



Cambridge International A Level

FRENCH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

9898/21

Paper 2 Writing

May/June 2026

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 40

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

This document consists of **14** printed pages.

General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: - the specific content defined in the mark scheme - the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions - the standard of response required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award whole marks (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks positively . This means that: - marks are not deducted for errors or omissions - marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for other valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate - the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged only when the mark scheme indicates that these features are specifically assessed in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must consistently apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and must not award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Credit for good language or content point
	Incorrect
	Omission
	Development, expansion of a point
	Grammatical, spelling or vocabulary error
	Irrelevant
	Repetition
	Meaning unclear or illegible
On page comment	Wrong question number given by candidate

Annotation	Meaning
	Used to show that blank pages have been seen and any creditworthy material has been awarded
Highlighter	Highlight
Off-page comment	Used to make a holistic comment about the script
	A section of the text to which the annotation refers

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Candidates respond to two questions. All candidates answer Question 1 and choose to answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3. Each question is worth 20 marks.

Candidates will be awarded marks in three categories for each response:

Question 1

- Content (maximum of 8 marks): see Table A
- Linguistic range and organisation (maximum of 6 marks): see Table B
- Language accuracy (maximum of 6 marks): see Table C.

Question 2 and Question 3

- Content (maximum of 8 marks): see Table D
- Linguistic range and organisation (maximum of 6 marks): see Table E
- Language accuracy (maximum of 6 marks): see Table F.

The Writing assessment objectives are:

- **W1:** Communicate information, opinions, arguments and creative ideas clearly and effectively, with support/justification.
- **W2:** Organise ideas into coherent text by using a range of cohesive devices and paragraphing where appropriate.
- **W3:** Use text conventions and register appropriate to the given purpose and audience.
- **W4:** Use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar effectively.
- **W5:** Use vocabulary and grammar accurately.

Generic guidance on using levels-based mark schemes

- (a) Marking of work should be positive, rewarding achievement where possible, but clearly differentiating across the whole range of marks, where appropriate.

The examiner should look at the work and then make a judgement about which level statement is the best fit. In practice, work does not always match one level statement precisely so a judgement may need to be made between two or more level statements.

Once a 'best-fit' level statement has been identified, examiners should use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:

- Where the candidate's work **convincingly** meets the level statement, award the highest mark.
- Where the candidate's work **just** meets the level statement, award the lowest mark.

- (b) Examiners are reminded that this is a language qualification aimed at assessing language proficiency at level B2 and C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The descriptions in this mark scheme should be understood and applied with reference to CEFR B2 and C1 levels.

TABLE A – Question 1 Content

W1: Communicate information, opinions, arguments and creative ideas clearly and effectively, with support/justification.

W3: Use text conventions and register appropriate to the given purpose and audience.

The recommended response length is 300–400 words. There will be no penalty for responses that do not adhere to the recommended response length.

Level	Description	Marks
4	- Information used is fully relevant to the question. - Fully develops complex ideas, expanding particular points, with a wide range of supporting evidence, justifications and examples. - A very detailed argumentative/discursive response, written in an assured and natural style appropriate to the task. - Convincingly argues a case and/or discusses both sides, with an effective conclusion.	7–8
3	- Information used is mostly relevant to the question. - Develops some complex ideas, expanding particular points, with a range of supporting evidence, justifications and examples. - A detailed argumentative/discursive response, written in a natural style appropriate to the task. - Clearly argues a case and/or discusses both sides, with a clear conclusion.	5–6
2	- Information used is partially relevant to the question. - Develops ideas and main points with some supporting evidence, giving reasons and examples. - An argumentative/discursive response with some detail, written in an appropriate style. - Argues a case and/or discusses both sides with some repetition. May draw a simple conclusion.	3–4
1	- Information used is occasionally relevant to the question. - Partially develops ideas and main points with occasional supporting reasons and examples. - An argumentative/discursive response with limited detail; attempts to write in an appropriate style. - There are inconsistencies in the argument or discussion with repetition.	1–2
0	No creditable response. Performance is below level 1.	0

TABLES B and C – Question 1 Quality of Written Communication

W2: Organise ideas into coherent text by using a range of cohesive devices and paragraphing where appropriate.

W4: Use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar effectively.

W5: Use vocabulary and grammar accurately.

Only work which is clearly related to the question can be considered when applying the marks for Quality of Written Communication. Essays which do not relate in any way to the exact essay title/question will be awarded 0 marks for content and 0 marks for language.

Table B Linguistic range and organisation		
Level	Description	Marks
3	• A clearly-organised and coherent text using a good range of cohesive devices and appropriate paragraphing. • Uses a wide range of grammar, including complex structures. • Uses a wide range of appropriate vocabulary including less common vocabulary. Uses language naturally and with ease.	5–6
2	• A generally well-organised and coherent text using a range of cohesive devices and possibly using paragraphing. • Uses a range of grammar including some complex structures. • Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary. Can avoid repetition with some success.	3–4
1	• The text is not well organised. May include limited or repetitive use of cohesive devices. • Uses mostly simple structures with occasional use of complex structures. • Uses vocabulary appropriate to the task, but frequently overuses some vocabulary.	1–2
0	• No creditable response. Performance is below level 1.	0

Table C Language accuracy

Level	Description	Marks
3	- Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy. - Spelling and punctuation are accurate with occasional slips. - Errors do not impede communication.	5–6
2	- Good use of simple grammar. Use of some complex grammar with occasional errors. - Spelling and punctuation are generally accurate, with occasional errors. - Errors rarely impede communication.	3–4
1	- Uses simple grammar, with some errors. - Attempts to use more complex grammar, with frequent errors. - Some errors in spelling and punctuation. - Errors sometimes impede communication.	1–2
0	No creditable response. Performance is below level 1.	0

TABLE D – Questions 2 and 3 Content

W1: Communicate information, opinions, arguments and creative ideas clearly and effectively, with support/justification.

W3: Use text conventions and register appropriate to the given purpose and audience.

The recommended response length is 300–400 words. There will be no penalty for responses that do not adhere to the recommended response length.

Level	Description		Marks
4	General - Fully develops more complex ideas, expanding particular points, with a wide range of supporting information and examples. - A very detailed descriptive or narrative response, written in an assured and natural style appropriate to the task.		7–8
	Specific – Descriptive - Very strongly conveyed and controlled description which is consistently developed. - Rich in experiences, ideas, images and/or sensory details, appropriate to the task.	Specific – Narrative - Very strongly conveyed and controlled narrative which is consistently developed. - Narrates real or imaginary events with convincing and engaging features appropriate to the task (e.g. plot, characterisation, effective climax).	
3	General - Develops some complex ideas, expanding particular points, with a range of supporting information and examples. - A detailed descriptive or narrative response, written in a natural style appropriate to the task.		5–6
	Specific – Descriptive - Strongly conveyed description which is well developed. - A good range of experiences, ideas, images and/or sensory details, appropriate to the task.	Specific – Narrative - Strongly conveyed narrative which is well developed. - Narrates real or imaginary events with clear and engaging features appropriate to the task (e.g. plot, characterisation, effective climax).	

Level	Description		Marks
2	General - Develops ideas and main points with some supporting information and examples. - A descriptive or narrative response with some detail, written in an appropriate style.		3–4
	Specific – Descriptive - Appropriately conveyed description which is developed. - A range of experiences, ideas, images and/or sensory details which are appropriate to the task.	Specific – Narrative - Appropriately conveyed narrative which is developed. - Narrates real or imaginary events with features appropriate to the task (e.g. plot, characterisation, effective climax).	
1	General - Partially develops ideas and main points with occasional supporting information and examples. - A descriptive or narrative response with limited detail; attempts to write in an appropriate style.		1–2
	Specific – Descriptive - Conveys a simple description which is occasionally developed. - Some experiences, ideas, images and/or sensory details, generally appropriate to the task.	Specific – Narrative - Conveys a simple narrative which is occasionally developed. - Narrates real or imaginary events with some features (e.g. plot, characterisation, climax) which are generally appropriate to the task.	
0	No creditable response. Performance is below level 1.		0

TABLES E and F – Questions 2 and 3 Quality of Written Communication

W2: Organise ideas into coherent text by using a range of cohesive devices and paragraphing where appropriate.

W4: Use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar effectively.

W5: Use vocabulary and grammar accurately.

Only work which is clearly related to the question can be considered when applying the marks for Quality of Written Communication. Essays which do not relate in any way to the exact essay title/question will be awarded 0 marks for content and 0 marks for language.

Table E Linguistic range and organisation		
Level	Description	Marks
3	• A clearly-organised and coherent text using a good range of cohesive devices and appropriate paragraphing. • Uses a wide range of grammar, including complex structures. • Uses a wide range of appropriate vocabulary including less common vocabulary. Uses language naturally and with ease.	5–6
2	• A generally well-organised and coherent text using a range of cohesive devices and possibly using paragraphing. • Uses a range of grammar including some complex structures. • Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary. Can avoid repetition with some success.	3–4
1	• The text is not well organised. May include limited or repetitive use of cohesive devices. • Uses mostly simple structures with occasional use of complex structures. • Uses vocabulary appropriate to the task, but frequently overuses some vocabulary.	1–2
0	• No creditable response. Performance is below level 1.	0

Table F Language accuracy

Level	Description	Marks
3	- Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy. - Spelling and punctuation are accurate with occasional slips. - Errors do not impede communication.	5–6
2	- Good use of simple grammar. Use of some complex grammar with occasional errors. - Spelling and punctuation are generally accurate, with occasional errors. - Errors rarely impede communication.	3–4
1	- Uses simple grammar, with some errors. - Attempts to use more complex grammar, with frequent errors. - Some errors in spelling and punctuation. - Errors sometimes impede communication.	1–2
0	No creditable response. Performance is below level 1.	0

Glossary of terms used in the Writing levels-based mark schemes**TABLES A and D – Content**

- **Argumentative:** An argumentative piece of writing attempts to clearly present a strong position on a particular topic. Its purpose is to both educate and persuade the reader on a particular point of view.
- **Discursive:** A discursive piece of writing presents a balanced examination of a subject. The response should present both sides of the discussion.
- **Descriptive:** A descriptive piece of writing describes a person, place or situation, creating an image with words so that the reader can picture it in their mind.
- **Narrative:** A narrative piece of writing tells a story containing a sequence of connected events which may be real or imaginary.

TABLES B, C and E, F – Quality of Written Communication

- **Range:** the variety of words and grammatical forms a candidate uses. At higher levels, candidates will make increasing use of a greater variety of words, fixed phrases, collocations and grammatical forms.
- **Cohesive devices:** refers to more sophisticated linking words and phrases (e.g. 'moreover', 'it may appear', 'as a result'), as well as grammatical devices such as the use of reference pronouns, substitution (e.g. There are two women in the picture. The one on the right ...), ellipsis (e.g. The first car he owned was a small car, the second a family car.).
- **Simple structures:** A simple structure is, for example, a sentence that has just one independent clause (i.e. it stands alone and expresses one complete thought) and uses a basic tense.
- **Complex structures:** A complex structure is, for example, a sentence that has an independent clause (i.e. it stands alone and expresses one complete thought) and a dependent clause (i.e. one that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence because it does not express a complete thought).
- **Errors and slips:** **Errors** are systematic mistakes. **Slips** are mistakes that are non-systematic, i.e. the candidate has learned the vocabulary item or grammatical structure, but just happened to make a mistake in this instance. In a candidate's response, where most other examples of a lexical/grammatical point are accurate, a mistake on that point would most likely be a slip.
- **Impede communication:** gets in the way of meaning.
- **Simple grammar:** words, phrases, basic tenses and simple clauses.
- **Complex grammar:** longer and more complex items, e.g. noun clauses, relative and adverb clauses, subordination, passive forms, infinitives, verb patterns, modal forms and tense contrasts.