

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

FRENCH

MAY 2013

EXAMINERS' REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE

EXAMINATIONS' BOARD

**SEC FRENCH
MAY 2013 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

1. General**1.1 Registration for Examination**

997 candidates registered for Paper A and 405 candidates registered for Paper B.

1.2 Attendance for Examination

12 candidates (2 for Paper A and 10 for Paper B) did not turn up for the entire examination.

1.3 Overall Performance

Grades were distributed as indicated by the Table below.

MAY 2013 RESULTS										
GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER A	100	235	315	164	99			82	2	997
PAPER B				65	97	89	65	79	10	405
TOTAL	100	235	315	229	196	89	65	161	12	1402
% OF TOTAL	7.13	16.76	22.47	16.33	13.98	6.35	4.64	11.48	0.86	100

2.0 Remarks concerning different sections of the examination**2.1 Interprétation de l'Image**

As in past years, candidates were asked to choose a photograph and were given some time to examine the picture carefully.

The questions asked about the different photographs presented were uniform in their scope. Examiners routinely move from objective questions to more challenging ones.

Markers noted that evidence of preparation to face this exercise in an intelligent fashion is not steady. Some candidates are obviously well prepared but others lack even the most basic vocabulary: "un jeune homme", the expression of time of year, the expression of time, basic elements of physical description. These are essential and should by now be familiar to all candidates.

An important remark at this point is that candidates are expected not only to answer questions but to know how to make coherent conversation, to ask for repetition and clarification, as well as to improvise or simply say that they cannot answer a particular question (what is being tested is communicative competence).

2.2 Dictée

The same procedure used in previous years for the production of texts was maintained: a number of texts were chosen for the respective examination sessions. As far as possible, an effort was made to ensure the level of difficulty of the content was equal in all cases.

Although the candidates wrote one whole text, markers took account of pre-selected items which represented a range of lexical or grammatical components. It needs to be said that the emphasis does not fall on the simple spelling of nouns, which although important can be remedied in normal life with the use of a dictionary, but on the construction of meaningful items in context: the forms of homophonic words, the conjugation of verbs, the orthography of important prepositions, pronouns, etc.

2.3 Compréhension de l'Oral

It is repeatedly evident that while candidates are doing well in the listening aspect of this exercise, they need to put more effort into the way they express themselves. Even though they are not penalized for orthography, candidates still need to express their understanding clearly.

On the positive side, quite a number of candidates got full marks in this exercise.

2.4 Message à rédiger

Candidates were asked to write an e-mail to a cousin asking for an opinion. At the risk of being repetitive over the years, one needs to point out to candidates that it is important to read the instructions carefully. The cousin in question was not being asked to keep the pet while its owner was away, but was being asked for an opinion. The typical message here should have included naming a few options, with possible advantages and disadvantages being added.

Messages ranged from ones which were really to the point to others which were raw, incomprehensible or off the mark.

Markers are complaining of a lack of preparation (rough work) before the actual writing down of the message, as well as a lack of visual neatness, with a lot of words being crossed out and illegible texts.

2.5 Culture et civilisation

The format adopted was consistent with that of previous years. One should remember that this format seeks to minimize the amount of memorization in favour of knowledge of facts, even if a cue is required. Candidates scored well in this exercise.

2.6 Tâche à accomplir

The task set was a straightforward narrative, common to both Paper A and B, with some support provided in Paper B in the form of questions.

As in previous years, the marking was carried out at two different levels by two different markers: the communicative aspect was marked out of 6 and the linguistic aspect was marked out of 9.

2.7 Compréhension de l'écrit

The comprehension texts presented for Papers 2A and 2B were identical while the format of the questions was different. Markers indicated that the candidates' overall performance was good.

One still finds cases where candidates underperform, not because they do not understand the text but because they do not follow instructions, such as by exceeding word limits. Such issues can be worked on and can improve candidates' performance.

2.8 Exercices de langue

These exercises test various points that the candidate is expected to know.

In both Paper 2A and Paper 2B, an association exercise required candidates to choose a corresponding "answer" from clues available, not excluding a process of elimination.

The second exercise in Paper A dealt with the knowledge of tenses: candidates should now have a clear idea of what should be considered a priority in verb use and conjugation.

The corresponding second exercise in Paper B once more dealt with various points which the candidate could tackle banking on his/her general experience over the past years.

A look at the actual performance of candidates shows that they are actually performing well in exercises which demand reasoning. Performance declines dramatically in Paper 2A Exercise 2. Candidates fared better in Paper 2B Exercise 2.

3.0 General concluding remarks

Candidates' performance is steadily satisfactory in the "receptive" components (comprehension) but still needs to improve in the "productive" components.

One cannot say that there is no trend towards less drilling, more reasoning and more application in the format of the papers as well as in the performance of the candidates. The following are trends which if abided by should lead to an improvement in the candidates' performance:

- ✓ Making good use of time: thinking about answers before actually writing down the definitive version;
- ✓ Reading the instructions very carefully and respecting them;
- ✓ Learning how to re-read one's work: not just going over answers but re-reading questions and asking oneself if the answer corresponds to what was requested, and if the wording of the answer "looks right".