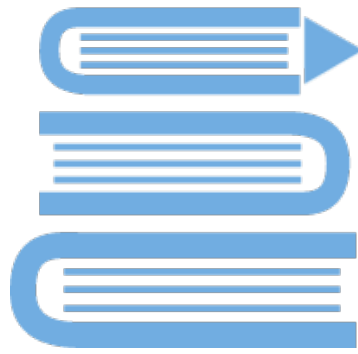


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Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension

In the Leaving Cert French exam, there are two reading comprehensions. This question (Comprehension Écrite) is Section 1 of the exam paper. They count for 120 marks out of the 400 in total (30%).

- Each comprehension is worth 60 marks. One is always a journalistic piece (i.e. from a newspaper/ magazine). The other is a literary piece (i.e. extract from novel).
- There are six questions for each comprehension, while each question is worth 5 marks.
- The types of questions asked can vary, with some asking you to quote from the piece and others asking you to manipulate the piece into your own words
- Two other types of questions include multiple choice questions and grammar-related questions (i.e. find a verb, adjective etc. or identify the word a pronoun refers to).
- Question 6 in both comprehensions is in English, so must be answered in English. The aim is to show that you have understood the passage and can develop an opinion on it.

Key General Advice:

- Make necessary changes to pronoun to suit the question (i.e. change 'je' or 'nous' in text to 'il/elle' or 'ils/elles') and changes to verbs.
- For question 6, you are required to make two points. State your point, explain your opinion based on the text, and use a direct quote to back it up.
- Study grammatical terms for answering the grammar questions.
- Never give too much or too little information. Know what you're looking for.
- Learn all vocab used in questions. The same type of questions always come up.
- Constantly practise past comprehensions. Once you finish it, translate every word you don't know and learn them. This is how you constantly improve.

Before Answering Questions:

- Assess the image provided and try guess the topic of the piece.
- Read Question 6, since it will give you an indication as to what the piece is roughly about.
- Read the pieces headline and try to understand any of it.
- Read over questions 1-5 in order to paint a better picture of what this piece is all about.
- Read the link question in the written section (Q1), because (a) and (b) of this question are always loosely linked to the comprehensions.

Learn the above tips.

Question Vocab:

- Trouvez = Find
- Citez = Quote
- Relevez = Take out
- Cherchez = Look for
- Un mot = One word
- Une expression = An expression (i.e. relevant part of a sentence)

- Une phrase = A sentence (i.e. full sentence)
- Montre = to show (qui montrent = who shows)
- Indiquer = to indicate
- Une raison = A reason
- Décrire = To describe
- Exprimer = To express (an opinion)
- L'auteur/ l'écrivain = The author/ writer
- Selon/ d'après = According
- Un extrait/ article/ entretien = An extract/ article/ interview
- Qui = Who
- Quand = When
- Où = Where
- Comment = How
- Pourquoi = Why
- Que/quel (quelle/quels/quelles) = What
- Combien = How much/ how many
- Lequel/ laquelle/ lesquels/ lesquelles = Which

Types of Questions

1. Information Retrieval

Many comprehension questions ask you to retrieve information from the text (using words like 'trouvez', 'relevez' and citez').

- When the comprehension question involves this direct retrieval, simply pick out the phrase/ sentence from the text that gives the information required.
- Always insert inverted commas to show your answer is a quotation.
- If 'un détail' or 'un mot' is asked for, do not write a very long answer. Marks are deducted for extraneous material.
- Try not to give too much information in your answers as you may be penalised for this.
 - This is not always the case as for question 6 you should write as much as you can to show you understand the text.

2. Grammar Questions

There are two types of grammar questions:

1. Direct identification
2. Indirect identification of the word a pronoun refers to

1. Direct Identification -

- You must know all the grammar and verb terms and what they mean. You need to know examples within the various grammar categories.
 - See the ExamLearn grammar file and verbs file to study this.
- EG: "Trouvez une verbe dans le conditionnel" (find a verb in the conditional) or "Trouvez un pronom disjonctif dans la Section 2" (find a disjunctive pronoun in Section 2)

2. Indirect Identification -

- You are asked to find the word or group of words a pronoun refers to.
- Here is an example of a small piece of text followed by this type of question.
 - Nous avons signé un contrat de neuf ans avec le gouvernement. Si les huit années restantes passent à la vitesse de la première, nous **le** prolongerons sans doute.
 - Question: Pour le pronom en italique (**le**), trouvez le mot auquel il se réfère.
 - Answer = "contrat"

*Don't include 'un' in your answer before 'contrat' since the question is asking for the ONE word that is replaced by the pronoun 'le'. This is a common mistake.

3. Multiple Choice Questions

These are generally considered to be the easiest types of questions in the comprehensions.

- Start by rejecting the answers you know do not apply.
- Then link the synonyms in the question to the text and answer to the best of your ability
- Ensure your answer is neat in the box so the examiner can easily read it

4. Manipulation Question

You must change around the answer, using words in the question or text. For these types of questions, you cannot quote directly from the text.

- The difference between these questions and the information retrieval style questions is that these are usually introduced with a question word (eg. Pourquoi/ Comment), whereas the information retrieval style questions often begin with words like 'Trouvez'/ 'Citez'/ 'Cherchez' etc.
- You have to change pronouns usually -
 - "Je réponds au téléphone" becomes "**Elle** répond au téléphone" (obviously depending on the piece).
- Must change possessive adjectives too -
 - "Nous retrouvons nos copains en ville" becomes "Ils retrouvent **leurs** copains en ville" (again obviously depending on the piece).

5. The Question 6

This question must be answered in English. In the entire French exam, you must always remember that golden rule:

- Question in French, answer in French
- Question in English, answer in English

This question is easier than expected to get full marks. However, you must prepare for it.

- There are usually many possible answers to question 6.
- You are asked to make two points, each point being worth 5 marks.
- You must show to examiner that you have a solid understanding of the piece and that you can develop an opinion on whatever aspect of the piece is being tested.
- This question inadvertently aids you in getting a grasp on what the text is actually about (since it is in English), so take advantage of this.

Comprehension Vocab

Un auteur = An author

Une biographie = A biography

Un écrivain = A writer

Une légende = A caption

Une pièce de théâtre = A play

Un roman = A novel

Une bande dessinée = A comic strip

Un conte = A story/ tale

La lecture = Reading

Une nouvelle = A short story

Un personnage = A character

Exam Guide

This is how you should approach the comprehensions:

1. Assess the image
2. Read the title and subtitle.
3. Read Question 6 since it is in English and it will give you some help in understanding what the piece is about.
4. Read Section 2 Q1 (a)/(b) as the topic is roughly linked to the comprehensions.
5. For the journalistic piece, now read the questions based on section 1 of the piece, then read section 1 and then answer those questions. Follow this method for the rest of the questions. However, for the literary piece I'd advise a different method since it is commonly regarded as being more difficult (but you must find out what works for you) - you should now read the entire piece to get a good grasp of what it is about, then read the questions based on section 1, read section 1 again and then answer those questions. Continue with that pattern for the rest of the questions.
6. Go over it all when you're finished the exam. Leave NO blanks.

*Always remember the most important thing about the Leaving Cert in general: - You can be sure you will get no marks for a question if you write nothing. But if you write something, you might just get something. Never leave a question blank.