog or email.

#### *Advice for candidates*

- Write concise answers that make sense as expressed in English, while remaining faithful to the French text.
- Use the 'Space for notes' column effectively in the Listening section.
- Be aware that it is misleading to expect that there is always one question for each paragraph in the texts in Section Two: Response: Viewing and reading.
- In the Written communication section, read very carefully the stimulus and the questions – both the English and French versions – to make sure that you provide the correct information.
- Use the *tu/vous* forms appropriately.

### *Advice for teachers*

- Spend time on deceptive cognates/‘*faux-amis*’.
- Provide opportunities for students to build vocabulary beyond each individual topic so that common words much-used in French ‘real/practical life’ are not overlooked such as numbers, ‘*demander*’, ‘*vocation*’, ‘*mois*’, ‘*ans*’, ‘*passer un test*’, ‘*faire un stage*’, ‘*toute*’, ‘*se sentir mal*’ and ‘*pas mal*’.
- Ensure that students learn comparative and negative structures, such as ‘*pas plus ... que*’ and ‘*ne ... que*’.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop proficiency in searching for specific words in the dictionary, then contextually adjusting the translation to match the text; for example *déposer un dossier*.
- Increase your students’ cultural awareness of French-speaking countries other than France.
- Ensure that students know the different text types in detail.
- Provide opportunities for students to access the Written communication sections of past examinations, where they can practise reading very carefully the stimulus and the questions – both the English and French versions.

### **Comments on specific sections and questions**

#### **Practical examination**

##### **Part B: Discussion of stimulus (20 Marks)**

All candidates attempted this section. They were well-prepared and demonstrated a good to excellent knowledge of the course content. Most candidates generally only added a pertinent point, or conclusion, at the end of their stimulus when prompted. Some demonstrated not only competent language skills, but deep knowledge of the subject and beyond. Nearly all candidates presented a stimulus related in some way, to one or more of the Unit 3 or Unit 4 contexts.

##### **Part C: Conversation (20 Marks)**

All candidates attempted this section. Candidates ranged from those having excellent knowledge of each topic area to those who could not articulate beyond rehearsed speech. It is important that candidates understand that this part of the examination requires conversation.

#### **Written examination**

##### **Section One Response: Listening (29 Marks)**

Deceptive cognates and numbers challenged candidates. Many found it difficult to provide accurate translations and responses in clear, concise English. Only a few candidates used the notes section effectively.

##### **Section Two Response: Viewing and reading (64 Marks)**

The majority of candidates attempted all questions. While most candidates showed an overall understanding of the texts, their responses lacked detail. There was a notable lack of precision in English expression in candidates’ answers.

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

Question 28 was the popular choice but Question 29 produced a better performance. Some candidates did not follow the structure given for Question 28, nor provide the key conventions of a blog. Those candidates who chose to answer Question 29 made good use of the stimulus, using information such as the address and the requirement to be on the jury.

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

Question 30 was by far the most popular and Question 31 the least popular choice. Each of the three questions elicited similar content but a general weakness was a lack of relevant details and/or personal ideas. The conventions for a speech, an article or an email were not always widely used.