

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA  
THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION**

**INTERMEDIATE LEVEL**

**FRENCH  
MAY 2016**

**EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE  
EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

**IM FRENCH  
MAY 2016 SESSION  
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

Ninety-nine (99) candidates registered for the Intermediate French examination. The table below outlines how the candidates fared.

*Table 1: Grades attained by the candidates*

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	Abs	Total
<b>Number of Candidates</b>	8	22	32	18	9	8	2	99
<b>% of Total</b>	8.08	22.22	32.32	18.18	9.09	8.08	2.02	100

### The Written Examination

#### *Free Composition*

The most popular essay title was (d) as it was chosen by 56% of the candidates. Essay title (a) was chosen by 24% of the candidates and essay titles (b) and (c) were almost equal in popularity, the former being chosen by 11% of the candidates and the latter by 9% of the candidates. While a good number of candidates respected the expected layout of an informal letter, a number did not respect the format of an email. The content in almost all the essays was relevant to the title, however, the ideas presented were often not complex or mature enough.

In a significant number of scripts, the possessive adjectives were not used correctly, e.g. "mon famille" instead of "ma famille". Prepositions of place were also often used incorrectly, particularly "en" and "à". A very common mistake was writing "J'espère que tu es bien" instead of "que tu vas bien".

Many candidates showed that they were able to clearly distinguish between the use of the *passé composé* and that of the *imparfait*. Overall, the conjugation of the verbs in the *passé composé* was correct, however, the endings of the verbs in the *imparfait* were often not. The present tense was hardly used, even though it was needed at times. With regard to syntax, candidates often wrote "à toi" instead of "te", for example, "je voudrais dire à toi" instead of "je voudrais te dire". Candidates' responses also showed that they need to master the use of linking words which were either lacking or poor.

Some candidates lost marks for writing less than the required minimum of 230 words. The majority lost some marks for writing much more than the word limit.

#### *Summary*

The majority of the candidates found the summary more challenging than the essay. Although they showed an understanding of the passage, they were not able to use their own words. It is suggested that candidates become better acquainted with *le gérondif* so as to be able to make more use of it in their summary.

In a significant number of scripts, "exemple" was misspelt, and candidates often confused "a" with "à". A good number of candidates remembered to use "de" and not "des" after "beaucoup", however, they failed to observe the rule when using other expressions of quantity.

Many candidates were not selective enough when presenting the text's main ideas, consequently leaving out some important ones. Also, linking words were very much lacking, which is why a significant number of candidates lost marks for coherence and cohesion. As for the last line in the

original passage, many candidates simply reproduced it in their own summary. The majority of the candidates respected the word limit.

### *Literature*

Almost all the candidates chose to write about *Oscar et la Dame rose*, with 65% of the candidates choosing question (b) and around 34% of the candidates opting for (a). Only one candidate wrote about *L'Envol*, opting for question (d).

There were cases where candidates did not indicate clearly the chosen title, hence making it difficult for examiners to understand which title was being discussed.

Overall, most of the candidates showed a good understanding of both the text and the title, therefore they were able to present and discuss the main themes rather than simply narrate. The candidates who were able to discuss the novel were also able to present a good introduction and conclusion. On the other hand, the candidates who simply narrated the story often also did not give a good introduction and conclusion and therefore lost marks both for lack of discussion and for starting and ending their task inadequately.

Another reason why some candidates lost marks in their literature essay is that quotes were too short to be even considered as quotes and were often either not well memorised or not relevant to the point being made. No marks are awarded when a candidate inserts a French word in a sentence to try to make it look like a quote, for example, *he was starting to feel "fatigué"*. Moreover, a good number failed to make any reference to the author and his background.

### *Civilisation*

The majority of the candidates scored a high mark in the culture section. It seems that the new culture book introduced in the new syllabus has generated more interest among candidates as they showed a good understanding of the chapters on which they were tested overall.

The questions which proved to be more challenging than others were the ones which tested dates and percentages as well as the ones on the French national football team. Most candidates lost marks particularly in these areas.

### **The Oral Examination**

For the first time this year, candidates were asked two questions on the reading passage. The majority showed an understanding of the passage and gave satisfactory answers. Most candidates read their passage quite fluently, however, some simply concentrated on pronouncing words correctly. A number of candidates did not make a distinction between "*c'est*" and "*ce*" in the phrase "*ce n'est pas si difficile*". The "-ent" ending in verbs conjugated in the present tense was also mispronounced by some candidates, such as in the phrase "*qui nous empêchent*". Some also pronounced the "r" of verbs in the infinitive such as "*pour discuter*".

As for the Free Conversation exercise, candidates very often understood the chosen topic, presenting relevant ideas. Despite committing some grammatical mistakes and at times borrowing words from other languages, the majority tried to keep their conversation flowing and to interact with the examiner as much as possible.

At times, candidates had to be reminded that during the free conversation, they had to try and maintain eye contact with the examiner as much as possible and not look too often at the notes jotted down during preparation time.

*Chairperson*  
*2016 Examination Panel*