



## GCSE French

### Top Tips for the Listening and Reading Exams!

**L Link words** Look for related words and synonyms (same meaning, different word)

**E Educated guess** Don't leave anything blank, use context to make an educated guess and write as much **detail** as you can (especially on harder questions)

**N Nasty negatives** See below – familiarise yourself with negatives and words to express quantity like 'peu' (little) 'sans' (without)

**T Title** The title will give you a clue about the content of the question – keep that in mind!

#### General tips

- ✓ **Answer all of the paper IN ENGLISH!**
- ✓ Know your vocabulary!! Do not leave this until a few nights before the exam. You should be doing at least 30 minutes vocabulary revision each day. To help with vocabulary revision you could make flashcards, look/cover/check sheets (vocabulary fans), put Post-it notes around your room, use Kerboodle vocabulary shuffle, use your vocabulary tests (25 foundation/25 higher words) or use your memory stick with the past papers to practise reading at foundation and higher level. You need to leave time to go through all vocabulary more than once. Use your foundation/higher tests to help with this.
- ✓ Look out for cognates (words same or similar to English) – this will especially help with unfamiliar structures/vocabulary in other parts of the sentence. Don't panic if you don't understand every word! Use what you do know to help you.
- ✓ Know your opinion words – **j'adore/j'aime/je n'aime pas/je déteste aren't always enough!** Can you recognise...**je pense, je trouve, je crois, je dirais, ça me plaît, j'estime, j'aime mieux, plus...que, moins...que, aussi...que ?**
- ✓ Know your negatives – **ne...pas = do not, ne...jamais = never, ne...plus = no longer, ne...que = only (!!)**
- ✓ Use the titles – each question has a title. Use this to help you with vocabulary and context. E.g.: 'Future plans' you should be thinking about work and future education
- ✓ Know your tenses – how many parts are there for the different tenses? How can you quickly spot these?
- ✓ Use common sense. The exam usually consists of a section about a Francophone country e.g.: Sénégal in Africa. Think about the type of country that is being described and what life might be like there to help you to understand more difficult texts.

## 1. Reading

The exam is 30 minutes (Foundation) or 50 minutes (Higher) long. Leave yourself enough time and plan how you are going to tackle the paper! Remember the questions will go up and down in terms of difficulty and the last couple of questions that require long answers in English are usually the trickiest so leave yourself enough time to answer these.

### T/F/? (True/false/not mentioned)

- ✓ Use 'T' if the information is **definitely** true – not a mixed statement or opinion it is true
- ✓ Use 'F' if the information is **definitely** false – it says in writing the opposite of the statement or has a different version of what is written e.g.: 'Il va en France avec son frère T/F/?' and in the text it says 'Il va en France avec sa sœur'.
- ✓ Use '?' if there is no mention of this statement in the text. It doesn't mean it is false it means if it isn't mentioned **at all**. Be careful with this option and take your time in reading the texts.

### P/N/P+N (Positive/negative/positive and negative)

- ✓ If the answer is positive look for positive opinions and justifications
- ✓ If the answer is negative look for negative opinions and justifications
- ✓ If the answer is **positive and negative** look for a **connective (mais, cependant, de l'autre côté)**. **Do not stop reading after spotting a positive or negative statement! Read the whole phrase to figure out whether it might be both positive and negative!**

### Filling in the gap activity

- ✓ Use the title! This is very important for understanding the gist of the sentences
- ✓ Figure out what the list of words might mean. Any you can't figure out try to figure out and recognise what part of speech they are e.g.: verb? noun? adjective?
- ✓ Try to have an idea of the translation of the sentence in mind – don't panic or worry if you don't understand every word! If you did the exam would be too easy ☺ You are being tested on if you can figure out by context what the missing word might be.
- ✓ Use the word before the missing word to help you – if you are completely stuck this will help you.
  - If it's a person it is most likely going to be followed by a verb – do any of the list of words look like a verb that will match the person in the sentence?
  - If there is a le/la/les or un/une/des a noun will follow.
  - If there is already a verb directly before the box look for an infinitive in the list (2 verbs in a row !) or if the word before is 'de' (or sometime 'à') it will also usually be followed by an infinitive. Remember infinitives in French always end in 'er/ir/re' so you can easily spot these in your list!
  - If the verb 'être' is used before it will most likely be followed by an adjective 'I am.../they will be.../he was...' etc

### Answering longer questions (end of paper questions)

- ✓ **Leave enough time for these questions! They are usually worth around/at least 10 marks. Leave at least 20 minutes for this section.**

- ✓ These texts are always going to be tricky – don't give up with them! Read through the text for gist once using the title and any cognates you can spot to help you get an idea about the text. Then read through all the questions to help get a further idea of the gist of the text.
- ✓ Once you have done all of this you can then look at answering the questions and hopefully this will help you feel more prepared and less stressed ☺
- ✓ When answering make sure if there are two details needed i.e.: part a) and b) or i) and ii) that you make sure these ideas are separate and don't overlap or you will not be given two separate marks.
- ✓ Include all the detail you can even if it seems obvious eg not just 'unemployment' but 'because of the high level of unemployment'. Use the appropriate connective like because to answer the question directly.

## 2. Listening

The exam lasts for 30 minutes (Foundation) plus 5 minutes reading time or 40 minutes (Higher) plus 5 mins reading time.

During the reading time fully prepare your brain for what you are going to listen to! That means read the questions properly, underline key words, think of the kind of words that might come up in French – you may make notes on the exam paper where the question is, but not on the blank sheets.

Before each question refocus your mind again on the question at hand – check title, check full understanding of statements/ questions.

The CD bleeps when the next question is coming up.

- Revise numbers? Foundation vocab and Higher if you are a Higher candidate.
- When revising make sure you **hear** the vocab – look for AQA vocab app in iTunes store or use Kerboodle

### Answering questions with a choice of statements

- Make sure that you read the statements carefully in the reading time and underline key words – some are very similar

### Any questions where you need to write English

- Don't write in French! Give maximum detail

### P/N/P+N (Positive/negative/positive and negative)

See Reading section!

### Any questions where you need to write a letter

- Choose a letter and make it clear – do not make it a mixture of 2 otherwise it will definitely be wrong!

Bonne chance!