

Leaving Certificate French Predictions 2022

Updated February 2022

- As with all subjects, it is impossible to accurately predict what styles of question and topics will come up on the French paper
 - It is possible however, to study the past papers and establish the most common features, and to look at current affairs that may have influenced the examiner
- You may also like: [Complete Guide to Leaving Cert French](#) or [French in 90 words opinion piece collection \(€\)](#)

Please be aware of the amendments made to the exams this year: [further amendments made in February 2022](#)

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1. Paper structure

- The French written paper is divided into three sections – aural comprehension, reading comprehension and written comprehension
- For the aural and reading comprehension sections, the best way to prepare is to listen to and read as much French as possible in the run-up to the exam, and get comfortable with question styles by doing past papers
- The written comprehension section:

- In this section, there are six questions.
- You must answer one of three parts of question 1 (a, b or c), and one more, either question 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6.

Question 1

Question 1 is related to the contents of the reading comprehension texts and is usually a choice between a [90-word opinion piece](#) and a récit

- Récit: This question provides a prompt, and asks you to write a short story about a particular incident**
- If you plan on writing a récit, make sure that you have a good understanding of the three past tenses (passé composé, imparfait and plus-que-parfait) and descriptive language, such as adjectives and adverbs
- Since 2007, the récit has come up 9 times (2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020)

- Opinion Piece: This question also provides a prompt from the reading comprehension, as well as a specific question to answer**
- This style of question comes up every year
- They usually deal with topical subjects (see below) and are style to encourage the use of argumentative language and structured arguments

Question 2

Question 2 is a functional writing question, with a choice between any of two of the following:

- Journal intime: This question provides a prompt and asks you to write a diary entry recounting a series of events**
- The question usually aims to encourage the use of emotive language and strong descriptive language – they often ask you to write about your feelings on an event or subject
- The journal intime has a set layout:
 - On the top right, put the date eg. le 4 mai, 2018
 - Begin the entry with “Cher journal”
 - End the entry with something like “À demain” and sign off with your first name
 - The journal intime has come up every year since 2007
- Formal letter: The formal letter has only come up once since 2007, in 2016**
- This question usually asks you to write a letter in order to apply for a job/ make a complaint/ book a hotel room
- As it is a formal letter, you must use formal language and only ever address the recipient as “vous”
- Formal letters have a required structure:
 - On the top right, write the city and date of the letter eg. Dublin, le 8 mai 2018.
 - Under this, write the name, title and address of the person you are writing to
 - On the line below this, but on the left hand side of the page, write the name and address given to you as the sender by the question
 - Open the letter with Madame or Monsieur
 - Sign off with “Veuillez agréer Madame/Monsieur, l’expression de mes sentiments distingués” which means “Yours sincerely” and the name given to you in the question.
- Informal letter: The informal letter has not come up since 2007**
- This question usually asks you to write a letter to a friend, a family member or a penpal
- As it is an informal letter, slightly more casual language can be used, and the recipient can be addressed with “tu” or “vous”, depending on their age
- Informal letters have a set structure:
 - In the top right corner, write the city and date of the letter eg. Dublin, le 8 mai
 - Open the letter with “Cher/ Chère [name of recipient]”
 - Close letter with something like “À bientôt” and sign off with the name given to you in the question
- Email: A question asking you to write an email has come up 10 times since 2007 (2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019)**
- Emails usually have the question style and contents as an informal letter to a friend or family member
- It is not impossible however that you get asked to write a formal email in response to a job advertisement or to make a formal complaint via email
- Emails have a set structure:
 - On the first line, write “À: [recipient’s email address]”
 - On the second line, write “De: [sender’s email address]”
 - On the third line, write “Date: [date]”
 - On the fourth line, write “Objet: [subject of the email]”
 - Open the email with “Cher/Chère [name of recipient]” if it’s informal, or “Madame/Monsieur” if it’s formal
 - Close the email either with an informal ending (as in an informal letter) or with your sincerely (as in a formal letter) and sign off with the sender’s name
- Note: In 2008 and 2013, students were asked to write a message or a note for somebody**
- These can be formal (as in 2008, when students were asked to write a request to hold a party) or informal (as in 2013, when students had to leave a note for the family they were staying with)
- They are otherwise very similar in content and style to the letter and email

Questions 3, 4, 5 and 6

Q3 and 4 are usually opinion pieces that deal with topical subjects, which will be examined below

- Often, they will provide a photograph, a quote or a statement as a prompt, and then ask you to give your reaction or opinion on the subject
- Structurally, they should have an introduction, a conclusion and at least two but preferably 3 main points laid out as paragraphs
- The aim of these questions is not to test your knowledge of the subject, but your ability to make coherent arguments in fluid French
- Make sure you learn off phrases that can be used in the opening paragraph, some argumentative phrases to open each paragraph, and important logical connectors such as “cependant”, “mais”, “en revanche” etc.
- The most important thing in these questions is to keep your French simple and correct, and to clearly answer the question without using irrelevant information

2. Predictions for topics for Opinion Pieces

- The themes that feature in the opinion questions are usually related to topical debates and current affairs
- Below are the themes that have featured since 2007:**
 - 2021: technology, disability, travel, music, buying second-hand, sport, COVID-19, diets and health, reading
 - 2020: the environment, health and exercise, cycling, gender equality and feminism, homelessness, transition year
 - 2019: climate change, acts of kindness, drugs, sports, foreign languages, voting
 - 2018: rural life in Ireland, technology, driverless cars, the media and social media, European politics (young leaders),
 - 2017: technology and the media, gender equality, sports, Brexit, the generational gap and tourism
 - 2016: family, the 1916 Rising, multiculturalism, health and obesity, maths and science in education
 - 2015: technology, part-time jobs, voting, war and terrorism, homelessness
 - 2014: technology, shopping and fashion, smoking, gender equality, animal cruelty, freedom and independence in youth
 - 2013: friendship, The Gathering, celebrity culture and the media, the horsemeat scandal, the benefits of university education
 - 2012: concerts and music, sports and the media, politics and protest, holidays and tourism in Ireland, happiness
 - 2011: alcohol, sports, religion, social networks and technology, independence in youth, crime
 - 2010: health and obesity, volunteering and charity work, fashion, education, emigration
 - 2009: sports, literature and education, the environment, the future, technology
 - 2008: traditions and the future, voting, the benefits of university education, gender equality, noise and business of life
 - 2007: fashion and religion, reality TV and the media, the European Union’s 50-year anniversary, aid and charity work after natural disasters, transport and the environment
- As is evident from the above list, there is a very wide range of topics that the examiners can choose from, but many, such as sport, health, alcohol and smoking, have a significant amount of crossover
- Generally speaking, there is usually at least one question, if not more, related to current events – below are ten topics that may come up as a result of the main events of the past year**

- Health** may come up as a way of tying the COVID-19 pandemic into the paper
 - Others questions linked to this might include questions about working from home, technology (using Zoom for class etc), science or socialising
- Other topics that may have influenced the examiners might include:
 - The US withdrawal from Afghanistan could influence a question about conflict and war
 - Violence** could come up in the form of either gun violence/ mass shootings or terrorism (especially with the 20th anniversary of 9/11 occurring in 2021)
 - Technology, the media and social networks** as a result of the ongoing Facebook scandal, new EU laws on data privacy protection, and the use of technology in the pandemic
 - The media and social networks have come under scrutiny for their role in politics too
 - Homelessness** and the housing crisis have been big topics both in Ireland, and in France, where huge numbers of immigrants are currently homeless
 - The housing crisis came up in 2020 but as it is such a topic of interest at the moment, it could easily come up again
 - Extreme weather conditions may come up on its own, or may influence a question about the **environment and climate change**
 - The environment hasn’t come up since 2019
 - Huge climate events like the flooding in Germany, hurricanes in the USA and fires in the US and Australia could influence this
 - The Olympics took place in summer 2021 and this could influence **sport** to appear on the paper
 - A variety of political scandals might influence a question about **politics** in Ireland and the decade of centenaries might influence questions about **education, history, conflict and peace**

3. What to revise

- Other than reading about and preparing for the possible themes that will come up, it is possible to prepare for the paper by understanding what the examiners are testing you for, and fine tuning these skills
- In the written paper, the two skills of communication and language are each worth 50% of the total question
- In question 1, both are worth 20 marks
- In questions 2, 3 and 4, they are both worth 15 marks
- Communication: to earn top communication marks, you are expected to fully understand and dissect the question material
- In opinion pieces, your arguments need to be laid out clearly with relevant argumentative language
- In functional writing, you need to have the correct structure and register
- A French person who speaks no English must be able to understand your writing without help
- You need to deal with all parts of the question and prompt material, and ensure that you are answering the question
- In order to improve your communication skills, you need to practice structuring your written pieces, ensuring that they make clear, coherent sense and are relevant to the question
- Pick some of the aforementioned themes, and organise three key points that you should mention in any question relating to that theme eg. in a question relating to the environment, three key points might be the causes, the effects and the solution
- Language: Language marks are awarded for correct grammar, correct complex sentences and rich, varied, idiomatic vocabulary. In order to prepare you should:
 - Learn off vocabulary in different categories, including:
 - Argumentation, logical connectors, expressions of emotions, adjectives to describe things as good and bad
 - Learn vocabulary relating to the above opinion piece themes that you would otherwise not know eg. “les espèces en voie de disparition” means “endangered species”, and is a phrase which is quite specific to climate change
 - Learn idiomatic phrases, ie. phrases that the French use which mean nothing when translated literally into English (like “it’s raining cats and dogs” in English) eg. “Arriver comme un cheveu sur la soupe” literally means “to arrive like a hair on the soup” but is used in France to describe arriving at an awkward moment
 - Make sure that you have a good range of verbs so that you don’t have to depend on avoir and être, and make sure that you can conjugate them in the following tenses:
 - Présent
 - Futur proche and futur simple
 - Passé composé
 - Imparfait
 - Plus-que-parfait
 - Conditionnel
 - Make sure you know when to use each of these tenses
 - If you can learn a few verbs in the subjunctive, or certain subjunctive phrases such as “Il faut qu’il fasse...” (it’s necessary that he does...), the examiner will be impressed but it’s more important to focus on regular verb moods
 - The same goes for the present participle (words that end in ...ing in English or ...ant in French) – if you can learn them, they allow you to build more complex sentences and let the examiner know that you have a grasp of the language
 - Learning your pronouns and when to use them:
 - Direct object: me, te, le, la, nous, vous, les
 - Indirect object: me, te, lui, nous, vous, leur,
 - Relative: que, qui, lequel, dont, où
 - Adverbial: y, en (These always cause confusion for students – if you struggle with them, just learn off some set phrases such as “J’y vais” – I’m going there, or “J’en ai besoin” – I need some of it, that you can use in different contexts
 - Indefinite relative: ce qui, ce que, ce dont
 - Possessive: le mien, le tien etc.
 - Demonstrative: celui, celle, ceux, celles
 - Make sure you know how to make adjectives agree with the gender and quantity of a noun, and make sure you know the different ways to make a noun feminine and/or plural
 - Spelling is very important – Chief Examiner’s reports always highlight the fact that students misspell words frequently – make sure you know which accents go where, and which order vowels come in words like malheureusement and chapeau



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