

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

FRENCH

MAY 2010

EXAMINERS' REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD

**IM FRENCH
MAY 2010 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

One hundred and twenty-two candidates registered for the French Intermediate examination and they were all present. Three candidates sat only for the written examination. The following table shows the distribution of grades.

Table 1 : Distribution of Grades May 2010

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	Abs.	Total
No. Of Grades	9	19	20	33	25	16	0	122
% of Total	7.4	15.6	16.4	27.0	20.5	13.1	0.0	100.0

The Written examination

1. Free Composition (25 marks)

The four titles were attempted. The most popular was title (c) where candidates were asked to write about the reflections they confided to their diary concerning their drug-addicted friend. Title (d) was also popular as the topic of friendship allowed the candidates to imagine a situation they could easily find themselves in. While title (a) appealed to the candidates' imagination and creativity and was well developed by most of the candidates who chose it, a few candidates misunderstood the first part of the title, "*Au seuil de votre maison [...]*". The word "seuil" was confused with the word "seul". Candidates wrote that they were all alone at home and they described how they went about looking for their birthday present all around the house, instead of dealing about the surprise found on the doorstep. Marks were deducted as their essay was slightly out of point. Very few candidates opted for title (b) that is, the dialogue between a mother and her spendthrift daughter.

Almost 50% of the candidates failed in this exercise while 9% obtained a mark equivalent to 75% or over. Two candidates left out the essay altogether. Year after year, candidates neglect the same basic grammar rules. The weakest points are the wrong use of the tenses and the conjugation of common irregular verbs. Other common mistakes concern direct and indirect pronouns, the relative pronouns and the rules regarding agreement. Candidates are encouraged to revise their work and look out for careless mistakes. The general presentation of the essay is often good and ideas are generally coherent. Candidates should read carefully the instructions regarding the number of words they are required to write. This year, many candidates wrote less than 230 words. Two students wrote even less than 100 words. As in past years, the limited vocabulary of some candidates is particularly worrying; some try to make up for this deficiency by trying their luck in inventing neologisms through their knowledge of either Italian or English or Maltese. Useless to say, such a strategy does not work.

2. Summary (25 marks)

36% of the candidates failed in this exercise while 13.1% obtained 75% or higher. This year, there was a big improvement regarding the word limit as a very small number of students exceeded 110 words; among these, one candidate "summarised" the passage by writing 171 words. However, some candidates went to the other extreme by summarising the passage in less than the minimum required, with the result that some secondary ideas were left out. A number of candidates copied directly from the text and they failed as they did not summarize the

text in their own words. In this exercise, the same grammatical errors referred to in the essay reappeared together with orthographical errors, mainly due to carelessness.

3. Literature (15 marks)

Only (5) five candidates failed in this exercise and 68% obtained 75% or over. This is a very satisfactory result. The answers were generally good, sometimes excellent, and to the point. Only (11) eleven candidates answered the questions on *Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon* and the same number of candidates answered in Maltese. As regards **question (a)**, candidates discussed in an interesting way the themes of vanity and pride as exhibited mostly by Monsieur Perrichon and le Commandant, whereas in **(b)** candidates aptly highlighted the competition for Henriette's hand between Armand and Daniel. They also explained what these two characters had in common while distinguishing their different personality, as Armand was sincere and generous, while Daniel was more cunning and calculating. A large majority of the candidates who prepared *Monsieur Ibrahim et les fleurs du Coran* chose question **(c)**. They were well prepared and included quotations in most of their answers. These quotations, though often not precise, were well placed and illustrated the particular point that was being discussed. They managed to bring out the fatherly figure of Moïse and how, through his generosity, he guided Ibrahim to grow into a mature adult. Almost all the candidates who chose question **(d)** obtained an excellent mark.

4. Civilisation (15 marks)

50% of the candidates failed in this exercise. Such a high percentage of failures show that this part of the paper need to be given the attention it deserves and that it is of crucial importance that candidates learn facts on French culture. Candidates have only a vague idea of some facts, with the result that they confuse them. For instance, some candidates confused *téléachat* with *télétravail*, while for B1 the correct answer was *le Comité Colbert* and not the *triangle d'or*. Candidates are advised to read the questions well before they rush to write their answers. Only 25% of the candidates chose Question A.

The Oral Examination (20 marks)

Three (3) candidates were absent while only six (6) candidates failed this test and 32% obtained 15 marks (75%) or over. These figures mark a big improvement over last year's result. In many cases, the dialogue ran smoothly, the candidates generally made good use of the preparation time at their disposal. In the reading passages, the main difficulties concerned numbers and intonation. Candidates should respect punctuation marks and reproduce them in their reading through correct intonation.

Chairman
Board of Examiners

October 2010