

AM SYLLABUS (2026)

FRENCH

AM 12

SYLLABUS

French Syllabus	AM 12 Paper 1 (2 hrs) + Paper II (3 hrs) + Paper III (2½ hrs) + Paper IV (30 mins) + Oral (15 mins)
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AIMS

The syllabus aims to consolidate and extend the knowledge of French acquired at SEC level by providing candidates the means of:

- understanding the spoken and written forms of the language from a variety of registers;
- reading coherently and articulating French linguistic sounds and French prosody in a context;
- being able to communicate intelligibly, confidently, fluently and with accuracy in spoken French;
- communicating accurately in writing;
- increasing their interest in a greater awareness of French culture and civilisation including *francophonie*, and developing critical insights into the culture of France and the other countries where French is spoken;
- instilling in them a love for French literature through the introduction of three integral texts. This introduction to French literature is meant to stimulate the students to read other books. These texts also serve to illustrate the language, improve the students' style and arouse a critical perception. It is also in itself an exercise in French civilisation and a reflection of life;
- acquiring such love for the language and the people who speak it as to encourage further studies at degree level.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The examination will test the candidate's ability to:

- respond to the language spoken at normal speed by reproducing in the Dictation test French sounds and punctuation, and also by communicating effectively in the dialogue through an exchange of ideas, opinions and information in correct French;
- respond to the written language by showing an understanding of French and an ability to reformulate data;
- express opinions and ideas in a coherent form and logical sequence, with the use of correct grammar and syntax, and to master a relatively wide range of vocabulary;
- demonstrate the ability to analyse a non-literary text by identifying its main theme or themes and analysing the form used to convey the same theme/themes. Candidates should be able to make linguistic remarks and analyse the functional element of the text as well as point out elements of style, features of language, the type of text and the author's intentions;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of aspects of French civilisation and culture;
- demonstrate a critical appreciation of the literary texts in the syllabus.

SUBJECT CONTENT**Introduction**

Four written papers are set. An oral examination will also be held for all candidates. Instructions in all the papers will be given in French.

Examination

Paper I *Analyse d'un texte non littéraire* (Two hours, 60 marks)

In this exercise candidates are advised to look for the main theme/s of the text (350-400 words) and to explain the subject-matter by analysing the form chosen to convey the theme/s. Candidates are strongly advised not to deviate by simply making a summary or paraphrase of the text.

Linguistic Remarks

- aspects of syntax (such as sentence structure, length of sentences, sequence of sentences, linking words, pronouns: place and use);

- (ii) lexical items (such as choice of vocabulary, frequency of words, alternative forms, key words and phrases).

Discourse Analysis

- (i) style (such as, point of view of the author, presence or complete absence of the author in the text, attitude of author, rhythm of text, imagery, symbolism, etc.);
- (ii) *Paraphrase référentielle*, features of language, likely to be used with reference to a notion, an action, an event, and other such elements present in the text;
- (iii) *Paraphrase pragmatique* through which the author expresses the same idea in different ways;
- (iv) type of text (descriptive, narrative, argumentative, dialogue form, or any combination) ;
- (v) author's intention in writing text (to warn, to instruct, to sensitise reader to some cause, to recommend, etc.)

Functional Analysis

- (i) tenses;
- (ii) mood;
- (iii) (a) aspect (*perfectif/ imperfectif; accompli/ non-accompli ou inaccompli*);
(b) procès d'un verbe (*inchoatif/non inchoatif, ponctuel/duratif, unique/itératif, conclusif/non conclusif*);
- (iv) direct/indirect speech.

Candidates are not expected to examine ALL these features. The analysis should not, however, be presented in point form, but in a passage of continuous prose. When quoting from the text, candidates are expected to use inverted commas and indicate the lines. Candidates are expected to use correct grammar and syntax. **The use of a French monolingual dictionary is permitted for this paper only.**

Paper II Essay and Written Comprehension (Three hours, 175 marks)

This paper will consist of:

(a) Essay (100 marks)

Candidates will be asked to write 350-400 words on a topic chosen from a list of 4/5 titles. These topics will be mainly argumentative, but descriptive and narrative topics are not excluded. Candidates are expected to demonstrate their ability to explain, argue, justify, describe, evaluate, present and discuss facts, etc., according to the topic chosen by them, in a logical and coherent manner, making use of correct grammar and syntax. They should also make use of a wide range of vocabulary and include idiomatic expressions.

(b) Written Comprehension (75 marks)

A set of questions dealing directly or indirectly with the subject-matter of the text (450-500 words), including questions on acts of speech¹ will be set in French. Candidates are advised to give full answers and to use correct grammar and syntax. They are expected to formulate their answers in such a way as to avoid repeating whole sentences or even phrases from the text.

Paper III Literary Studies (Two and a half hours, 75 marks)

This paper will be divided into two sections. Both sections are compulsory.

Section A will consist of two extracts from *Le malade imaginaire* followed by questions in French with reference to the context. Candidates have to choose one extract and answer in **French** all the questions following the extract of their choice.

¹ Questions on 'Reformulez' shall not be asked.

In Section B, two essay questions will be set in French on each of the other four prescribed texts. Candidates must answer **two** questions on **two different authors**. The answers in Section B may be given in French, Maltese or English. No extra marks will be given for answers in French. Candidates are also advised to include in their answers a few relevant quotations taken from the French text. In their answers, they may be expected to display knowledge not only of the text, but also of the author and the literary age in which he lived.

The following are the prescribed texts:

Molière, *Le malade imaginaire*, Bibliocollège, Classiques Hachette, 1999.

Victor Hugo, *Le dernier jour d'un condamné*, Collection Classiques et patrimoine, Magnard, 2012.

Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt, *Concerto à la mémoire d'un ange*, Gallimard, coll. Folio, 1972.

Joseph Joffo, *La jeune fille au pair*, Livre de poche, 1995.

Marcel Pagnol, *La femme du boulanger*, Paris, de Fallois, 2005.

Note : Other editions of the *texte intégral* of the prescribed texts may be used.

Paper IV Dictation (30 minutes, 30 marks)

The Dictation will consist of a passage of modern French (140-160 words). It will be read out once through. Then, it will be dictated in breath groups of words and each breath group will be repeated once. At the end of the dictation, the passage will be read through once again. Five minutes will then be allowed for revision. When these 5 minutes are over, the papers will be collected.

All punctuation marks included in the passage will be dictated by the examiner exclusively in French. French names and surnames which may appear in the text will be written in full on the board or spelt out in French before the dictation commences.

The Oral Examination (15 minutes, 60 marks)

Reading (15 marks)

The reading passage (approx. 140-160 words) will be taken from modern French. The objective of this exercise is to test the candidate's articulation of French linguistic sound and French prosody in a context.

Dialogue (45 marks)

The conversation exercise is made up of two components: free conversation and a dialogue based on the text set in the syllabus.

Free conversation (20 marks)

Free conversation is intended to test the candidate's ability to communicate in good spoken French. Six (6) themes will be set and candidates will be asked to draw **two** themes by lot. The candidate will then choose **one** theme which will be the subject of the conversation.

Dialogue on a set text (25 marks)

Prescribed text: Denis C. Meyer, *Clés pour la France*, Hachette, pages 8, *Apéritif*; 16, *Chefs*; 22, *Fromages*; 54, *Yannick Noah*; 56, *Édith Piaf*; 64, *Académie française*; 80, *Mai 68*; 88, *République*; 92, *2CV*; 100, *La Sorbonne*; 110, *TGV*; 122, *Canard Enchaîné*; 130, *Festival de Cannes*; 140, *Petit Prince*; 146, *Tintin*; 156, *Bricolage*; 168, *Rentrée*; 174, *Tour de France*.

Before the beginning of the oral examination, candidates will be asked to pick at random **three** topics on which this part of the examination will be based. No questions relating to the *Parler* and *Rechercher* sections of the text will be asked.

The preparation time for the reading, the free conversation and the dialogue on a set text will not be less than that of fifteen (15) minutes' duration.

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

The examination consists of four papers and an Oral examination. All instructions are given in French.

Paper I (Two hours)

This paper carries 60 marks. Only one exercise is given: *Analyse d'un texte non littéraire*. Candidates are expected to write one or more paragraphs in continuous prose as advised in the Subject Content dealing with this part of the paper.

Paper II (Three hours)

This paper consists of an essay which carries 100 marks and a written comprehension which carries 75 marks. Both exercises are compulsory. Candidates are given a choice of 4 or 5 topics and they are asked to write 350-400 words on any one topic of their choice. The questions on the written comprehension are all compulsory. The marks allotted to each of them are given on the question paper.

Paper III (Two and a half hours)

This paper carries 75 marks. Five literature text-books are set in the syllabus. Molière's comedy, *Le Malade imaginaire* must be studied by all the candidates, while candidates are free to choose any other two texts out of the remaining four. Candidates must answer one reference to the context question in Section A, and two questions in the form of an essay on two different texts in Section B. The questions in Section B may be answered in French, Maltese and English. Each question of each section carries 25 marks.

Paper IV (30 minutes)

This paper consists of a dictation (140-160 words) and it carries 30 marks. All proper nouns are written on a blackboard/whiteboard or spelt out in French before the commencement of the exam. All punctuation marks are dictated in French. The Dictation passage is read out once through. Then, it is dictated in breath groups of words and each breath group is repeated once. At the end of the dictation, the passage is read through once again. Five minutes are then allowed for revision. When these 5 minutes are over, the papers are collected.

The Oral Examination (15 minutes)

The candidate will have some 15 minutes to prepare her/himself for the oral component.

The Oral examination is made up of three components. As soon as the candidate enters the examination room, s/he is given a reading passage to prepare. The candidate is then asked to draw two conversation topics by lot and to choose one which will be the subject of the free conversation between her/him and the examiner.

After sitting for the reading component (15 marks), the candidate is examined in free conversation (20 marks). Topics of general interest are chosen. It is not the candidate's general knowledge which is tested but his/her ability to carry on a conversation in good, correct French. Spontaneous corrections are accepted.

Finally, the candidate is examined orally on the aspects of French civilisation set in the syllabus. This part of the examination carries 25 marks. The candidate will be asked to draw at random three themes out of the ones listed under the general title "Subject content".

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

Grade A is awarded to candidates who

(a) in the oral examination

- are able to respond readily and to speak fluently
- are able to develop their answers and to express themselves in idiomatic and correct French
- demonstrate accurate pronunciation and intonation and only occasionally hesitate or make some slight mistake
- demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the civilisation topics set in the syllabus

(b) in the written examination

- show clear understanding of written texts and the ability to infer meaning and ideas and to analyse detail, content and style
- communicate ideas and information clearly and effectively
- demonstrate a thorough knowledge of French grammar and syntax except for errors of a minor nature
- possess a wide range of vocabulary and idiom
- demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the literary texts by focusing on the particular aspect of the topic in question and through clear, concise and logical arguments supported by relevant references and quotations.

Grade C is awarded to candidates who

(a) in the oral examination

- respond readily but require some help to carry on a conversation at some length
- are able to express themselves in correct French but their vocabulary and idiom is quite limited
- may show some interference from other languages in their pronunciation and intonation
- show a satisfactory, though incomplete knowledge of the civilisation topics which, though satisfactory, is not complete

(b) in the written examination

- understand written texts and can identify the main arguments and analyse content and style
- communicate ideas and information clearly with limitations concerning vocabulary and expression
- demonstrate a knowledge of the basic grammar rules, in spite of some grammatical errors mainly due to negligence
- demonstrate a knowledge of the literary texts by focusing on the aspect of the topic in question, through arguments that are not always supported by a reasonable amount of references and quotations.

Grade E is awarded to candidates who

(a) in the oral examination

- are hesitant, lack fluency, and communication is restricted, with the result that their language becomes unintelligible
- make basic errors of grammar and syntax
- demonstrate that their pronunciation and intonation are influenced by interference from other languages

(b) in the written examination

- communicate ideas and information in a fairly comprehensible manner and with obvious difficulty
- demonstrate a very limited knowledge of French grammar and syntax and make basic errors
- demonstrate restricted vocabulary which often leads to repetition and shows interference from other languages

- do not plan their literary essays and lose sight of the question, reproducing memorised material which hardly bears any relation to the question
- do not support their literary arguments by any references or quotations.