



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In French (9FR0)
Paper 2: Written response to works and
translation

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General

The overall standard of achievement was consistent with that of previous years. Examiner reports indicated a polarisation in the quality of work; while there was a commendable number of outstanding scripts, there was also a significant proportion of weaker responses. Only a few scripts were left incomplete, suggesting that most learners managed their time effectively. However, the occurrence of careless mistakes implies that some learners could have benefited from dedicating more time to reviewing their work. Once again this year, a decline in handwriting quality was observed. Clear presentation remains essential to ensure examiners can read and understand responses. Writing more slowly, and trying to write more legibly, by increasing the size of handwriting or using alternate lines, may help. Learners are reminded that illegible work cannot be awarded marks.

Question 1 Translation into French

Translation from English into French remains a significant challenge. Even otherwise capable learners frequently made numerous careless and avoidable errors. A curious pattern, noted in previous reports, was again apparent: learners who perform poorly on Question 1 often go on to produce two essays written in decent French. This suggests that many learners struggle with the constraints of translating prescribed content but perform better when given the freedom to express themselves in their own words.

The text was based on Theme 1, the education system. Sections which were intended to be straightforward, such as boxes 3, 4, 9, 12, 13, 14, and 20 posed few problems for the most part. However, for the relatively simple box 2, more learners wrote *penser de* than *penser à*. Some learners forgot to include *ans* in box 3 and therefore lost the mark. Box 4 was found to be difficult for almost all learners, with only very few correctly using *prendre une décision* rather than the English-influenced *faire une décision*. Learners seemed to have little trouble with the third person plural conditional in box 5, although some learners opted for the present tense of *devoir*. Box 7 was a stumbling block for many, with *gagner une vie* being very common. Box 8 was found to be very difficult for most learners; those who managed the perfect subjunctive failed to translate apprentice mechanic correctly as *apprenti mécanicien*, with vocabulary and word order causing problems for some; *mécanique* was seen more often than *mécanicien*. In many cases the perfect subjunctive of *aient choisi* was often correct box 10 but then marred by an incorrect preposition or the wrong gender of *garage*.

Box 11 caused problems with the preposition *à*, which was either rendered as *de*, missed out, or replaced by the English-influenced comment *être*. Box 15 showed that many learners need to revise the recent past, and box 16 caused issues for some, perhaps surprisingly. Learners seemed to have little trouble with the future tense of *devenir* in box 18, although the incorrect spelling of *indépendant* could not be awarded. Box 19 proved very difficult for almost all learners, many of whom believe that *espérer* is followed by *de*. Most learners were able to render box 20 correctly.

A number of errors could have been easily avoided with greater attention to detail. It is especially frustrating when learners successfully render a seemingly difficult phrase, only to undermine it with mistakes such as incorrect agreements or issues with concord. Examiners consistently feel that most learners could improve their scores in this task with just a bit more care. It seems there may be a tendency to rush through Question 1 in favour of spending more time on the essays, which are often viewed as the more significant component of the paper.

Sections B and C

As in previous sessions, the majority of essays focused on six works: *L'Étranger*, *No et Moi*, and *Un Sac de Billes* from the literary works, and *Intouchables*, *La Haine*, and *Les Choristes* from the films. There are signs that *Les Choristes* is slowly declining in popularity and being replaced by *Au Revoir les Enfants*, which is gaining in popularity. Very few, or no, essays were submitted on *Le Blé en Herbe*, *La Vie en Rose*, *Le Dernier Métro*, and *Un Long Dimanche de Fiançailles*, so no further comment on these works is necessary.

The quality of responses in Sections B and C varied considerably, as is to be expected. While most essays demonstrated solid knowledge of the texts and films studied, this understanding was not always effectively directed toward fully relevant answers. For instance, in Section C some learners focused on film technique rather than the essay question, presumably because they had studied it in depth. In terms of language, most learners wrote at a level at least sufficient for the task, although some essays read as though learners had a prepared introduction or conclusion which was used without adapting it to suit the question they'd chosen.

Despite recommendations to keep each essay between 300 and 350 words, very few learners adhered to this guideline. Examiners reviewed all content submitted, but many essays were excessively long. Such extended responses often worked to learners' disadvantage, leading to digression, repetition, and a lack of focus. Some essays included prolonged narrative or descriptive passages at the expense of analytical depth. There is a common temptation, which is understandable but misguided, to include every detail known about a book or film in an attempt to impress. There is no need to give the year of publication or release of a work, nor to tell the examiners who a work is by. In practice, such irrelevant detail detracts from the clarity and impact of the argument.

The importance of planning cannot be overstated. While learners might worry about time constraints and want to start their essay immediately, spending a few minutes planning the essay seems to pay off for most learners. They are more focussed on the question without repeating their arguments and points unnecessarily. Not only does effective planning ensure the essay is logical, chronological and focused, it also obviates the need for asterisks and points made on separate pages, as well as scribbling out, all of which detract from an essay. Scribbles and asterisks often created more confusion than clarity.

The strongest essays addressed the set question directly and succinctly, offering relevant analysis supported by accurate references to the work. These references need not be direct quotations, though well-chosen quotations can be effective when used appropriately. However, some learners rely too heavily on memorised quotations, forcing them into responses whether or not they are relevant. It should be remembered that it is more effective to provide examples from the work to substantiate a point, rather than to include incorrect quotations.

Succinct introductions were noted this year, which is a pleasing change from previous lengthy introductions. Learners often conclude introductions with a generic statement restating the essay question, sometimes verbatim. Some learners using this approach have sometimes changed the essay question by the end of the introduction so it is worth learners checking for this issue: this approach can help learners to focus on the question. Some introductions were memorised and flawless, followed by much weaker writing.

The overall use of language across essays was mixed, but the majority maintained an appropriate register and communicated ideas clearly. Pre-learned sentences were sometimes

used out of context or inserted unnaturally, but many learners produced excellent work, which was fluent, insightful, and largely free of errors. While literary or cinematic criticism at a professional level is not expected, it was encouraging to see learners using terminology suited to literary and film analysis, especially in response to certain film-related questions.

Reading learners' perspectives on the works they studied was often rewarding. It was generally evident that they had engaged with and enjoyed the material. Many essays included original ideas not mentioned in the indicative content provided in the mark scheme. This is entirely acceptable and even encouraged, provided such ideas were supported by well-reasoned arguments and specific references to the texts or films.

Boule de Suif

Question 2a was less popular than Q2b. The general consensus of learners who choose Q2b was that Maupassant's vision of human nature was not entirely negative, with several convincing examples of why this assertion is not entirely true.

La Place

Question 3b was more popular than Q3a. Most learners wrote detailed, convincing essays on the parents' attitude to their daughter, although many concentrated on the father, and either mentioned her mother in passing, or not at all.

Le Château de ma Mère

Not as many learners attempted Q5a, as Q5b, but of those who did, most wrote credible essays on Lili's importance as a link to nature. It was disappointing that some learners failed to mention the nature of Lili's untimely passing and the poignance it lends to the book. For Q5b, learners tended to disagree with the assertion that the title reflects Marcel's mother's importance. Learners who chose this question often stated that the mother played a minor role, whereas Joseph's character was more fully fleshed out.

Le Gone du Chaâba

Almost all learners who studied this work chose Q6b. This was well-answered for the most part, although some learners failed to mention the language barrier or the illiteracy of Azoud's parents, concentrating more on living conditions.

Les Mains Sales

Only a small number of learners had studied this text, and most chose to do Q7b. While some learners were rather verbose, most wrote credible essays on the link between the play's title and the metaphorical dirty hands.

Les Petits Enfants du Siècle

Almost all learners who wrote on this work chose Q8b. There was some good discussion of the father's role, less so of the mother's, and very few learners commented on the brother's role.

Le Tartuffe

This remains a relatively popular choice. Most learners chose Q9a, and provided good analysis of the ways in which various characters had tried to persuade Orgon not to trust Tartuffe, but some essays tended to be a little narrative.

L'Étranger

L'Étranger remains a popular prescription. Learners who answered on this work were evenly split between Q10a and Q10b. Of those who chose Q10a, most tended to deal with both aspects of the question: “*incompatible*” and “*invraisemblable*”, and most were of the opinion that Meursault and Marie were not compatible. However, some learners either ignored whether they were an unlikely couple, or misunderstood the meaning of ‘*invraisemblable*’. The most convincing essays didn’t forget to mention that Marie could be seen as the embodiment of society’s conventions. For Q10b, most learners agreed that this is a book which disturbs, and gave valid reasons why this is the case, from Meursault himself, his friendship with the dubious Raymond and involvement in luring his mistress for a beating, to the unfairness of Meursault’s trial. Some essays stayed focused on the question; others wandered into overly philosophical territory. It should be remembered that this is only appropriate if the point is made that the philosophy itself is disturbing.

No et Moi

This remains a very popular choice. Q11a was more popular than Q11b and was often well answered. Many learners managed to produce good analyses in response to this question, which, on the whole, allowed learners to showcase their knowledge of the book. However, some learners did not know what *perdants* meant, taking it to mean ‘losses’, which compromised their essays. Q11b produced some insightful answers to this question, but also caused problems for some learners who focused only on the improbable aspect of the friendship, forgetting entirely to comment on whether it is moving.

Thérèse Desqueyroux

Few learners had studied this work, and of those who had, all chose to answer 12b.

Une Si Longue Lettre

Of the few learners who had studied this work, all chose Q13a.

Une Sac de Billes

This remains the most popular text. Learners who chose Q14a commented that it certainly was the case that Maurice directed the action at the start of the book, giving plentiful examples of what he had done. Disappointingly, some learners failed to mention Jo’s age at the start of the novel. Some of the less convincing essays tended to be a little narrative, but the question does slightly require some re-telling of events. Those who answered Q14b handled it well for the most part, with learners commenting that although Jo does reveal his Jewish identity at the end of the book, this does not count as going against his father’s order as he is no longer in danger.

Au Revoir Les Enfants

This film remains popular. Of the two questions, Q15a attracted more responses than Q15b, with most learners of the view that the film could indeed be called *Au Revoir L'Enfance*, although few remarked that this title would not echo Père Jean's poignant last words to the children. The best essays made the point that the level of trauma experienced leads to the end of childhood, while some learners related the end of childhood to Julien's loss of innocence, to smoking, being active in the black market and reading *1001 Nights*. Q15b was well-answered with most learners discussing both whether Joseph's actions were understandable, and whether they could be forgiven. Most learners were firmly of the view that Joseph's actions were understandable, but not forgivable.

Chocolat

Few learners studied this film, but those who did answered the questions well. An equal amount opted for each question.

Cléo de 5 à 7

Of the learners who wrote essays on this film, all chose Q17a. Responses to this question agreed that Cléo was very different at the end of the film, with many commenting how her clothes and the film's lighting techniques highlight her change of mood.

Entre les Murs

Learner responses were split equally between the two questions. For Q19a, learners felt that the *conseil de discipline* highlighted the unfairness of the system, commenting on the language barrier for Souleymane's mother, with many learners feeling that M. Marin had let Souleymane down. Q19b was well-answered, with learners discussing the literal aspect with the film being filmed almost entirely within the school, and the metaphorical aspect of limited horizons.

Intouchables

Intouchables is still the most popular film of the prescriptions. There were many varied essays on Q20a and Q20b, both in terms of analysis and language. Q20a was chosen more frequently than Q20b, with most learners making the point that both these scenes are useful for conveying the disparity in the two men's cultural tastes, but that the fact that Driss accompanies Philippe to both events denotes a willingness to learn from each other. Most learners dealt with the humour in these two scenes, with the ubiquitous "*Pas de bras, pas de chocolat*" quotation being used often. Most learners failed to notice that Philippe is not, in fact, amused by this comment, although the better essays commented on his initial irritation. Q20b was a less popular choice, but essays on this question tended to be very good. Learners commented on the suspense and pace of the opening car chase scene, the intrigue it lends the film, the racist attitude of the police towards Driss, and the insight the scene gives the viewer into men's relationship, with one learner making the link between the bet in the car chase scene and Philippe's bet to Driss at the interview.

La Haine

This film is still studied by a lot of learners, who tended to show a good knowledge of the film and were able to use it to answer the questions successfully. Answers to Q21a were, on the whole, better answered than answers on Q21b. Learners explored the different facets of Saïd's character and his role in the film. Most responses focused on his role as the joker and the mediator and discussed how the viewer feels pity for him at the police station where he is a victim of police prejudice and brutality. However, little was made of his misogyny and how viewers might react to this disagreeable character trait. Q21b was the more popular option, with many learners providing detailed and convincing arguments for why the film is, indeed, *contre les flics*, including the archive footage with which the film opens, and police behaviour throughout the film. Many learners commented on Samir, the polite police in Paris and the trainee police officer who is horrified by the police's treatment of Hugo and Saïd, although a number of learners portrayed the police as solely negative. This question also seemed to invite some irrelevant material, such as excessive detail about the real events that inspired the film, and long sections of writing about what the film was about instead of a focus on the police. Some learners were confused by the term *flic*, taking it to be a knife or a "flick" rather than a respectable film.

Les Choristes

On the whole, learners were successful in their response to these two questions, demonstrating good analytical skills and precise knowledge of the film. Unsurprisingly, the most convincing answers mentioned the musical element of the film and its impact on the spectators in different scenes. In Q24a learners described the outing as a metaphor for the freedom Matthieu affords the boys and discussed the lighting and the music at length. The fact that this outing allows Mondain the opportunity to set fire to the school was discussed by most learners, but not all. Not all learners made the link that the outing leads to Matthieu's dismissal. Q24b was a much more popular choice and was, on the whole, done well. Learners discussed how the two boys appear similar at first, but that Mondain is beyond Clement Matthieu's influence. The best essays discussed the fact that while both boys present as difficult, Mondain is far more sinister a character than Morhange, whose misdemeanours include drawing caricatures and throwing ink, as opposed to Mondain's history of expulsion, bullying, extortion, and arson. Much was made of Morhange's career but the point was made that we do not know what happened to Mondain.

Les 400 Coups

Q25b was more than twice as popular a choice as Q25a. Essays on 25a focused on Petite Feuille's failure as a teacher and that he is part of the system that fails Antoine. Q25b was well-answered, with learners painting a bleak picture of French society as depicted in the film.

