FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9898/11
Reading

Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key
1	C	11	H	21	C	31	D
2	B	12	E	22	A	32	B
3	D	13	C	23	D	33	A
4	A	14	B	24	A	34	B
5	B	15	C	25	B	35	C
6	A	16	A	26	A	36	D
7	G	17	D	27	B	37	B
8	D	18	A	28	A	38	D
9	A	19	B	29	B	39	C
10	B	20	C	30	C	40	A

General comments

Candidates generally performed well across the paper. Questions for texts 1 and 5 were answered particularly well. Some candidates found the questions for text 4 more challenging.

Questions 1–6

Most candidates were able to find the correct answers to **Questions 1**, **3**, **4**, **5** and **6**. **Question 2** was answered correctly by stronger candidates. It required candidates to recognise implicit, rather than clearly stated, information within the text. For **Question 3**, a few candidates answered **A**, possibly misunderstanding '*se transmet*', while for **Question 6** some candidates conflated *'mondialisation'* with *'la loi'*. **Question 5** was answered correctly by almost all candidates.

Questions 7–12

These questions were answered well by the majority of candidates. For **Question 12**, some chose **C**, as a summary of environmental impact, rather than the success of the messaging.

Questions 13–20

In this part, **Questions 19** and **20** were the most successfully answered, with candidates at all levels selecting the correct response. For **Question 13**, some candidates selected option **D**, incorrectly word-spotting *'paresse'* in the question and linking it to *'paresseux'* in the text. For **Question 15**, the vocabulary item *'boulot'* appeared to cause a few issues, while for **Question 16**, some candidates wrongly linked *'professeur'* with *'profession'*.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Questions 20–32

Weaker candidates found this the most difficult section, especially where the requirement was to select the correct vocabulary item. **Questions 23** and **25** were only answered correctly by the strongest candidates. For **Questions 21** and **30** candidates needed to read on to the following sentence to ensure selection of the correct item.

Questions 22, **23** and **25** tested quite specialised vocabulary which was evidently not well known by many candidates. For **Question 24** and **28**, some candidates misunderstood and selected a response which was opposite in meaning to the gist of the text, while **Question 28** required reference back to the idea discussed at the beginning of the text. A number of candidates found the grammatical tasks challenging, including the use of *'depuis'*, the use of the subjunctive mood with *'à condition que'*, and the tense sequence *'si + imperfect + conditional'*.

Questions 33–40

Questions 33, **34**, **36** and **38** were answered correctly by most candidates. For **Question 35**, some were confused about the use of *'ce qui'*. This led them to choose an answer which opposed the general message of the text. Some candidates did not recognise *'poissons'* as *'faune'* and read further on and tenuously linked *'ennuient les baigneurs'*, with *'contaminent trop souvent les océans'* for **Question 37**. For **Question 39**, candidates needed to realise that *'assiettes'* implied *'consommation'* and to rule out *'pas toujours'* and *'rarement'*, which only the very best candidates were able to do. The final question needed candidates to spot that the answer was present in a sentence used as a distractor for **Question 39**.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9898/12
Reading

Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key
1	C	11	H	21	C	31	D
2	B	12	E	22	A	32	B
3	D	13	C	23	D	33	A
4	A	14	B	24	A	34	B
5	B	15	C	25	B	35	C
6	A	16	A	26	A	36	D
7	G	17	D	27	B	37	B
8	D	18	A	28	A	38	D
9	A	19	B	29	B	39	C
10	B	20	C	30	C	40	A

General comments

Candidates generally performed well across the paper. Questions for texts 1 and 5 were answered particularly well. Some candidates found the questions for text 4 more challenging.

Questions 1–6

Most candidates were able to find the correct answers to **Questions 1**, **3**, **4**, **5** and **6**. **Question 2** was answered correctly by stronger candidates. It required candidates to recognise implicit, rather than clearly stated, information within the text. For **Question 3**, a few candidates answered **A**, possibly misunderstanding '*se transmet*', while for **Question 6** some candidates conflated *'mondialisation'* with *'la loi'*. **Question 5** was answered correctly by almost all candidates.

Questions 7–12

These questions were answered well by the majority of candidates. For **Question 12**, some chose **C**, as a summary of environmental impact, rather than the success of the messaging.

Questions 13–20

In this part, **Questions 19** and **20** were the most successfully answered, with candidates at all levels selecting the correct response. For **Question 13**, some candidates selected option **D**, incorrectly word-spotting *'paresse'* in the question and linking it to *'paresseux'* in the text. For **Question 15**, the vocabulary item *'boulot'* appeared to cause a few issues, while for **Question 16**, some candidates wrongly linked *'professeur'* with *'profession'*.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Questions 20–32

Weaker candidates found this the most difficult section, especially where the requirement was to select the correct vocabulary item. **Questions 23** and **25** were only answered correctly by the strongest candidates. For **Questions 21** and **30** candidates needed to read on to the following sentence to ensure selection of the correct item.

Questions 22, **23** and **25** tested quite specialised vocabulary which was evidently not well known by many candidates. For **Question 24** and **28**, some candidates misunderstood and selected a response which was opposite in meaning to the gist of the text, while **Question 28** required reference back to the idea discussed at the beginning of the text. A number of candidates found the grammatical tasks challenging, including the use of *'depuis'*, the use of the subjunctive mood with *'à condition que'*, and the tense sequence *'si + imperfect + conditional'*.

Questions 33–40

Questions 33, **34**, **36** and **38** were answered correctly by most candidates. For **Question 35**, some were confused about the use of *'ce qui'*. This led them to choose an answer which opposed the general message of the text. Some candidates did not recognise *'poissons'* as *'faune'* and read further on and tenuously linked *'ennuient les baigneurs'*, with *'contaminent trop souvent les océans'* for **Question 37**. For **Question 39**, candidates needed to realise that *'assiettes'* implied *'consommation'* and to rule out *'pas toujours'* and *'rarement'*, which only the very best candidates were able to do. The final question needed candidates to spot that the answer was present in a sentence used as a distractor for **Question 39**.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9898/13
Reading

Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key
1	C	11	H	21	C	31	D
2	B	12	E	22	A	32	B
3	D	13	C	23	D	33	A
4	A	14	B	24	A	34	B
5	B	15	C	25	B	35	C
6	A	16	A	26	A	36	D
7	G	17	D	27	B	37	B
8	D	18	A	28	A	38	D
9	A	19	B	29	B	39	C
10	B	20	C	30	C	40	A

General comments

Candidates generally performed well across the paper. Questions for texts 1 and 5 were answered particularly well. Some candidates found the questions for text 4 more challenging.

Questions 1–6

Most candidates were able to find the correct answers to **Questions 1**, **3**, **4**, **5** and **6**. **Question 2** was answered correctly by stronger candidates. It required candidates to recognise implicit, rather than clearly stated, information within the text. For **Question 3**, a few candidates answered **A**, possibly misunderstanding '*se transmet*', while for **Question 6** some candidates conflated *'mondialisation'* with *'la loi'*. **Question 5** was answered correctly by almost all candidates.

Questions 7–12

These questions were answered well by the majority of candidates. For **Question 12**, some chose **C**, as a summary of environmental impact, rather than the success of the messaging.

Questions 13–20

In this part, **Questions 19** and **20** were the most successfully answered, with candidates at all levels selecting the correct response. For **Question 13**, some candidates selected option **D**, incorrectly word-spotting *'paresse'* in the question and linking it to *'paresseux'* in the text. For **Question 15**, the vocabulary item *'boulot'* appeared to cause a few issues, while for **Question 16**, some candidates wrongly linked *'professeur'* with *'profession'*.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Questions 20–32

Weaker candidates found this the most difficult section, especially where the requirement was to select the correct vocabulary item. **Questions 23** and **25** were only answered correctly by the strongest candidates. For **Questions 21** and **30** candidates needed to read on to the following sentence to ensure selection of the correct item.

Questions 22, **23** and **25** tested quite specialised vocabulary which was evidently not well known by many candidates. For **Question 24** and **28**, some candidates misunderstood and selected a response which was opposite in meaning to the gist of the text, while **Question 28** required reference back to the idea discussed at the beginning of the text. A number of candidates found the grammatical tasks challenging, including the use of *'depuis'*, the use of the subjunctive mood with *'à condition que'*, and the tense sequence *'si + imperfect + conditional'*.

Questions 33–40

Questions 33, **34**, **36** and **38** were answered correctly by most candidates. For **Question 35**, some were confused about the use of *'ce qui'*. This led them to choose an answer which opposed the general message of the text. Some candidates did not recognise *'poissons'* as *'faune'* and read further on and tenuously linked *'ennuient les baigneurs'*, with *'contaminent trop souvent les océans'* for **Question 37**. For **Question 39**, candidates needed to realise that *'assiettes'* implied *'consommation'* and to rule out *'pas toujours'* and *'rarement'*, which only the very best candidates were able to do. The final question needed candidates to spot that the answer was present in a sentence used as a distractor for **Question 39**.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9898/21
Writing

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates should:

- read the questions carefully
- write logical, well-illustrated answers on the precise question
- use a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures
- use clear and well-linked paragraphs.

General comments

For ***Section A* Question 1**, which is an essay that can be argumentative or discursive in nature, candidates should take time to plan their responses. They should write an introduction that makes close reference to the question, then construct a logical, relevant and clear argument before providing a conclusion that displays a considered final judgement of the issues discussed, not merely a repetition of points made. Their essays should be coherent and present well-developed ideas. For the argumentative essay, they should be able to take a specific position on a topic and argue for or against it. For the discursive essay, they should be able to discuss both sides of a topic, presenting balanced arguments from different perspectives with examples. Candidates should be able to use wide-ranging vocabulary, correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Candidates should also use the correct register in a formal essay: words such as *truc*, *boulot* or *mecs* are not appropriate. The use of *tu* in formal essays is also not appropriate.

In ***Section B***, candidates can choose between a descriptive or narrative piece of writing. If they choose the descriptive question, they should be able to produce very detailed descriptions of people, places and situations. Descriptive writing needs to include detail and structure. Descriptions should be rich and include the sensory dimension essential to a convincing piece of writing. To avoid becoming too narrative, candidates should plan their answers before beginning to write and check them at the end. The sensitive use of adjectives, adverbs and comparisons will help to provide a multi-layered experience for the reader.

If they choose the narrative question, the subject matter should be thought through carefully and lend itself naturally to an effective narrative. They should attempt to write narratives that are fresh and original; learning something by heart and trying to make it fit will sound inauthentic and be less successful. The main purpose is to tell an interesting story that involves the reader both intellectually and emotionally, whilst also engaging the senses.

The narrative needs to have a beginning, middle and end that takes the reader on a journey where nothing is too predictable. The use of tenses should be consistent and accurate; candidates using the *passé simple* should be clear about how to form it.

Candidates need to leave time to check their work at the end of the examination. Essays should be read through for sense and then for language, checking for accents, misspellings, verb endings and agreements.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Au niveau individuel, les petites initiatives environnementales ne servent à rien pour sauver la planète. Êtes-vous d'accord ?

Almost all responses were written in paragraphs and had an introduction and conclusion, although some candidates answered the question set in their opening sentence saying immediately whether they agreed or not with the title statement. There was a considerable range of ability shown; at the upper end, essays were stylistically sophisticated and demonstrated an impressive control of language and argument. They deployed a good range of topic-appropriate vocabulary and were able to argue persuasively, fully developing complex ideas and using pertinent examples. Some responses, however, revealed a lack of planning and a tendency to include everything known on the topic without specific reference to the question.

There was a wide variety of responses to this question. The overall consensus was that individuals on their own could not save the planet but that environmental initiatives could be effective if more people adopted them. The notion of influence played strongly in arguments; the more seemingly small things people do, like recycling, planting trees and using public transport, the more they will influence and encourage other people to do the same. A concrete example was the oil spill off Mauritius where a snowball effect led to large numbers of people donating their hair to help soak up the oil. Greta Thunberg was also often quoted as an example of an individual taking action with important results.

The best responses argued that alongside the small initiatives there needed to be larger initiatives such as international treaties and strong penalties imposed on multinational companies who refuse to change to more environmentally friendly production methods. Other suggested ways forward were better education of the general population and the use of social media to keep environmental issues at the front of people's minds.

Some responses took the approach that individual actions were pointless when big companies and countries continue to use fossil fuels, when rich people organise trips to space and when it is too expensive for most people to buy an electric car or to become vegetarian. Others believed that large fines put in place by governments to prevent people from dropping litter or throwing rubbish into the rivers or sea would change behaviour enough to save the planet.

There were many thoughtful and well supported responses as well. Some weaker responses were a general essay on the environment and description of different types of pollution.

Section B

Question 2

Vous assistez à un carnaval. Décrivez ce que vous voyez, ainsi que les emotions et sensations que vous ressentez.

There were some very lively and interesting responses to this question. Most candidates were able to describe in some detail the type of carnival, its location and significance as well as the associated sights and sounds. Even when language accuracy was less good, there was still a good flavour of the event and the sensations it evoked. The best responses were those which made the carnival come alive in the reader's mind, judiciously using adjectives, adverbs and comparisons to create a multi-layered experience. For example « *Les confettis de toutes couleurs imaginables avaient trouvé refuge dans mes cheveux en m'offrant une teinture gratuite. », « Une odeur alléchante de fritures… », « Les lumières irisées des balançoires me rappellent les jours lointain de mon enfance. »*

Some weaker responses tended towards narrative, meaning that there was insufficient development of detail.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Question 3

Écrivez une histoire qui commence avec les mots suivants : C'est en sortant de l'aéroport que j'ai eu ma première surprise…

This question elicited a very wide range of responses. The important words in the title prompt were *aéroport, première* and *surprise* and these needed to be key in the narrative. In order to gain marks in the top level, responses needed to show a strongly conveyed and controlled narrative that convinced the reader. The strongest responses held the reader's attention through skilled use of an exciting plot and effective climax. They had a sense of drama, dealing with imaginary events such as going to another planet, meeting zombies or being taken hostage. These essays often ended with a cliff-hanger and were genuinely convincing to read. In weaker responses, the story was quite bland, with little to excite the reader, and a climax which fell flat, for example going to bed after a tiring day. Surprises were often quite moderate and there was often only one. Some responses only included the word *surprise* in the introduction, and it was hard to discover what the surprise actually was.

Language

Strong candidates demonstrated that they had mastery of basic grammar, including prepositions and agreements (singular/plural; masculine/feminine; subject/verb), use of accents. In weaker responses there was sometimes interference from their first language. Most candidates included a good range of vocabulary and attempted some complex grammatical structures and idiom.

Candidates should pay attention to the consistency of tenses, to ensure that the different tenses are appropriately used. They can use structures such as *avant de/après avoir* to help the narrative develop.

Candidates are advised to focus on the following linguistic points (this is not an exhaustive list).

Spelling of common words, including those provided in the questions. Errors included *pourqoi/pourqoui, beacoup*, *résaux, un individue, la plus part, environment, gouvernment, le stresse, l'aspet, deuxiement, neanmois*

Use of *comme/comment; par/pour; grâce à*/*à cause de/parce que/car*

Use of accent on *à* (specifically, not using it in the perfect tense: *l'éducation a été; le monde a changé*)

Use of the infinitive after modal verbs: *on doit utiliser*

Use of negatives, including both parts: *ce n'est pas*

Use of preposition after common verbs (*de*, *à*)

Avoiding repetitive use of vocabulary such as *chose/choses; personnes/gens; beaucoup; plusieurs*

The difference between *ces/ses/c'est; ça/sa; son/sont; ce/ceux; mais/mes/met; si/ci*

Correct verb conjugation after *cela*

Use of *c'est* and *il est*

Relative pronouns : *qui/que*

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9898/22
Writing

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates should:

- read the questions carefully
- write logical, well-illustrated answers on the precise question
- use a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures
- use clear and well-linked paragraphs.

General comments

For ***Section A* Question 1**, which is an essay that can be argumentative or discursive in nature, candidates should take time to plan their responses. They should write an introduction that makes close reference to the question, then construct a logical, relevant and clear argument before providing a conclusion that displays a considered final judgement of the issues discussed, not merely a repetition of points made. Their essays should be coherent and present well-developed ideas. For the argumentative essay, they should be able to take a specific position on a topic and argue for or against it. For the discursive essay, they should be able to discuss both sides of a topic, presenting balanced arguments from different perspectives with examples. Candidates should be able to use wide-ranging vocabulary, correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Candidates should also use the correct register in a formal essay: words such as *truc*, *boulot* or *mecs* are not appropriate. The use of *tu* in formal essays is also not appropriate.

In ***Section B***, candidates can choose between a descriptive or narrative piece of writing. If they choose the descriptive question, they should be able to produce very detailed descriptions of people, places and situations. Descriptive writing needs to include detail and structure. Descriptions should be rich and include the sensory dimension essential to a convincing piece of writing. To avoid becoming too narrative, candidates should plan their answers before beginning to write and check them at the end. The sensitive use of adjectives, adverbs and comparisons will help to provide a multi-layered experience for the reader.

If they choose the narrative question, the subject matter should be thought through carefully and lend itself naturally to an effective narrative. They should attempt to write narratives that are fresh and original; learning something by heart and trying to make it fit will sound inauthentic and be less successful. The main purpose is to tell an interesting story that involves the reader both intellectually and emotionally, whilst also engaging the senses.

The narrative needs to have a beginning, middle and end that takes the reader on a journey where nothing is too predictable. The use of tenses should be consistent and accurate; candidates using the *passé simple* should be clear about how to form it.

Candidates need to leave time to check their work at the end of the examination. Essays should be read through for sense and then for language, checking for accents, misspellings, verb endings and agreements.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Au niveau individuel, les petites initiatives environnementales ne servent à rien pour sauver la planète. Êtes-vous d'accord ?

Almost all responses were written in paragraphs and had an introduction and conclusion, although some candidates answered the question set in their opening sentence saying immediately whether they agreed or not with the title statement. There was a considerable range of ability shown; at the upper end, essays were stylistically sophisticated and demonstrated an impressive control of language and argument. They deployed a good range of topic-appropriate vocabulary and were able to argue persuasively, fully developing complex ideas and using pertinent examples. Some responses, however, revealed a lack of planning and a tendency to include everything known on the topic without specific reference to the question.

There was a wide variety of responses to this question. The overall consensus was that individuals on their own could not save the planet but that environmental initiatives could be effective if more people adopted them. The notion of influence played strongly in arguments; the more seemingly small things people do, like recycling, planting trees and using public transport, the more they will influence and encourage other people to do the same. A concrete example was the oil spill off Mauritius where a snowball effect led to large numbers of people donating their hair to help soak up the oil. Greta Thunberg was also often quoted as an example of an individual taking action with important results.

The best responses argued that alongside the small initiatives there needed to be larger initiatives such as international treaties and strong penalties imposed on multinational companies who refuse to change to more environmentally friendly production methods. Other suggested ways forward were better education of the general population and the use of social media to keep environmental issues at the front of people's minds.

Some responses took the approach that individual actions were pointless when big companies and countries continue to use fossil fuels, when rich people organise trips to space and when it is too expensive for most people to buy an electric car or to become vegetarian. Others believed that large fines put in place by governments to prevent people from dropping litter or throwing rubbish into the rivers or sea would change behaviour enough to save the planet.

There were many thoughtful and well supported responses as well. Some weaker responses were a general essay on the environment and description of different types of pollution.

Section B

Question 2

Vous assistez à un carnaval. Décrivez ce que vous voyez, ainsi que les emotions et sensations que vous ressentez.

There were some very lively and interesting responses to this question. Most candidates were able to describe in some detail the type of carnival, its location and significance as well as the associated sights and sounds. Even when language accuracy was less good, there was still a good flavour of the event and the sensations it evoked. The best responses were those which made the carnival come alive in the reader's mind, judiciously using adjectives, adverbs and comparisons to create a multi-layered experience. For example « *Les confettis de toutes couleurs imaginables avaient trouvé refuge dans mes cheveux en m'offrant une teinture gratuite. », « Une odeur alléchante de fritures… », « Les lumières irisées des balançoires me rappellent les jours lointain de mon enfance. »*

Some weaker responses tended towards narrative, meaning that there was insufficient development of detail.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Question 3

Écrivez une histoire qui commence avec les mots suivants : C'est en sortant de l'aéroport que j'ai eu ma première surprise…

This question elicited a very wide range of responses. The important words in the title prompt were *aéroport, première* and *surprise* and these needed to be key in the narrative. In order to gain marks in the top level, responses needed to show a strongly conveyed and controlled narrative that convinced the reader. The strongest responses held the reader's attention through skilled use of an exciting plot and effective climax. They had a sense of drama, dealing with imaginary events such as going to another planet, meeting zombies or being taken hostage. These essays often ended with a cliff-hanger and were genuinely convincing to read. In weaker responses, the story was quite bland, with little to excite the reader, and a climax which fell flat, for example going to bed after a tiring day. Surprises were often quite moderate and there was often only one. Some responses only included the word *surprise* in the introduction, and it was hard to discover what the surprise actually was.

Language

Strong candidates demonstrated that they had mastery of basic grammar, including prepositions and agreements (singular/plural; masculine/feminine; subject/verb), use of accents. In weaker responses there was sometimes interference from their first language. Most candidates included a good range of vocabulary and attempted some complex grammatical structures and idiom.

Candidates should pay attention to the consistency of tenses, to ensure that the different tenses are appropriately used. They can use structures such as *avant de/après avoir* to help the narrative develop.

Candidates are advised to focus on the following linguistic points (this is not an exhaustive list).

Spelling of common words, including those provided in the questions. Errors included *pourqoi/pourqoui, beacoup*, *résaux, un individue, la plus part, environment, gouvernment, le stresse, l'aspet, deuxiement, neanmois*

Use of *comme/comment; par/pour; grâce à*/*à cause de/parce que/car*

Use of accent on *à* (specifically, not using it in the perfect tense: *l'éducation a été; le monde a changé*)

Use of the infinitive after modal verbs: *on doit utiliser*

Use of negatives, including both parts: *ce n'est pas*

Use of preposition after common verbs (*de*, *à*)

Avoiding repetitive use of vocabulary such as *chose/choses; personnes/gens; beaucoup; plusieurs*

The difference between *ces/ses/c'est; ça/sa; son/sont; ce/ceux; mais/mes/met; si/ci*

Correct verb conjugation after *cela*

Use of *c'est* and *il est*

Relative pronouns : *qui/que*

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9898/23
Writing

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates should:

- read the questions carefully
- write logical, well-illustrated answers on the precise question
- use a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures
- use clear and well-linked paragraphs.

General comments

For ***Section A* Question 1**, which is an essay that can be argumentative or discursive in nature, candidates should take time to plan their responses. They should write an introduction that makes close reference to the question, then construct a logical, relevant and clear argument before providing a conclusion that displays a considered final judgement of the issues discussed, not merely a repetition of points made. Their essays should be coherent and present well-developed ideas. For the argumentative essay, they should be able to take a specific position on a topic and argue for or against it. For the discursive essay, they should be able to discuss both sides of a topic, presenting balanced arguments from different perspectives with examples. Candidates should be able to use wide-ranging vocabulary, correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Candidates should also use the correct register in a formal essay: words such as *truc*, *boulot* or *mecs* are not appropriate. The use of *tu* in formal essays is also not appropriate.

In ***Section B***, candidates can choose between a descriptive or narrative piece of writing. If they choose the descriptive question, they should be able to produce very detailed descriptions of people, places and situations. Descriptive writing needs to include detail and structure. Descriptions should be rich and include the sensory dimension essential to a convincing piece of writing. To avoid becoming too narrative, candidates should plan their answers before beginning to write and check them at the end. The sensitive use of adjectives, adverbs and comparisons will help to provide a multi-layered experience for the reader.

If they choose the narrative question, the subject matter should be thought through carefully and lend itself naturally to an effective narrative. They should attempt to write narratives that are fresh and original; learning something by heart and trying to make it fit will sound inauthentic and be less successful. The main purpose is to tell an interesting story that involves the reader both intellectually and emotionally, whilst also engaging the senses.

The narrative needs to have a beginning, middle and end that takes the reader on a journey where nothing is too predictable. The use of tenses should be consistent and accurate; candidates using the *passé simple* should be clear about how to form it.

Candidates need to leave time to check their work at the end of the examination. Essays should be read through for sense and then for language, checking for accents, misspellings, verb endings and agreements.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Au niveau individuel, les petites initiatives environnementales ne servent à rien pour sauver la planète. Êtes-vous d'accord ?

Almost all responses were written in paragraphs and had an introduction and conclusion, although some candidates answered the question set in their opening sentence saying immediately whether they agreed or not with the title statement. There was a considerable range of ability shown; at the upper end, essays were stylistically sophisticated and demonstrated an impressive control of language and argument. They deployed a good range of topic-appropriate vocabulary and were able to argue persuasively, fully developing complex ideas and using pertinent examples. Some responses, however, revealed a lack of planning and a tendency to include everything known on the topic without specific reference to the question.

There was a wide variety of responses to this question. The overall consensus was that individuals on their own could not save the planet but that environmental initiatives could be effective if more people adopted them. The notion of influence played strongly in arguments; the more seemingly small things people do, like recycling, planting trees and using public transport, the more they will influence and encourage other people to do the same. A concrete example was the oil spill off Mauritius where a snowball effect led to large numbers of people donating their hair to help soak up the oil. Greta Thunberg was also often quoted as an example of an individual taking action with important results.

The best responses argued that alongside the small initiatives there needed to be larger initiatives such as international treaties and strong penalties imposed on multinational companies who refuse to change to more environmentally friendly production methods. Other suggested ways forward were better education of the general population and the use of social media to keep environmental issues at the front of people's minds.

Some responses took the approach that individual actions were pointless when big companies and countries continue to use fossil fuels, when rich people organise trips to space and when it is too expensive for most people to buy an electric car or to become vegetarian. Others believed that large fines put in place by governments to prevent people from dropping litter or throwing rubbish into the rivers or sea would change behaviour enough to save the planet.

There were many thoughtful and well supported responses as well. Some weaker responses were a general essay on the environment and description of different types of pollution.

Section B

Question 2

Vous assistez à un carnaval. Décrivez ce que vous voyez, ainsi que les emotions et sensations que vous ressentez.

There were some very lively and interesting responses to this question. Most candidates were able to describe in some detail the type of carnival, its location and significance as well as the associated sights and sounds. Even when language accuracy was less good, there was still a good flavour of the event and the sensations it evoked. The best responses were those which made the carnival come alive in the reader's mind, judiciously using adjectives, adverbs and comparisons to create a multi-layered experience. For example « *Les confettis de toutes couleurs imaginables avaient trouvé refuge dans mes cheveux en m'offrant une teinture gratuite. », « Une odeur alléchante de fritures… », « Les lumières irisées des balançoires me rappellent les jours lointain de mon enfance. »*

Some weaker responses tended towards narrative, meaning that there was insufficient development of detail.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Question 3

Écrivez une histoire qui commence avec les mots suivants : C'est en sortant de l'aéroport que j'ai eu ma première surprise…

This question elicited a very wide range of responses. The important words in the title prompt were *aéroport, première* and *surprise* and these needed to be key in the narrative. In order to gain marks in the top level, responses needed to show a strongly conveyed and controlled narrative that convinced the reader. The strongest responses held the reader's attention through skilled use of an exciting plot and effective climax. They had a sense of drama, dealing with imaginary events such as going to another planet, meeting zombies or being taken hostage. These essays often ended with a cliff-hanger and were genuinely convincing to read. In weaker responses, the story was quite bland, with little to excite the reader, and a climax which fell flat, for example going to bed after a tiring day. Surprises were often quite moderate and there was often only one. Some responses only included the word *surprise* in the introduction, and it was hard to discover what the surprise actually was.

Language

Strong candidates demonstrated that they had mastery of basic grammar, including prepositions and agreements (singular/plural; masculine/feminine; subject/verb), use of accents. In weaker responses there was sometimes interference from their first language. Most candidates included a good range of vocabulary and attempted some complex grammatical structures and idiom.

Candidates should pay attention to the consistency of tenses, to ensure that the different tenses are appropriately used. They can use structures such as *avant de/après avoir* to help the narrative develop.

Candidates are advised to focus on the following linguistic points (this is not an exhaustive list).

Spelling of common words, including those provided in the questions. Errors included *pourqoi/pourqoui, beacoup*, *résaux, un individue, la plus part, environment, gouvernment, le stresse, l'aspet, deuxiement, neanmois*

Use of *comme/comment; par/pour; grâce à*/*à cause de/parce que/car*

Use of accent on *à* (specifically, not using it in the perfect tense: *l'éducation a été; le monde a changé*)

Use of the infinitive after modal verbs: *on doit utiliser*

Use of negatives, including both parts: *ce n'est pas*

Use of preposition after common verbs (*de*, *à*)

Avoiding repetitive use of vocabulary such as *chose/choses; personnes/gens; beaucoup; plusieurs*

The difference between *ces/ses/c'est; ça/sa; son/sont; ce/ceux; mais/mes/met; si/ci*

Correct verb conjugation after *cela*

Use of *c'est* and *il est*

Relative pronouns : *qui/que*

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9898/31
Literature

Key messages

Candidates should:

- think carefully about what the question is asking of them and plan their responses before they start to write their essays
- read through all parts of the questions before starting their answer
- start essay questions with an introductory paragraph, which acknowledges and defines the question, and end with a conclusion which summarises the points made in the essay.

General comments

There were some very strong answers to questions in both parts of this new-format paper, and it was evident that the majority of candidates had detailed knowledge of the texts that they had studied. Most responses were balanced and well-structured, but candidates must read the questions carefully and plan their responses properly before starting their answers. Many of this year's questions came in two parts and candidates occasionally failed to address the second part of the question.

Candidates' standard of French was generally adequate to communicate their response clearly, though there were a few occasions where poor handwriting, inaccurate grammar or spelling made it difficult to understand the candidate's responses. By contrast, there were also cases in which the standard of the language used was exceptionally impressive. Time management has improved, with only rare examples of rushed replies to the second essay.

The passage-based questions were well dealt with overall, particularly so the Racine and Molière plays. Presumably after having read the new mark scheme, some candidates spent a great deal of time analysing how the author 'conveys meaning and creates effects in the text'. Though this is important, the textual analysis occasionally deflected candidates from the main purpose of these questions, which is to use the passage as a springboard to examine the text as a whole.

In response to the essay questions, candidates showed good understanding and some strong personal reactions, backed by some very good analysis. However there were a few responses which began with lengthy, pre-learned introductions describing the background to the work, the author's life or his/her literary output, which bore little relation to the question. Such extraneous commentaries do not attract marks, and they waste time which would be better spent on answering the question.

It was once again pleasing to see many candidates present both sides of an argument: does Madické really achieve his objectives or not; is Gaby's mother really an admirable woman? Therein lies the art of good essay writing.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – *Britannicus,* Jean Racine

This was a popular question, and well answered overall. Candidates described Nero's character in detail, although there was some disagreement over whether he had truly fallen in love with Junia. The best responses saw Nero's reaction to the young girl as the beginnings of his descent into despotism: he desires Junia physically, but he sees her primarily as an object to possess; an object through whom he can inflict maximum damage on his rival, Britannicus. He enjoys the power that this gives him, and he derives sadistic pleasure from watching Junia suffer. Unfortunately, some candidates did not address the second part of the question – *Quelle est l'importance de ces sentiments par la suite?* Nero's obsessive fixation and Junia's resistance create an unbridgeable divide which drives the action of the rest of the play. Realising that he cannot part Junia from Britannicus, Nero has his stepbrother poisoned. Junia flees to the temple and begs to be allowed to become a vestal virgin, while Aggrippina and Burrhus, aware that Nero will continue to exert control through increasingly destructive means, are left to fear for their lives.

Question 2 – *Indiana,* George Sand

There were some mixed replies to this question. Most candidates were able to give a reasonable account of Raymon's despicable character; how he preyed on vulnerable women; how he had been responsible for Noun's suicide; how he now had his eyes set on Indiana. But rather too many responses failed to account for Raymon's current state of 'pallor and breathlessness'. Having come to seduce Indiana, he is agitated because he has had to steal across the grounds of the house, at night, avoiding detection, and has crossed the same stream where Noun's lifeless body had been found. He is also excited at the prospect of his impending pleasure with Indiana. But his pallor is directly attributable to what he sees in Indiana's room. Indiana, fully aware of what she is doing, has dressed herself in the same *pelisse* that Noun had worn to meet Raymon, and has tied the same scarf around her head, in the creole style, that Noun used to wear. For a few moments, Raymon believes that he is confronted by Noun's ghost. Better responses were able to account fully for Raymon's shock, but then highlight how quickly Raymon recovers, and is able to put aside his guilt over Noun, when he realises that this is indeed the woman he has come to seduce.

Question 3 – *Le Misanthrope,* Molière

This question was competently addressed, and most candidates were able to give clearly reasoned arguments for why their sympathies lay with either Alceste or Célimène. Alceste detests the artifice and deception that he perceives in court society. He renounces flattery and superficiality in human relationships and is deeply committed to truth and sincerity, characteristics which often lead him into trouble. His relationship with Célimène is therefore somewhat contradictory. It is this rather perverse association that lies at the heart of the play. Having just learned of the scurrilous letters in which Célimène tells of her true feelings for Alceste, and other admirers, Alceste offers to forgive Célimène her failings but only if she will come and live with him in a desert, far removed from all social interaction. Of course, Célimène has no intention of abandoning life at court, where she is in such demand for her sharp wit and playful banter. She thrives in salon culture and is far too young to relinquish her life of pleasure. Candidates admired either Alceste for his uncompromising pursuit of truth, or Célimène for her whole-hearted embrace of life. Some candidates saw both faults and praiseworthy attributes in both characters, which is exactly what Molière intended.

Section B

***Petit Pays,* Gaël Faye**

Question 4

There were some competent descriptions of the similarities and differences between Gaby's mother and father, but only the strongest responses got to grips with a full assessment of each. Gaby's father, Michel, represents the colonial dream: a French expatriate building a new life in Africa. He is pragmatic and deeply invested in his business interests. He views life through a western lens of order, logic and prosperity, and he maintains a certain detachment from Africa's volatile political realities. As an outsider, he does not fully understand the ethnic tensions that surround him. By contrast, Gaby's mother, Yvonne, is a passionate, outspoken individual whose life has been shaped by the weight of the horrors she has already experienced in her native country, Rwanda. Her strong opinions and fiery temperament often clash with Michel's reserved

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

and pragmatic nature. Her maternal instincts and efforts to instil a sense of Rwandan identity in her family create a tight bond between her and her children, but her volatility sometimes makes her seem distant and unapproachable. This dichotomy is not only a source of strain within the marriage (and the cause of the eventual separation of the two), but also reflects the broader themes of colonialism and post-colonial tension in the novel.

Question 5

Another popular question. Some candidates argued perceptively that it was not the act of growing up that led to Gaby's loss of innocence, but his exposure to the horrific acts of violence as Rwanda, then Burundi descended into chaos, which caused Gaby to grow up too quickly. The best essays dealt with the question in logical stages. Firstly, the idyllic childhood that Gaby spent in the lush beauty of Burundi, surrounded by friends and family, and the comforting rhythm of routine. Subsequently, the growing tension at home: the first serious crack in Gaby's innocence appearing as his family disintegrates. For the first time, he is confronted with the idea that even the most fundamental bonds can be fragile and fractured. The dissolution of Gaby's family serves as a prelude to the wider disintegration that he will experience in his country and in his sense of self. Finally, the chaos, as Gaby's sheltered world is infiltrated by the harrowing violence of ethnic conflict. Though he attempts to find escape in Mme Economopoulos' world of books, he cannot avoid the realities that surround him. The fragmentation of his group of friends, the execution of his cousin Christian, his mother's descent into madness following the discovery of the massacred bodies of her Burundian family: Gaby's nadir eventually arrives as he is forced to set fire to the man accused of killing Armand's father.

***Le Ventre de l'Atlantique,* Fatou Diome**

Question 6

This was the more popular of the two essays on Fatou Diome's novel, but it was not the best addressed question. Most candidates wrote about Madické's passion for football, his hero Maldini and his desperate attempts to get to Europe with the help of his sister, Salie. Stronger responses described Madické as a dreamer who, in common with most of his Senegalese peers, had been hypnotised by the tales of villagers, such as l'homme de Barbès, and the representation of western lifestyles in TV adverts. Though Salie represents a tangible connection to the foreign land that Madické idealises, she is deeply aware of the gap between the dreams of migrants and the reality they face upon arrival, having herself faced real financial hardship since coming to France. Candidates differed on whether Madické had achieved his ambitions. Some felt that he had not, and had simply resigned himself to life in Senegal. Others recognised that Madické had matured and come to terms with reality. Having used the money sent by his sister to open a store in his village, he had become a respected and relatively wealthy citizen of Niodior and, as such, he was a satisfied man.

Question 7

Fewer candidates dealt with this question, but most of those who did wrote strong responses. Though there were some candidates who wrote rather superficially about the subservient position of women in Senegal, others were able cite Sankèle's tragic story in considerable detail and showed how her treatment was typical of that of all women in the country. The best responses also recognised that Sankèle's tale represented something of a warning. Though some village rumours suggested that she had fled to France where she was enjoying a life of ease and wealth, others suggested that her rebellion against village traditions had brought her to an untimely end

***La Promesse de l'aube,* Romain Gary**

The novel is clearly popular with candidates and both questions were competently dealt with.

Question 8

There were some excellent responses to this question. Candidates analysed how 'l'aube' evoked the image of a new day, a fresh start, mirroring the early promises of life as seen through the eyes of the protagonist. Gary's mother is of course the source of many of these promises. Dawn thus becomes a metaphor for a mother's boundless love and the dreams she has for her child (violinist, dancer, actor, man of letters, warrior/hero, diplomat). However, 'dawn' also foreshadows the challenges of living up to such lofty promises (*Avec l'amour maternel, la vie vous fait à l'aube une promesse qu'elle ne tient jamais*). Gary's life, as recounted in the narrative, is a series of struggles to fulfil the ambitions his mother set out for him. The title

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

underscores the duality of a promise: it is both a gift and a burden, offering purpose while imposing obligations.

Question 9

This was another well-handled question. Candidates wrote at length and gave appropriate examples, demonstrating the many ways in which Gary's mother was an admirable person. She dedicated herself entirely to her son's upbringing, often at great personal cost. Her devotion, resilience and sacrifice were seen as commendable qualities. The downside for Gary was that his mother's obsessive ambitions for him placed an immense weight on his shoulders, and her expectations affected him emotionally and psychologically. The very best responses asked whether his mother's dreams were entirely driven by love for her son. Could it be that they reflected her own desires, her own selfish craving for status and recognition, just as much as they represented a genuine care for her son's future happiness? If so, then perhaps she was a less than perfectly admirable character.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9898/32
Literature

Key messages

Candidates should:

- think carefully about what the question is asking of them and plan their responses before they start to write their essays
- read through all parts of the questions before starting their answer
- start essay questions with an introductory paragraph, which acknowledges and defines the question, and end with a conclusion which summarises the points made in the essay.

General comments

There were some very strong answers to questions in both parts of this new-format paper, and it was evident that the majority of candidates had detailed knowledge of the texts that they had studied. Most responses were balanced and well-structured, but candidates must read the questions carefully and plan their responses properly before starting their answers. Many of this year's questions came in two parts and candidates occasionally failed to address the second part of the question.

Candidates' standard of French was generally adequate to communicate their response clearly, though there were a few occasions where poor handwriting, inaccurate grammar or spelling made it difficult to understand the candidate's responses. By contrast, there were also cases in which the standard of the language used was exceptionally impressive. Time management has improved, with only rare examples of rushed replies to the second essay.

The passage-based questions were well dealt with overall, particularly so the Racine and Molière plays. Presumably after having read the new mark scheme, some candidates spent a great deal of time analysing how the author 'conveys meaning and creates effects in the text'. Though this is important, the textual analysis occasionally deflected candidates from the main purpose of these questions, which is to use the passage as a springboard to examine the text as a whole.

In response to the essay questions, candidates showed good understanding and some strong personal reactions, backed by some very good analysis. However there were a few responses which began with lengthy, pre-learned introductions describing the background to the work, the author's life or his/her literary output, which bore little relation to the question. Such extraneous commentaries do not attract marks, and they waste time which would be better spent on answering the question.

It was once again pleasing to see many candidates present both sides of an argument: does Madické really achieve his objectives or not; is Gaby's mother really an admirable woman? Therein lies the art of good essay writing.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – *Britannicus,* Jean Racine

This was a popular question, and well answered overall. Candidates described Nero's character in detail, although there was some disagreement over whether he had truly fallen in love with Junia. The best responses saw Nero's reaction to the young girl as the beginnings of his descent into despotism: he desires Junia physically, but he sees her primarily as an object to possess; an object through whom he can inflict maximum damage on his rival, Britannicus. He enjoys the power that this gives him, and he derives sadistic pleasure from watching Junia suffer. Unfortunately, some candidates did not address the second part of the question – *Quelle est l'importance de ces sentiments par la suite?* Nero's obsessive fixation and Junia's resistance create an unbridgeable divide which drives the action of the rest of the play. Realising that he cannot part Junia from Britannicus, Nero has his stepbrother poisoned. Junia flees to the temple and begs to be allowed to become a vestal virgin, while Aggrippina and Burrhus, aware that Nero will continue to exert control through increasingly destructive means, are left to fear for their lives.

Question 2 – *Indiana,* George Sand

There were some mixed replies to this question. Most candidates were able to give a reasonable account of Raymon's despicable character; how he preyed on vulnerable women; how he had been responsible for Noun's suicide; how he now had his eyes set on Indiana. But rather too many responses failed to account for Raymon's current state of 'pallor and breathlessness'. Having come to seduce Indiana, he is agitated because he has had to steal across the grounds of the house, at night, avoiding detection, and has crossed the same stream where Noun's lifeless body had been found. He is also excited at the prospect of his impending pleasure with Indiana. But his pallor is directly attributable to what he sees in Indiana's room. Indiana, fully aware of what she is doing, has dressed herself in the same *pelisse* that Noun had worn to meet Raymon, and has tied the same scarf around her head, in the creole style, that Noun used to wear. For a few moments, Raymon believes that he is confronted by Noun's ghost. Better responses were able to account fully for Raymon's shock, but then highlight how quickly Raymon recovers, and is able to put aside his guilt over Noun, when he realises that this is indeed the woman he has come to seduce.

Question 3 – *Le Misanthrope,* Molière

This question was competently addressed, and most candidates were able to give clearly reasoned arguments for why their sympathies lay with either Alceste or Célimène. Alceste detests the artifice and deception that he perceives in court society. He renounces flattery and superficiality in human relationships and is deeply committed to truth and sincerity, characteristics which often lead him into trouble. His relationship with Célimène is therefore somewhat contradictory. It is this rather perverse association that lies at the heart of the play. Having just learned of the scurrilous letters in which Célimène tells of her true feelings for Alceste, and other admirers, Alceste offers to forgive Célimène her failings but only if she will come and live with him in a desert, far removed from all social interaction. Of course, Célimène has no intention of abandoning life at court, where she is in such demand for her sharp wit and playful banter. She thrives in salon culture and is far too young to relinquish her life of pleasure. Candidates admired either Alceste for his uncompromising pursuit of truth, or Célimène for her whole-hearted embrace of life. Some candidates saw both faults and praiseworthy attributes in both characters, which is exactly what Molière intended.

Section B

***Petit Pays,* Gaël Faye**

Question 4

There were some competent descriptions of the similarities and differences between Gaby's mother and father, but only the strongest responses got to grips with a full assessment of each. Gaby's father, Michel, represents the colonial dream: a French expatriate building a new life in Africa. He is pragmatic and deeply invested in his business interests. He views life through a western lens of order, logic and prosperity, and he maintains a certain detachment from Africa's volatile political realities. As an outsider, he does not fully understand the ethnic tensions that surround him. By contrast, Gaby's mother, Yvonne, is a passionate, outspoken individual whose life has been shaped by the weight of the horrors she has already experienced in her native country, Rwanda. Her strong opinions and fiery temperament often clash with Michel's reserved

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

and pragmatic nature. Her maternal instincts and efforts to instil a sense of Rwandan identity in her family create a tight bond between her and her children, but her volatility sometimes makes her seem distant and unapproachable. This dichotomy is not only a source of strain within the marriage (and the cause of the eventual separation of the two), but also reflects the broader themes of colonialism and post-colonial tension in the novel.

Question 5

Another popular question. Some candidates argued perceptively that it was not the act of growing up that led to Gaby's loss of innocence, but his exposure to the horrific acts of violence as Rwanda, then Burundi descended into chaos, which caused Gaby to grow up too quickly. The best essays dealt with the question in logical stages. Firstly, the idyllic childhood that Gaby spent in the lush beauty of Burundi, surrounded by friends and family, and the comforting rhythm of routine. Subsequently, the growing tension at home: the first serious crack in Gaby's innocence appearing as his family disintegrates. For the first time, he is confronted with the idea that even the most fundamental bonds can be fragile and fractured. The dissolution of Gaby's family serves as a prelude to the wider disintegration that he will experience in his country and in his sense of self. Finally, the chaos, as Gaby's sheltered world is infiltrated by the harrowing violence of ethnic conflict. Though he attempts to find escape in Mme Economopoulos' world of books, he cannot avoid the realities that surround him. The fragmentation of his group of friends, the execution of his cousin Christian, his mother's descent into madness following the discovery of the massacred bodies of her Burundian family: Gaby's nadir eventually arrives as he is forced to set fire to the man accused of killing Armand's father.

***Le Ventre de l'Atlantique,* Fatou Diome**

Question 6

This was the more popular of the two essays on Fatou Diome's novel, but it was not the best addressed question. Most candidates wrote about Madické's passion for football, his hero Maldini and his desperate attempts to get to Europe with the help of his sister, Salie. Stronger responses described Madické as a dreamer who, in common with most of his Senegalese peers, had been hypnotised by the tales of villagers, such as l'homme de Barbès, and the representation of western lifestyles in TV adverts. Though Salie represents a tangible connection to the foreign land that Madické idealises, she is deeply aware of the gap between the dreams of migrants and the reality they face upon arrival, having herself faced real financial hardship since coming to France. Candidates differed on whether Madické had achieved his ambitions. Some felt that he had not, and had simply resigned himself to life in Senegal. Others recognised that Madické had matured and come to terms with reality. Having used the money sent by his sister to open a store in his village, he had become a respected and relatively wealthy citizen of Niodior and, as such, he was a satisfied man.

Question 7

Fewer candidates dealt with this question, but most of those who did wrote strong responses. Though there were some candidates who wrote rather superficially about the subservient position of women in Senegal, others were able cite Sankèle's tragic story in considerable detail and showed how her treatment was typical of that of all women in the country. The best responses also recognised that Sankèle's tale represented something of a warning. Though some village rumours suggested that she had fled to France where she was enjoying a life of ease and wealth, others suggested that her rebellion against village traditions had brought her to an untimely end

***La Promesse de l'aube,* Romain Gary**

The novel is clearly popular with candidates and both questions were competently dealt with.

Question 8

There were some excellent responses to this question. Candidates analysed how 'l'aube' evoked the image of a new day, a fresh start, mirroring the early promises of life as seen through the eyes of the protagonist. Gary's mother is of course the source of many of these promises. Dawn thus becomes a metaphor for a mother's boundless love and the dreams she has for her child (violinist, dancer, actor, man of letters, warrior/hero, diplomat). However, 'dawn' also foreshadows the challenges of living up to such lofty promises (*Avec l'amour maternel, la vie vous fait à l'aube une promesse qu'elle ne tient jamais*). Gary's life, as recounted in the narrative, is a series of struggles to fulfil the ambitions his mother set out for him. The title

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

underscores the duality of a promise: it is both a gift and a burden, offering purpose while imposing obligations.

Question 9

This was another well-handled question. Candidates wrote at length and gave appropriate examples, demonstrating the many ways in which Gary's mother was an admirable person. She dedicated herself entirely to her son's upbringing, often at great personal cost. Her devotion, resilience and sacrifice were seen as commendable qualities. The downside for Gary was that his mother's obsessive ambitions for him placed an immense weight on his shoulders, and her expectations affected him emotionally and psychologically. The very best responses asked whether his mother's dreams were entirely driven by love for her son. Could it be that they reflected her own desires, her own selfish craving for status and recognition, just as much as they represented a genuine care for her son's future happiness? If so, then perhaps she was a less than perfectly admirable character.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9898/33
Literature

Key messages

Candidates should:

- think carefully about what the question is asking of them and plan their responses before they start to write their essays
- read through all parts of the questions before starting their answer
- start essay questions with an introductory paragraph, which acknowledges and defines the question, and end with a conclusion which summarises the points made in the essay.

General comments

There were some very strong answers to questions in both parts of this new-format paper, and it was evident that the majority of candidates had detailed knowledge of the texts that they had studied. Most responses were balanced and well-structured, but candidates must read the questions carefully and plan their responses properly before starting their answers. Many of this year's questions came in two parts and candidates occasionally failed to address the second part of the question.

Candidates' standard of French was generally adequate to communicate their response clearly, though there were a few occasions where poor handwriting, inaccurate grammar or spelling made it difficult to understand the candidate's responses. By contrast, there were also cases in which the standard of the language used was exceptionally impressive. Time management has improved, with only rare examples of rushed replies to the second essay.

The passage-based questions were well dealt with overall, particularly so the Racine and Molière plays. Presumably after having read the new mark scheme, some candidates spent a great deal of time analysing how the author 'conveys meaning and creates effects in the text'. Though this is important, the textual analysis occasionally deflected candidates from the main purpose of these questions, which is to use the passage as a springboard to examine the text as a whole.

In response to the essay questions, candidates showed good understanding and some strong personal reactions, backed by some very good analysis. However there were a few responses which began with lengthy, pre-learned introductions describing the background to the work, the author's life or his/her literary output, which bore little relation to the question. Such extraneous commentaries do not attract marks, and they waste time which would be better spent on answering the question.

It was once again pleasing to see many candidates present both sides of an argument: does Madické really achieve his objectives or not; is Gaby's mother really an admirable woman? Therein lies the art of good essay writing.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – *Britannicus,* Jean Racine

This was a popular question, and well answered overall. Candidates described Nero's character in detail, although there was some disagreement over whether he had truly fallen in love with Junia. The best responses saw Nero's reaction to the young girl as the beginnings of his descent into despotism: he desires Junia physically, but he sees her primarily as an object to possess; an object through whom he can inflict maximum damage on his rival, Britannicus. He enjoys the power that this gives him, and he derives sadistic pleasure from watching Junia suffer. Unfortunately, some candidates did not address the second part of the question – *Quelle est l'importance de ces sentiments par la suite?* Nero's obsessive fixation and Junia's resistance create an unbridgeable divide which drives the action of the rest of the play. Realising that he cannot part Junia from Britannicus, Nero has his stepbrother poisoned. Junia flees to the temple and begs to be allowed to become a vestal virgin, while Aggrippina and Burrhus, aware that Nero will continue to exert control through increasingly destructive means, are left to fear for their lives.

Question 2 – *Indiana,* George Sand

There were some mixed replies to this question. Most candidates were able to give a reasonable account of Raymon's despicable character; how he preyed on vulnerable women; how he had been responsible for Noun's suicide; how he now had his eyes set on Indiana. But rather too many responses failed to account for Raymon's current state of 'pallor and breathlessness'. Having come to seduce Indiana, he is agitated because he has had to steal across the grounds of the house, at night, avoiding detection, and has crossed the same stream where Noun's lifeless body had been found. He is also excited at the prospect of his impending pleasure with Indiana. But his pallor is directly attributable to what he sees in Indiana's room. Indiana, fully aware of what she is doing, has dressed herself in the same *pelisse* that Noun had worn to meet Raymon, and has tied the same scarf around her head, in the creole style, that Noun used to wear. For a few moments, Raymon believes that he is confronted by Noun's ghost. Better responses were able to account fully for Raymon's shock, but then highlight how quickly Raymon recovers, and is able to put aside his guilt over Noun, when he realises that this is indeed the woman he has come to seduce.

Question 3 – *Le Misanthrope,* Molière

This question was competently addressed, and most candidates were able to give clearly reasoned arguments for why their sympathies lay with either Alceste or Célimène. Alceste detests the artifice and deception that he perceives in court society. He renounces flattery and superficiality in human relationships and is deeply committed to truth and sincerity, characteristics which often lead him into trouble. His relationship with Célimène is therefore somewhat contradictory. It is this rather perverse association that lies at the heart of the play. Having just learned of the scurrilous letters in which Célimène tells of her true feelings for Alceste, and other admirers, Alceste offers to forgive Célimène her failings but only if she will come and live with him in a desert, far removed from all social interaction. Of course, Célimène has no intention of abandoning life at court, where she is in such demand for her sharp wit and playful banter. She thrives in salon culture and is far too young to relinquish her life of pleasure. Candidates admired either Alceste for his uncompromising pursuit of truth, or Célimène for her whole-hearted embrace of life. Some candidates saw both faults and praiseworthy attributes in both characters, which is exactly what Molière intended.

Section B

***Petit Pays,* Gaël Faye**

Question 4

There were some competent descriptions of the similarities and differences between Gaby's mother and father, but only the strongest responses got to grips with a full assessment of each. Gaby's father, Michel, represents the colonial dream: a French expatriate building a new life in Africa. He is pragmatic and deeply invested in his business interests. He views life through a western lens of order, logic and prosperity, and he maintains a certain detachment from Africa's volatile political realities. As an outsider, he does not fully understand the ethnic tensions that surround him. By contrast, Gaby's mother, Yvonne, is a passionate, outspoken individual whose life has been shaped by the weight of the horrors she has already experienced in her native country, Rwanda. Her strong opinions and fiery temperament often clash with Michel's reserved

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

and pragmatic nature. Her maternal instincts and efforts to instil a sense of Rwandan identity in her family create a tight bond between her and her children, but her volatility sometimes makes her seem distant and unapproachable. This dichotomy is not only a source of strain within the marriage (and the cause of the eventual separation of the two), but also reflects the broader themes of colonialism and post-colonial tension in the novel.

Question 5

Another popular question. Some candidates argued perceptively that it was not the act of growing up that led to Gaby's loss of innocence, but his exposure to the horrific acts of violence as Rwanda, then Burundi descended into chaos, which caused Gaby to grow up too quickly. The best essays dealt with the question in logical stages. Firstly, the idyllic childhood that Gaby spent in the lush beauty of Burundi, surrounded by friends and family, and the comforting rhythm of routine. Subsequently, the growing tension at home: the first serious crack in Gaby's innocence appearing as his family disintegrates. For the first time, he is confronted with the idea that even the most fundamental bonds can be fragile and fractured. The dissolution of Gaby's family serves as a prelude to the wider disintegration that he will experience in his country and in his sense of self. Finally, the chaos, as Gaby's sheltered world is infiltrated by the harrowing violence of ethnic conflict. Though he attempts to find escape in Mme Economopoulos' world of books, he cannot avoid the realities that surround him. The fragmentation of his group of friends, the execution of his cousin Christian, his mother's descent into madness following the discovery of the massacred bodies of her Burundian family: Gaby's nadir eventually arrives as he is forced to set fire to the man accused of killing Armand's father.

***Le Ventre de l'Atlantique,* Fatou Diome**

Question 6

This was the more popular of the two essays on Fatou Diome's novel, but it was not the best addressed question. Most candidates wrote about Madické's passion for football, his hero Maldini and his desperate attempts to get to Europe with the help of his sister, Salie. Stronger responses described Madické as a dreamer who, in common with most of his Senegalese peers, had been hypnotised by the tales of villagers, such as l'homme de Barbès, and the representation of western lifestyles in TV adverts. Though Salie represents a tangible connection to the foreign land that Madické idealises, she is deeply aware of the gap between the dreams of migrants and the reality they face upon arrival, having herself faced real financial hardship since coming to France. Candidates differed on whether Madické had achieved his ambitions. Some felt that he had not, and had simply resigned himself to life in Senegal. Others recognised that Madické had matured and come to terms with reality. Having used the money sent by his sister to open a store in his village, he had become a respected and relatively wealthy citizen of Niodior and, as such, he was a satisfied man.

Question 7

Fewer candidates dealt with this question, but most of those who did wrote strong responses. Though there were some candidates who wrote rather superficially about the subservient position of women in Senegal, others were able cite Sankèle's tragic story in considerable detail and showed how her treatment was typical of that of all women in the country. The best responses also recognised that Sankèle's tale represented something of a warning. Though some village rumours suggested that she had fled to France where she was enjoying a life of ease and wealth, others suggested that her rebellion against village traditions had brought her to an untimely end

***La Promesse de l'aube,* Romain Gary**

The novel is clearly popular with candidates and both questions were competently dealt with.

Question 8

There were some excellent responses to this question. Candidates analysed how 'l'aube' evoked the image of a new day, a fresh start, mirroring the early promises of life as seen through the eyes of the protagonist. Gary's mother is of course the source of many of these promises. Dawn thus becomes a metaphor for a mother's boundless love and the dreams she has for her child (violinist, dancer, actor, man of letters, warrior/hero, diplomat). However, 'dawn' also foreshadows the challenges of living up to such lofty promises (*Avec l'amour maternel, la vie vous fait à l'aube une promesse qu'elle ne tient jamais*). Gary's life, as recounted in the narrative, is a series of struggles to fulfil the ambitions his mother set out for him. The title

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025

underscores the duality of a promise: it is both a gift and a burden, offering purpose while imposing obligations.

Question 9

This was another well-handled question. Candidates wrote at length and gave appropriate examples, demonstrating the many ways in which Gary's mother was an admirable person. She dedicated herself entirely to her son's upbringing, often at great personal cost. Her devotion, resilience and sacrifice were seen as commendable qualities. The downside for Gary was that his mother's obsessive ambitions for him placed an immense weight on his shoulders, and her expectations affected him emotionally and psychologically. The very best responses asked whether his mother's dreams were entirely driven by love for her son. Could it be that they reflected her own desires, her own selfish craving for status and recognition, just as much as they represented a genuine care for her son's future happiness? If so, then perhaps she was a less than perfectly admirable character.

https://xtremepape.rs/
© 2025