

## Ordinary Level French

### MAIN POINTS

- ◆ This is a much less difficult exam than the higher level one. The aural paper (worth 44 per cent) has about half as many questions as the higher level paper, and the questions are based on the same tape.
- ◆ Most of the reading comprehension (37 per cent) includes multiple choice questions. Other questions require a basic vocabulary.
- ◆ The written section (19 per cent) is the more challenging area of the exam. However, some of it is predictable and demands very basic French.

### A SUMMARY

**The Letter:** Students are given nine points to mention, from which they must choose four. They are only required to write one sentence on each point: four sentences (x 10 marks = 40 marks). The most popular points in the past have been:

- ◆ Saying "thank you" for his/her letter = merci de ta lettre
- ◆ Asking how s/he is = comment ça va?
- ◆ Giving news about your family = mon père est malade / ma sœur va en France avec ses amis
- ◆ Telling him/her you are going on holidays = ma famille et moi allons en vacances en Italie cet été
- ◆ Saying what you are going to do at the weekend = je vais au cinéma avec mon ami / je vais jouer au foot / je vais aller à la campagne pour le weekend
- ◆ Asking him/her a question = as-tu des animaux? / aimes-tu la musique? / Que fais-tu quand tu es libre?
- ◆ Saying something about school = je fais mes examens demain/je vais jouer un match de tennis à l'école la semaine prochaine
- ◆ Telling him/her to write soon = écris-moi bientôt

**The Postcard:** (4 points x 5 marks = 20 marks) the most popular points have been:

- ◆ Saying where you are = me voici à Nice / je suis à Nice / bonjour de Nice
- ◆ Saying that you are enjoying yourself = je m'amuse
- ◆ Talking about the weather = il fait beau / le soleil brille
- ◆ Talking about someone you met = j'ai rencontré une jeune Allemande sympa
- ◆ Saying what you do every day = je nage dans la mer / je vais en boîte
- ◆ Saying that you are camping = je fais / nous faisons du camping.

**The Note:** (4 points x 5 marks = 20 marks) the points to prepare are:

- ◆ Say where you are going = je vais à la piscine avec mes amis
- ◆ When you will be back = je vais rentrer à six heures
- ◆ You have your mobile = j'ai mon portable



# A French toast to a good end result

There are a lot of marks up for grabs in the ordinary level French exam, but it helps to know your structure, as well as key phrases to use in the written section

### LA CARTE POSTALE

15 marks go towards mentioning three main points in the content of your card, in a clear way that a French person could understand.

A further 15 marks go for the language and grammar in your writing.

The awarding of marks is usually in proportion, so if you score low on the content, you are unlikely to score high on language, and vice versa.

If you leave out a point, you automatically lose a third of your marks.

You'll only be marked out of two-thirds of the total available marks for both content and language, so it's well worth attempting to include all three points.

The emphasis in this question is on good, short, grammatically correct sentences.

### COMMON THEMES

◆ Saying where you are, and with whom:  
"Me voici en vacances à Perpignan avec ma famille" ou "salutations de Rome où je passe mes vacances avec ma famille".

◆ When you arrived and where you are staying:  
"Nous sommes arrivés la semaine dernière et nous restons dans un hôtel" ou "je suis arrivé hier soir et je reste dans une auberge de jeunesse".

◆ Description of weather and food:  
"Il fait très chaud / il pleut constamment. La cuisine me plaît beaucoup" ou "il fait assez froid / il fait du brouillard. La nourriture est moche".

◆ Describing how you are spending your time:  
"Nous nageons tous les matins. Je me bronze l'après-midi. Nous sortons / allons en boîte le soir".

◆ When you are returning home:  
"Je vais rentrer chez moi la semaine prochaine / nous rentrons vendredi".

### VERB STRUCTURES

Remember, you will probably need to use the present tense, passé composé and the future proche (the future tense, to say what you "are going to do").

An essential structure to learn and practise for the written section is the verb + infinitive:

- vouloir:** je veux acheter une veste = I want to buy a jacket
- devoir:** nous devons étudier = we have to / must study
- aller:** je vais faire de la natation = I'm going to go swimming
- pouvoir:** peux-tu jouer au foot demain? = can you play soccer tomorrow?



The French town of St Emilion – like many towns in France it is a fine mix of old and new, tradition and culture

