
A-LEVEL FRENCH

7652/2 Paper 2 Writing
Report on the Examination

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Overview

Most centres opted to do a text and a film, and the most popular combination was *No et moi* and *La Haine*. There were in total 1839 scripts with an answer on the de Vigan text and 2892 scripts dealing with one of the Kassovitz questions. Of the other texts, the most popular were *L'étranger* (1059), *Un sac de billes* (933) and *Kiffe kiffe demain* (391). *Au revoir les enfants* was studied by 943 students and *Entre les murs* by 335 students. The number studying the remaining works were lower, but answers were seen on all works.

It was clear from the vast majority of scripts that students had engaged well with the works they had studied for this paper and that they had acquired an impressive amount of knowledge of those works. Whether students had studied a text and a film or two texts, they were generally well-prepared in terms of their thematic and technical knowledge. However, the questions on this paper were not designed to test knowledge *per se*, but rather to assess how skilful students were in selecting from the knowledge they had acquired, the evidence that was relevant to the questions they opted to answer. It was this skill that determined whether responses were assessed as very limited, limited, reasonable, good or excellent. Each set of descriptors in the mark scheme for Assessment Objective 4 (AO4) has a heading in bold that refers to the quality of the critical and analytical response **to the question set**.

The most successful essays were those where students had carefully considered the scope of the question on the paper and had planned a fully relevant response. Many students appeared not to have done this, but rather to have come into the examination with a ready-made response already in mind, which they were going to write whatever the question. On this point, particularly in relation to literary texts, attention is drawn to the inherent risk of encouraging students to learn quotations: there was a marked tendency for quotations to be used more because students had made the effort to learn them than because they were relevant in supporting an opinion or conclusion. There is no extra credit given in the marking of essays for the use of quotations and, unless their use provided sound and accurate evidence in support of AO4 content, they marred rather than enhanced the quality of the responses.

Section A: Books

Le Tartuffe

- 1.1 Students dealt well with comic techniques in the play, including verbal and physical comedy, they but were not always successful in analysing how the situation may be considered to be tragic, either in the classical sense of tragedy, or in a more modern interpretation of the word.
- 1.2 This was the more popular choice of question for this text and answers were generally good. There was a clear understanding of the characters of Damis and Mariane, and of the latter's dilemma of obedience to her father and her love for Valère. Many students successfully incorporated into their analysis the degree to which Orgon himself is shown to be weak and easy to control.

Candide

2.1. There were some very good essays on this title, with lots of detail, references, and links to the philosophy of Optimism. Students demonstrated a real understanding of the work and produced excellent answers.

2.2. This was a less popular choice of question. The overall impression here was that students found it harder to form a precise argument and choose, from all the possible evidence, the examples that would have best supported their point of view.

Boule de Suif et autres contes de la guerre

3.1. Responses to this question were well-presented and well-argued. Most students drew a distinction between how Maupassant presents the Prussian officers and Prussian soldiers, with some sympathy shown for the latter who, like their French counterparts, are seen as victims.

3.2. This was the more popular choice of questions on this work and there were some perceptive and well-supported answers. The more discerning students spotted and addressed the *tous les personnages* in the question. Boule de Suif was seen by most as the exception and many made reference to her patriotism and generosity.

L'étranger

4.1. The quality of answers here was very varied. Some focused exclusively on Meursault's relationship with Marie, which did not really address the wider focus of the question. The most successful answers included Meursault's attitude to his mother as well as to Marie, and his apparently tolerant attitude towards Raymond's brutal treatment of his mistress.

4.2. Again, the quality of responses was very varied. Those students who had a full grasp of the philosophy of the Absurd produced very detailed and well-argued answers but many responses showed that Camus' philosophy was not well understood. There was often much detail about the character of Meursault but with no link to his 'philosophical significance'.

Bonjour Tristesse

5.1. The best answers here provided a detailed analysis of the effects of both Raymond's and Cécile's behaviour, linking the latter to Raymond's shortcomings as a parent, thus arguing that he was accountable for the tragic ending of the novel. Weaker answers tended to summarise the narrative with little commentary about the significance of the episodes being recounted.

5.2. This was the more popular of the Sagan questions. Students made judicious use of the contrast between Anne and the rest of Cecile's entourage in terms of attitudes towards love and marriage. Raymond's fickle nature was dealt with well, with many students making the comparison between Raymond and Dom Juan and exploring his influence on his daughter's attitude towards relationships.

Elise ou la vraie vie

6.1. There were too few answers to this questions to make any meaningful comment.

6.2. This was the more popular question and was generally well-handled with students showing a good awareness of the situation of the Algerians presented in the novel, mainly though not exclusively through the experiences of Arezki.

Un sac de billes

7.1. The tendency to 'recycle' a previously written essay was much in evidence with this question and this led to a significant number of weaker answers where knowledge of the work was presented without considering its relevance to the question set, with a final concluding remark that it was evidence the work is essentially autobiographical. That said, there were also some outstanding examples of consistently well-considered, well-presented evidence.

7.2. In many answers, it was clear that students did not fully understand the meaning of *se méfier des autres*, which many took to be synonymous with *mentir*, structuring an answer accordingly. Again, there were some excellent answers that documented well those incidents which showed that the boys had to learn quickly to distrust others.

Kiffe kiffe demain

8.1. This was the less popular of the two questions on this text. There was some good use made of Doria's humour in how she recounts her negative experiences of life, but some students merely summarised the various events in Doria's life without relating them to humour.

8.2. Most students who tackled this question identified how in the course of the novel Doria's attitude to life becomes less negative and more optimistic, but in only a minority of responses was the dual significance of the title made explicit, with the link established between each meaning and Doria's experience of life.

Un secret

9.1. The focus of many answers was on the attitude of Maxime and Tania to what became of Hannah and Simon, and in particular their sense of guilt, more strongly felt by Maxime. Those responses that took in other characters' reactions were more successful.

9.2. The question here invited an analysis of the importance of the structure of the novel but, in many responses, students merely recounted the content of each section of the work with no reference to the importance of the structure. There were, however, some more successful answers that referenced the narrator's need to invent and imagine his family's past and then to amend this in the light of the discoveries he makes.

No et moi

10.1. This was the less popular choice of question and the two elements of a story about adolescence and a social question were generally well analysed with a good range of evidence to support opinions and views.

10.2. Most students opted for this question and many made a very good attempt at demonstrating how No, Lou and Lucas, as well as Anouk and Lou's father, lack love and affection. In a number of essays, No's lack of love and affection was just taken as a 'given' and this weakened these answers.

Section B: Films*Les 400 coups*

11.1. Students answering this question demonstrated a good range of knowledge about the autobiographical elements and the parallels between Antoine Doinel's childhood and that of the director. The most successful answers were those in which students argued that there is nevertheless much more to the film than autobiography.

11.2. The behaviour of grown-ups, in most answers, concentrated on Antoine's mother and teacher and the focus was more on describing how they behave and what they do rather than on forming an argument, one way or the other, about the contradictory nature of this. Few answers dealt convincingly with this aspect of the question.

Au revoir les enfants

12.1. This was the less popular question for this film, but those who opted to answer it made a good attempt at addressing both elements. The Christian values that Père Jean sets out to impart were well understood, as was the extent to which he does or does not succeed. Some students commented on the harshness of the priest's treatment of Joseph as a contradiction of those values.

12.2. Many answers here concentrated exclusively on the character of Jean Bonnet and his friendship with Julien Quentin: these answers were only partially relevant to the question set and, in many cases, as they progressed, they became more an analysis of their friendship than anything else. There were some excellent responses, however, that went beyond the character and situation of Jean Bonnet.

La Haine

13.1. This was the more popular of the questions on this film and the best answers provided a fully relevant response, identifying aspects of the film that make it still relevant and interesting. Students have a wide range of knowledge about this film, but many are in a sense distracted by the need to demonstrate all of this knowledge, leading to details that are of little relevance to the question set.

13.2. This was generally well-handled, with students identifying relevant features of the sound-track and demonstrating their importance. For some, however, the sound track was nothing other than pre-learnt quotations (*c'est à moi que tu parles ; la haine attire la haine*, etc).

L'auberge espagnole

14.1. This was generally well-handled, with students showing a good understanding of the development of Xavier's character through the Erasmus programme and arguing that the experience allows him to know himself better and appears to enable him to manage his life better, at least in terms of knowing what he really wants to do with it.

14.2. This was the less popular of the Klapisch questions. Students were generally able to give a satisfactory account of the events leading to the breakdown in the relationship but few focused on the *malentendus*. However, the best responses here gave a good account of the relationship between Xavier and Martine and used Martine's visit to Barcelona to particularly good effect.

Un long dimanche de fiançailles

15.1. There were some excellent answers to this question that really illustrated well how Jeunet presents the theme of war objectively, including through the enemy's eyes as well as from a French perspective. There were also some answers that merely described the images of war presented in the film.

15.2. Students invariably disagreed with the quotation in the title and generally argued that almost all of the techniques in the film, from the soundtrack to the use of colours, were highly original. They tended to use this question to describe, and occasionally analyse, Jeunet's techniques, with a nod to the idea of 'originality' to conclude each paragraph of their essay.

Entre les murs

16.1. The best responses here presented the technical aspects with a justification for why they were worthy of interest but this second element was often lacking in weaker answers. Technical knowledge was, however, generally and genuinely impressive.

16.2. 'Those responsible for education' rarely went beyond Marin, and answers documented the successes and failures of his teaching with an analysis of individual pupils' reactions and behaviours. Few really got to grips with the more general thrust of the question.

Assessment Objective 3 (AO3)

Cases where errors of language completely impeded understanding were rare, but there was much evidence of anglicised structures and expressions being translated directly into French, with the usual inventions of French words. Most students demonstrated a reasonable to good range of thematic and/or technical vocabulary relevant to the works they had studied but there was some reliance on 'set-piece' structures (*autant que je sache ; il faut peser le pour et le contre*) with language that students had to generate themselves far from matching the quality of these. That said, at the top end of the range, there were examples of excellent use of idiom and a variety of structures that allowed a mature and sophisticated expression of ideas, opinions and evidence, making these scripts a real pleasure to read and assess.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.