

# GCE French – 6FR04

## Research-based Essay Guide

### Exemplars 1 & 2 – Littérature et arts

Summer 2014

#### **PREFACE**

##### **Use of Exemplar Material**

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##### **Notes on the Exemplar Material**

Please note that:

- Some items may have been removed, such as references to individuals and places. Please refer to the commentaries by the Principal Examiner for specific references.
- In order to maintain the authenticity of the writing, some errors and mistakes have been reproduced from the original candidate's response.

### Question 3 (d) - Littérature et arts

***Choisissez une scène de l'œuvre que vous avez étudiée qui vous semble bien illustrer un thème de l'œuvre. Décrivez-la et dites pourquoi elle est importante de ce point de vue.***

#### **Exemplar 1 : Un sac de billes**

Dans le livre "un sac de billes" par Joseph Joffo, j'examinerais la scène avec les gendarmes à Marseille qui contribue dans une grande mesure à le thème principal de l'oeuvre, la perte de l'enfance.

D'abord, quand Joseph et Maurice sont à Marseille, Joseph ment aux gendarmes que son père est le propriétaire du cinéma. Il entame également une conversation même avec un inconnu, en lui demandant l'heure, justement pour sembler plus fiable aux yeux vigilantes des gendarmes afin d'échapper le contrôle des papiers de nationalité et donc, il évite son arrestation.

Au début du récit, Joseph est naïf et innocent, il a les mêmes préoccupations que n'importe quel enfant. De l'autre côté, quand il doit fuir, il décide que son comportement doit changer afin qu'il soit sauvé. Quand il ment aux gendarmes, il perd sa naïveté et son innocence car selon le père Boulier, son instituteur à l'école on ne doit jamais mentir. La scène à Marseille nous montre la débrouillardise de Joseph et il devient plus mûr et responsable, c'est à dire qu'il réagit aux circonstances difficiles et son comportement n'est pas d'un enfant, car il n'attend pas de l'aide par quelqu'un mais il fait face à la situation de contrôle à Marseille tout seul.

En guise de conclusion, la scène à Marseille est primordiale dans le déroulement du récit. Joseph affirme que "À présent, nous sommes condamnés au mensonge", ce qui signifie que s'il n'avait pas menti, il n'aurait pas été sauvé. Il également affirme que "ils ont tué en moi l'enfant que j'aurais pu être", ce qui signifie la perte de l'enfance mais il comprend que c'était nécessaire afin de survivre.

(235 words)

## Commentary on Exemplar - Un sac de billes

*Un sac de billes* remains one of the most popular and successful selections of text in the Literature and arts area of Section C of this Unit. It satisfies the need to be able to discuss characters, themes, setting and style in enough detail to enable a candidate to deal with all potential questions and is thus a wise choice.

If one discounts the direct quotations and the proper nouns, this essay falls marginally short of the required word limits. In a succinct introduction the candidate nominates a short but significant scene in the book and identifies a key theme; that of the loss of childhood brought about by his wartime experiences. In order to survive Jo had to forget many of the lessons he had learned and had to act like an adult, although still of tender years.

There could be a little more description of what actually happens in this fleeting episode but by demonstrating a change in character the candidate manages to illustrate the chosen theme quite convincingly. Emphasis is given to the developing ability to lie, an unattractive but necessary skill in his efforts to remain alive in difficult times. The overall mood is sombre but the candidate manages to hint at some of the humour which nevertheless accompanies the narrative. There is some reference to other parts of the tale but this cannot be counted as irrelevant since it sheds light on the change in personality which the candidate is keen to chronicle.

At times it might be considered that the essay is merely a developing character study of the author but there is enough implicit link to the central theme to make it acceptable. The conclusion underlines the close link between the two. The candidate has a good understanding of the question and an obvious affinity with the text and for Reading, Research and Understanding the essay can safely be placed in the 'good' category, 19 – 24.

The essay has a very clear shape, the introduction lays out what is to be done and the conclusion sums up the way in which the important theme has been explored. The middle body of the essay might have been a bit fuller but the progression in character is shown very easily and logically. For Organisation and Development the essay deserves a mark in the range 7 – 8.

There are a few mistakes in the French, most of which are fairly minor and appear to be careless slips in several cases. Some abstract vocabulary on personality traits is well suited to the candidate's desire to show a development in character. Such items include *naïf, innocent, les mêmes préoccupations que, la débrouillardise, mûr et reponsable*. In contrast to the

minor flaws there are some quite sophisticated use of structures. For example, the candidate seems at home with the passive, can handle the subjunctive and produces complex tenses such as the perfect conditional. These are not inserted merely to impress but are used appositely in context. The language is not naturally fluent but it communicates very readily with little or no ambiguity and is worth a score of 5 – 6.

## **Exemplar 2 : Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain**

"Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain" est un film qui est sorti en 2001 et qui a été réalisé par Jean-Pierre Jeunet. Un thème principal tout au long du film est qu'Amélie cherche constamment le bonheur et afin de réussir elle essaye de rendre des autres personnages heureux.

La scène de l'aveugle est située dans le film après Amélie laisse la boîte des choses de l'enfance de Bretodeau à côté de la téléphone pour qu'il puisse la trouver. Bretodeau dit qu'il va rencontrer son grand-fils, et Amélie voit qu'elle a changé sa vie. Par conséquent elle se promet qu'elle consacra sa propre vie à aider des autres.

Ensuite, Jeunet utilise un gros-plan du visage d'Amélie pour nous montrer son expression déterminée. Ses yeux sont fixés sur l'aveugle qui essaye de traverser la route. La musique accélère pendant qu'Amélie lui aide et ils marchent au métro. Amélie décrit nombreux de petits détails tels que le prix du jambon, le modèle d'un cheval qui a perdu une oreille, et un bébé qui regarde un chien qui regarde des poulets. Finalement ils arrivent au métro et Amélie dit au revoir à l'aveugle. Il regarde vers le ciel et Jeunet utilise les effets spéciaux pour créer une lumière rouge et vive autour de lui.

La scène est importante pour communiquer le thème du bonheur car, bien que les détails décrit par Amélie ne soient pas significatifs pour la plupart des gens, pour l'aveugle Amélie lui permet de voir, en effet. Quand il regarde vers le ciel, son expression paraît comme il a rencontré un ange et il dit merci à Dieu.

De plus, dans la scène le spectateur voit un changement grand d'Amélie car elle poursuit son défi d'apporter le bonheur aux gens, et en faisant cela, elle devient plus heureuse aussi. Auparavant elle était isolée et timide mais maintenant elle a beaucoup de confiance pour agir avec la spontanéité.

(290 words)

## **Commentary on Exemplar - Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain**

The candidate has written very well about the film *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain*, which since the beginning of this specification has been quite a popular choice. Questions in the Literature and the arts category of Section C of the paper can legitimately be asked on characters, theme, setting and style. This film has sufficient material on all four areas to allow candidates to answer potential questions and is thus a sensible choice.

The essay is of an appropriate length, straying only marginally over the upper word limit allowed. The candidate obviously understands the task and its implications and has clearly done as asked. A tenable theme; that of Amélie's determination to help others, is identified in the concise introduction and a scene involving the central character's efforts to help a blind man and to describe the surroundings, which illustrates this theme very well, is nominated. The scene is described in a lot of telling detail, showing that the selected film has been studied and researched carefully.

The film is well enough known to allow the mention of small detail, such as the explanation of the price of ham and the presence of a model of a horse with a missing ear, all of which help to paint the scene which the blind man cannot see. The candidate has sufficient personal engagement with the film to explain how these mundane items, of little significance to most people, for a blind man are tantamount to giving him the ability to see. The candidate skilfully demonstrates how cinematographic techniques enhance the scene and help to convey the theme. There is an opposite reference to the use of close-up to show Amélie's determined expression to act for the good of others.

Music is cited as a means of conveying the build-up of the scene and there is mention of changing light. Such references indicate that the candidate has studied the film closely but has also researched cinematographic techniques relevant to the film. There is no irrelevance or digression.

Having chosen the scene with the blind man, it could be argued that there is a little too much on Amélie's previous act of kindness but the candidate explains clearly how one act leads to another and this can, therefore, be considered as entirely relevant. The candidate is obviously keen to show that the scene with the blind man is not an isolated incident but one in a chain of altruistic actions. After the description of the scene, which can be easily followed, there is definite analysis of the importance of the scene and this evaluation fairly obviously represents the candidate's own thoughts and opinions.

The conclusion is very perspicacious, as the candidate appreciates the subtle point that, in helping others, Amélie herself grows and develops as a person. For Reading, Research and Understanding the essay can be placed in the 25-30 band on the scheme of assessment.

The essay has clear shape with an explicit introduction and a substantial middle which deals first with factual narrative, as invited by the wording of the question, and then with associated analysis. The final paragraph, whilst not put forward as a declared conclusion shows how the central character has changed and explains how this change will be carried forward in the rest of the film. There is thus a discernible thread running through the whole. The essay is clear, logical and easy to read and for Organisation and Development can be placed in the 7-8 category.

The language is not perfect. Most of the errors of form, however, are minor ones. There is a good range of appropriate, technical vocabulary to support the stylistic features, such as the use of close-up, music and light referred to above and some variety of structure. Imperfections in the French do not in any way hinder communication of the desired message and for Quality of Language the piece can be awarded 5-6.