

# Cambridge International A Level

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**FRENCH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE****9898/31**

Paper 3 Literature

**May/June 2026****MARK SCHEME**Maximum Mark: 40

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**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.

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This document consists of **6** 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the specific <b>content</b> defined in the mark scheme</li> <li>the specific <b>skills</b> defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions</li> <li>the <b>standard of response</b> required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2 | Examiners must award <b>whole marks</b> (not half marks, or other fractions).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 3 | Examiners must award marks <b>positively</b> . This means that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>marks are not deducted for errors or omissions</li> <li>marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for <b>other valid answers</b> which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate</li> <li>the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged <b>only</b> when the mark scheme indicates that these features are <b>specifically assessed</b> in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.</li> </ul> |
| 4 | Examiners must <b>consistently</b> 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 <b>full range of marks</b> 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 <b>must not</b> 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                                                                           |
|  | Irrelevant                                                                         |
|  | Repetition                                                                         |
|  | Development, expansion of a point                                                  |
|  | Relevant detail                                                                    |
|  | Evaluation                                                                         |
|  | Relevant example used                                                              |
|  | Meaning unclear or illegible                                                       |
|  | To indicate that page has been seen and any creditworthy material has been awarded |
| On-page comment                                                                     | Wrong question number given by candidate                                           |
| Highlighter                                                                         | Highlight                                                                          |
| Off-page comment                                                                    | Used to make a holistic comment about the script                                   |

Candidates respond to two questions. One from Section A and one from Section B. Each question is worth 20 marks.

The recommended response length is 400–500 words for each question. There will be no penalty for responses that do not adhere to the recommended response length.

Candidates will write their answers in French. Examiners will look for a candidate's ability to communicate effectively and will ignore linguistic errors which do not impede communication.

*Passage based questions:* Examiners should consider the extent to which candidates have been able to identify the significant issues raised in the passage and, where appropriate, have applied these to the text as a whole. The passage is a stimulus passage, to be used as a springboard to give candidates a starting point for their answer.

*Essay questions:* Examiners should consider the extent to which candidates show detailed knowledge and understanding of the wider text.

Candidates may address the question in many different ways. There is no one required answer or approach, so do not penalise answers for leaving out a particular focus.

The Literature assessment objectives are:

- L1:** Present a relevant, structured and supported response.
- L2:** Demonstrate understanding of literary texts in a variety of genres, with an appreciation of relevant contexts and cultures.
- L3:** Analyse ways in which writers create meaning and effects to engage the reader.
- L4:** Produce personal opinions and interpretations of literary texts.

### 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:

- If the candidate's work **convincingly** meets the level statement, award the highest mark.
- If the candidate's work **adequately** meets the level statement, award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range (where middle marks are available).
- If the candidate's work **just** meets the level statement, award the lowest mark.

- (b) Examiners are reminded that in the Literature component language proficiency is not the focus of the assessment; this component is aimed at assessing candidates' responses to literature at level B2 and C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The descriptors in this mark scheme should be understood and applied with reference to CEFR B2 and C1 level of the relevant tables.

| Level    | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Marks |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>5</b> | <b>Perceptive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents a relevant, focused and well-structured response to the question. The response is supported by appropriate and concise textual references or quotations.</li> <li>Shows consistently detailed knowledge and understanding of the text and its themes, including context that is relevant to the question.</li> <li>Demonstrates perceptive analysis of the ways the writer conveys meaning and creates effects in the text; can comment in detail on how the text engages the reader.</li> <li>Produces a thoughtful and balanced personal interpretation and analysis of the text.</li> </ul> | 17–20 |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Competent</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents a relevant, mostly focused and structured response to the question. The response is supported by appropriate textual references or quotations.</li> <li>Shows sound knowledge and understanding of the text and its themes.</li> <li>Demonstrates sound awareness of the ways the writer conveys meaning and creates effects in the text. Some analysis and evaluation. Can comment on how the text engages the reader.</li> <li>Produces a personal interpretation with some analysis of the text.</li> </ul>                                                                                  | 13–16 |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Satisfactory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents a more generalised response to the question. There is an attempt to structure the response. Includes some relevant references or quotations but may omit key points.</li> <li>Knows the text and shows some understanding of the themes; may focus on narrative.</li> <li>Demonstrates some awareness of the ways the writer creates meaning and effects but tends to describe rather than analyse.</li> <li>Expresses a personal response to the work, showing some understanding of the text. Little analysis.</li> </ul>                                                                  | 9–12  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Limited</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responds with limited focus on the question. References to the text are not always correct or relevant.</li> <li>Shows limited knowledge of the text and limited understanding of the themes, focusing on narrative.</li> <li>Shows limited awareness and understanding of how the writer creates meaning and effects.</li> <li>Expresses a personal response which includes some references to the text, without analysis.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                     | 5–8   |
| <b>1</b> | <b>Simplistic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responds in an unstructured way, with little or no focus on the question. Few and/or irrelevant textual references.</li> <li>Little knowledge of the text. Response is too general to show understanding.</li> <li>Shows little awareness of how the writer creates meaning and effects.</li> <li>Expresses a simplistic personal response.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 1–4   |
| <b>0</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No creditable response.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 0     |

**Glossary of terms used in the Literature levels-based mark schemes**

**Textual references:** A textual reference paraphrases or gives a short summary of a part or parts of the text.

**Quotations:** Quotations are words or phrases copied directly from the text.

**Themes:** Themes are the key ideas, subjects or deeper meanings that a writer communicates throughout their work.

**Context:** Context refers to the time or location in which the writer lived or the writer's personal experience. It may also refer to the cultural, historical and physical setting of the text.

**Conveys meaning:** This refers to how writers use language to communicate their ideas.

**Creates effects:** This refers to the ways in which writers use language and techniques to create specific effects for the reader such as building tension or creating sympathy for a character.

**Engages the reader:** This refers to the ways in which writers actively shape their material to interest and hold the attention of their readers.

**Personal interpretation:** This refers to a candidate expressing their individual opinions about a text. It does not refer to opinions or interpretations produced by other writers/editors.

**Narrative:** Narrative is used to describe a response that focuses on retelling the story or plot.