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1

Oral Exam

aims

- To learn all the relevant vocabulary to approach the Oral Exam with confidence.
- To brush up on grammar and tenses and practise communicating in French.
- To help you to select and prepare a 'document'.

Introduction

The **Oral Exam** lasts **15 minutes**. Within this time the examiner has to fill in all your marks and therefore your conversation with the examiner will normally last about **12 minutes**. You may also bring a '**document**' into the exam with you. This may be a French novel, a photo, a project you have done in French, or an article in French. You can then chat about this 'document' with the examiner for about **2 minutes** of the conversation. For more information on the 'document' option please see page 15.

Many students do not perform as well as they should in the Oral Exam because they are nervous and are not well prepared. **Get a copy-book just for oral work** and study the topics in this book, writing all your answers to the questions in your copy. It is easy to anticipate the questions you will be asked at Ordinary Level so start early, be prepared and you will do well.

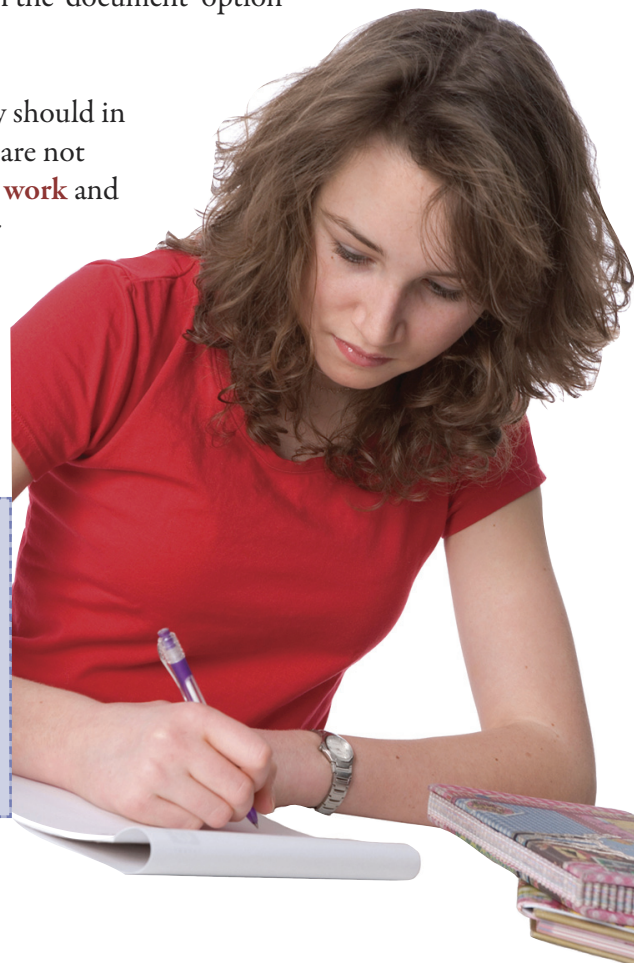
exam focus

The examiner will mark the conversation under four categories:

- Communication: 30 marks.
- Structures (i.e. grammar): 30 marks.
- Pronunciation: 20 marks.
- Vocabulary: 20 marks.

exam focus

Percentage = 20% of total exam
Marks = 80 (marked out of 100 on the day and then adjusted later)
Time = 15 minutes



Pronunciation (20 marks)

The **marking grid** for this section is as follows.

- **0–7:** stress often in the wrong place and words mispronounced most of the time.
- **8–12:** words generally well pronounced. Intonation, stress and rhythm close to French.
- **13–20:** few if any faults in pronunciation of words. Intonation, stress and rhythm almost always correct.

Out of 100 marks in the Oral Exam, 20 are given to pronunciation. If pronunciation is incorrect you may not be understood by the examiner.

In French, many letters are pronounced in a different way from English. **Listening carefully to people speaking French** and copying what they say is the best way to learn to speak French, but here are some pointers on sounds to help you. For each French sound there is an English word which sounds like it. **Listen to the CD** to hear the pronunciation of the different words.

A consonant at the end of a French word is not usually pronounced, e.g. 'français', 'petit', 'les', 'tout'.



Track 1

- a** (arriver, Paris, chat, mari) – *pronounced like the 'a' in 'cat'.*
- e** (le, petit, regarder) – *pronounced like the 'a' in 'above'.*
- é** (été, café, thé) – *pronounced like the 'a' in 'late'.*
- ê** (même, vous êtes) – *pronounced like the 'a' in 'care'.*
- i** (il, dix, police, ville) – *pronounced like the 'i' in 'machine'.*
- o** (fromage, pomme) – *pronounced like the 'o' in 'holiday'.*
- u** (du, une, plus, musique) – *round your lips to say 'oo', then try to say 'ee'.*
- eau, au** (eau, beau, gauche, château) – *pronounced like the 'oa' in 'toast'.*
- eu, œu** (fleur, beurre, sœur) – *pronounced like the 'u' in 'fur'.*
- ou** (ou, tout, beaucoup) – *pronounced like the 'oo' in 'food'.*
- oi** (voix, poisson, boîte) – *pronounced like the 'wa' in 'what'.*
- en, an** (dans, en français, passant) – *pronounced like 'ong' without the 'g'.*
- un** (un, chacun) – *pronounced like the 'u' in 'sun'. The final 'n' is not pronounced.*
- in, im** (vin, prince, impossible) – *pronounced like the 'an' sound in 'rang' without the final 'g'.*
- c** (merci, France, certain) – *before 'i' or 'e' this sounds like the 's' in 'sun'.*
(café, coton, crabe) – *before other letters this sounds like the 'c' in 'cat'.*

Ma famille et moi

- **Comment vous appelez-vous ?** *What is your name?*

Je m'appelle ... *My name is ...*

- **Vous avez quel âge ?** *How old are you?*

J'ai dix-sept/dix-huit ans. *I am seventeen/eighteen.*

Mon anniversaire est le dix juin. *My birthday is on the tenth of June.*

J'aurai dix-neuf ans le mois prochain. *I will be nineteen next month.*

Je suis né le quatre mai mil neuf cent quatre-vingt-dix-huit. *I was born on the fourth of May 1998.*

- **Décrivez-vous.** *Describe yourself.*

Je suis grand(e)/petit(e)/de taille moyenne/mince/gros (grosse). *I am tall/small/ average height/thin/fat.*

J'ai les yeux bleus/bruns/gris/verts. *I have blue/brown/grey/green eyes.*

J'ai les cheveux longs/courts/bruns/blonds/bouclés/raides. *I have long/short/brown/ blond/curly/straight hair.*



- **Décrivez votre personnalité.** *Describe your personality.*

Je suis patient(e)/bavard(e)/sociable/timide/sympathique/paresseux (paresseuse)/sportif (sportive). *I am patient/talkative/outgoing/shy/nice/lazy/sporty.*

- **Quels sont vos passe-temps préférés ?** *What are your favourite pastimes?*

J'adore le sport, je joue au foot tous les jours. *I love sport, I play football every day.*

Je fais de la natation et de la voile. *I go swimming and sailing.*

J'aime la musique, je joue de la guitare dans un groupe. *I like music, I play the guitar in a group.*

J'adore regarder la télévision et écouter la radio. *I love to watch television and to listen to the radio.*

Pendant mes moments de loisir j'aime lire. *During my free time I like to read.*

J'aime sortir au cinéma avec mes amis. *I like to go out to the cinema with my friends.*

- **Avez-vous des frères et sœurs ?** *Have you got any brothers or sisters?*

J'ai un frère et deux sœurs. Ils s'appellent ... *I have one brother and two sisters. Their names are ...*

Section B (b): Postcards



Remember that the same marking scheme applies for the postcard as with messages: **30 marks** are given (**15 for communication and 15 for language**).

There are normally **three points** to be made, each with equal marks. If you study the phrases below, you should be able to score well in this section.

Phrases to learn off by heart

Me voici à (town/city). *Here I am in ...*

Je suis en vacances avec mes amis. *I'm on holiday with my friends.*

Je suis en vacances au bord de la mer. *I am on holiday by the sea.*

Je m'amuse bien. *I'm having a good time.*

Comment vas-tu ? *How are you?*

Quel temps ! *What weather!*

Le soleil brille tous les jours. *The sun is shining every day.*

Il n'a pas arrêté de pleuvoir depuis mon arrivée. *It hasn't stopped raining since I arrived.*

La nourriture est délicieuse/horrible. *The food is delicious/horrible.*

Je suis arrivé(e) ici samedi dernier. *I arrived here last Saturday.*

Je suis arrivé(e) ici sain et sauf. *I arrived here safe and sound.*

Nous restons dans un hôtel/une auberge de jeunesse. *We are staying in a hotel/youth hostel.*

La plage est superbe. *The beach is superb.*

J'ai joué au foot et au tennis. *I played football and tennis.*
 J'apprends à faire de la voile. *I'm learning to sail.*
 J'ai rencontré des jeunes très sympas. *I met some very nice young people.*
 Je cherche à parler français mais ce n'est pas facile. *I am trying to speak French but it's not easy.*
 J'adore la nourriture française. *I love French food.*
 Je me bronze au soleil. *I sunbathe.*
 Nous visitons la région. *We are visiting the area.*
 Je sors tous les soirs. *I go out every night.*
 Nous allons visiter la Tour Eiffel. *We are going to visit the Eiffel Tower.*
 Chaque soir nous mangeons au restaurant. *Every evening we eat in a restaurant.*
 J'irai en ville demain acheter des souvenirs. *I will go to town tomorrow to buy souvenirs.*
 Je ferai une promenade à vélo. *I will go for a cycle ride.*
 La semaine prochaine j'espère aller/faire ... *Next week I hope to go/to do ...*
 Je serai de retour la semaine prochaine. *I will be back next week.*
 Je suis très bronzé(e). *I am very tanned.*
 C'est magnifique/super/génial. *It's magnificent/super/great.*
 Amuse-toi bien en vacances. *Have a good time on your holidays.*
 Écris-moi bientôt. *Write to me soon.*
 Amitiés. *Best wishes.*

Now test yourself. Translate the following phrases.

1. Here I am in Galway.
2. The sun is shining every day.
3. I arrived here last Tuesday.
4. I will be back next week.
5. I met some very nice young people.
6. I go out every night.
7. We are staying at a campsite.
8. I'm learning to swim.
9. I will go to town tomorrow to buy souvenirs.
10. Have a good time on your holidays.

Past exam papers

Postcard 1

You are on holiday in France. Write a postcard to your penfriend Claire in which you say that:

- you are on holiday in France with your family.
- the countryside is beautiful and the people are friendly.
- you hope to visit Paris before going home.

Sample answer

Chère Claire,

Comment vas-tu ? Moi, je vais très bien. Je suis en vacances en France avec ma famille. Le paysage est très

beau et les gens sont très amicaux. Je m'amuse bien. Je vais visiter Paris avant de rentrer en Irlande, je veux voir la Tour Eiffel.

Amitiés,

Marie

Correct use of feminine *chère*.

Main text: All three points made.

Good opening.

Correct use of preposition *en*: *en vacances, en France/ Irlande*.

Correct possessive adjective *ma famille*.

Correct vocabulary: *le paysage, les gens*.

Correct agreement of adjectives: *beau, amicaux*.

Futur proche: *vais visiter Paris ...*

Present tense verbs correct: *vais, suis, est, sont, m'amuse, veux*.