



Independent Schools
Examinations Board

COMMON ENTRANCE AT 13+

COMMON ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP AT 13+

FRENCH

Draft Specification

For teaching from September 2021 onwards

For examinations from November 2022 onwards



ISEB CORE AIMS

Pupils who have pursued a course of study based on CE specifications and assessments will:

- Be equipped not only for the next stage of their education, but for life-long learning based on a secure foundation of subject knowledge, concepts and skills and be able to apply what they know to new situations.
- Be enthusiastic learners who are open to new ideas and experiences, curious, questioning and keen to experiment.

They will:

- Enjoy reading and be able to articulate clearly orally and in writing.
- Have the confidence to think, weigh up evidence and make up their own minds, and the resilience to learn from their mistakes.
- Have the skills to work independently and collaboratively.
- Understand how subjects connect with each other.
- Demonstrate cultural and environmental awareness and empathy, developing an understanding of their place in the world.



INTRODUCTION

The ISEB French specification for examination at 13+ and/or Scholarship Level embraces the core aims of ISEB. It is based on the statutory programmes of study for languages for key stage 2 and key stage 3 of the National Curriculum (2013), and fits in with most key stage 2-3 courses.

The specification has been devised to meet the needs of those candidates who may have had only a limited exposure to French, as well as of those who have reached a more advanced stage. There are therefore two levels of Common Entrance examination, as well as an additional Scholarship examination.

AIMS

This French specification is designed to be accessible to learners of all abilities, and aims to encourage learners:

- to foster a love of learning languages;
- to explore their language skills/potential fully;
- to be open to learning new skills, curious about how languages work and keen to experiment;
- to establish secure foundations in the language, which can be used in a variety of everyday situations and transferred to new situations;
- to develop strategies for coping with unfamiliar situations and language;
- to seek opportunities to practise their language skills, so that they can be used with confidence;
- to use the wealth of technology-based resources available to support their learning in a fun, creative and interactive way;
- to experience a sense of adventure when learning about countries and communities where the language is spoken;
- to adopt a positive and enthusiastic approach to learning languages, both for the next stage of their education and for wider opportunities in the future.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The examination will test candidates' ability to:

Common Entrance at 13+

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- | | |
|------------|--|
| A01 | show an understanding of the spoken language dealing with a range of familiar topics, and identify and note main points and specific details, including opinions; |
| A02 | take part in short conversations, giving and obtaining information and opinions; |
| A03 | show an understanding of a number of printed items, ranging from short, simple phrases to longer, more complex texts and identify and note main points and specific details, including opinions; |
| A04 | produce pieces of writing, ranging from short phrases to longer passages, in which they seek and convey information and opinions. |
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SUBJECT CONTENT

The focus of this specification is on three distinct themes, which aim:

- to establish secure foundations in the language, so that students have the skills and confidence to communicate with young and adult native speakers in a variety of **social and more formal situations**;
- to broaden students' knowledge and understanding of countries and communities where the language is spoken, through a variety of **cultural activities**.

To achieve these aims, students will need to study the topics listed in *Appendix I*.

ASSESSMENTS

| Common Entrance at 13+ (Levels 1 and 2) | Marks | |
|---|-------|----------------------|
| Listening | 25 | 20 minutes (Level 1) |
| | | 25 minutes (Level 2) |
| Reading/Writing | 25/25 | 45 minutes |
| Speaking | 25 | 5 minutes (Level 1) |
| | | 7 minutes (Level 2) |

FURTHER ASSESSMENT DETAILS

Regulations for the conduct of the listening and speaking components can be found in the Schools area of the ISEB website.

LEVELS 1 AND 2

LISTENING

This will be based on a number of short passages recorded on a CD. Instructions will be given in English. There will be 25 questions, usually arranged in five sections. There will be a range of test-types: these might include multiple choice, true/false, table/grid completion, putting symbols on a map/plan, box-ticking, matching the recording with visual/verbal options, completing sentences/pictures, linking opinions with speakers, correcting a passage with mistakes highlighted, choosing correct answers or answering questions in English.

SPEAKING

SPEAKING: Levels 1 and 2

Marks

| Part 1 | Role play | 9 |
|---------------|-------------------|---|
| Part 2 | Text-based task | 8 |
| Part 3 | Open conversation | 8 |

The teacher-examiner will assess the candidate's performance and will submit recordings of all candidates for moderation. Instructions will be printed in English.

There will be three parts: a role-play situation; a text-based task and an open, unprepared conversation.

Ten minutes before the test, the examiner will give each candidate, at random, one of the three cards which are set, ensuring that all cards are used equally.

A bilingual dictionary will be provided for candidate use during the preparation time, but no written notes may be taken into the room, nor may any written notes be made during the preparation time.

Candidates should have a quiet place in which to prepare and no access should be given to reference materials, notes or other candidates.

Part 1: Role-Play situation (about 1-2 minutes; 9 marks)

Candidates will be required to carry out six tasks in French which have been given in English. Past tenses will not be required in this exercise.

At both levels, there will be one unpredictable task. At Level 1, the candidate will need to choose between two options offered by the examiner. At Level 2, the candidate will be required to respond, unprepared, to the examiner's question.

The role plays may be based on any area of the specification, and will be of a transactional or social nature, such as conversations in a shop, at the station, in a café/restaurant etc., or discussing hobbies, school or family etc. with a French-speaking friend.

The examiner will give a mark (maximum of 6 marks) for completion of the tasks and a mark (out of 3) for quality of language (see *Appendix III*).

Part 2: Text-based Task (about 2-3 minutes; 8 marks)

Candidates will be required to respond to five questions in French, basing their responses on information which has been given in English. The perfect and near future tenses may be used in this task but are not required.

The text-based task is intended to engage candidates in interactions of a more social nature, and will therefore be based on the topics listed under Theme A: Socialising (see *Appendix I*).

The text-based task is not intended to be a simple translation exercise. Candidates should be encouraged to develop their responses beyond simple statements in order to access the top marks.

They may add additional information, opinions and reasons to the stimulus material, but must be mindful of keeping this in proportion to the overall time allocation for the task and avoid overly long answers.

Although numbers etc. should be faithfully relayed, if key words are not known, the same message can usually be conveyed in other ways. Candidates should therefore be taught coping strategies, so that they are able to find an alternative way to express the same message.

The examiner will give a mark (out of 5) for quality of response to the questions and a mark (out of 3) for quality of language (see *Appendix III*).

Part 3: Open conversation (about 2 minutes; 8 marks)

Candidates will be required to take part in an open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion of any/all of the topics listed under Theme A: Socialising (see *Appendix 1*), but they should not overlap with the topics used in Parts 1 and 2. Examiners are expected to use a wide range of topics and candidates should not know in advance which topics have been chosen. Examiners are encouraged to enable candidates to demonstrate a range of vocabulary and grammar and to develop their responses, to show their fluency and knowledge of the language (including the perfect, as well as the present and near future tenses in order to achieve the highest marks).

The examiner will give an overall impression mark (maximum of 8 marks) for quality of response, quality of language and range of tenses used, according to the descriptors shown in *Appendix III*.

READING AND WRITING

Part A: Reading (Levels 1 and 2)

Instructions will be given in English. There will be 25 questions on a number of short passages, arranged in five sections. There will be several exercises of differing length, covering a range of different approaches to the development of reading skills, e.g. gap filling, multiple choice, matching headings to texts, matching pictures to descriptions, matching two halves of a sentence, matching questions and answers, matching people and opinions, choosing a number of correct answers.

Part B: Writing (Level 1)

All instructions will be given in English.

There will be four sections worth a total of 25 marks.

| Writing Level 1 | | Marks |
|-----------------|--|-------|
| Section 1 | Items of vocabulary | 5 |
| Section 2 | Grammar: sentence completion | 5 |
| Section 3 | Short sentences about five pictures | 10 |
| Section 4 | Five longer sentences on one of two given topics | 5 |

Section 1: Items of vocabulary

Candidates will be required to write six single-word items based on one of the Level 1 topics, with 1 mark awarded for each of the most correct items, up to a maximum of 5. Visual prompts will be provided, but any words relevant to the topic will be accepted.

Section 2: Grammar

This section will contain five sentence-completion questions designed to test Level 1 grammar. There will be a choice of answers.

Section 3: Short sentences about five pictures

This section will require candidates to write short sentences about five pictures and will be worth 10 marks. Candidates will be expected to include a conjugated verb in the present tense in each sentence, although other tenses are also acceptable.

Section 4: Five longer sentences on a given topic

This section will ask candidates to write five longer sentences on a choice of two given topics from the specification.

Marks will be awarded in accordance with *Appendix IV*.

Part B: Writing (Level 2)

There will be two sections worth a total of 25 marks.

Writing Level 2

Marks

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|----|
| Section 1 | Grammar: sentence translation | 10 |
| Section 2 | Continuous writing (80-120 words) | 15 |

Section 1: Grammar

Candidates will be required to translate five sentences from English into French, worth 2 marks each and designed to test Level 1 and Level 2 grammar. Nouns and their gender will be given, as well as the infinitive of verbs and the masculine singular of adjectives. The verbs *avoir* and *être* will not be given, and candidates will be expected to add extra words as necessary and make sure that the word order is correct in French. The perfect and imperfect tenses will not be required in this section.

Section 2: Continuous writing

This section will require 80-120 words of continuous writing in the form of an email, in which candidates may use only the present tense if they wish, but they would need to show a knowledge of past, present and near future tenses in order to access the top marks.

Five bullet points will be given in English and French, of which candidates will be expected to choose at least four. Candidates will be credited for the accurate use of a wide variety of vocabulary and grammar, and the ability to demonstrate the full range of their knowledge of the linguistic features contained in the specification.

Marks will be awarded in accordance with *Appendix V*.

SCHOLARSHIP

| Common Academic Scholarship | | Marks | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------|------------|
| Paper 1 | Listening | 25 | 30 minutes |
| Paper 2 | Reading/Writing | 50 | 60 minutes |
| Paper 3 | Speaking (conducted by senior schools) | | |

Scholarship papers in Listening (approximately 30 minutes) and Reading and Writing (60 minutes) are based on this specification. Senior schools will conduct their own Speaking tests.

All candidates will be required to show knowledge of all the tenses listed in *Appendix II*, as well as the future, conditional and pluperfect tenses, and a wide range of vocabulary.

The listening/reading exercises may include multiple choice, box-ticking, table/grid completion, choosing correct answers, true/false, gap-filling, linking opinions with speakers.

APPENDIX I

SUBJECT CONTENT

The following is an indicative, but not exhaustive, list of the topic areas for this specification.

THEME A: SOCIALISING

Exchanging information about:

- Self, family, friends and pets
- Where I live (house, local town/area etc.)
- Home life (routine, household chores etc.)
- School and school life (classroom language, subjects, school day, routines etc.)
- Free time activities (use of modern technology, music, cinema, TV, sport etc.)
- Arranging to go out (when, where etc.)
- Times, dates, numbers and prices
- Food and drink
- Clothes
- Holidays
- Travel and transport
- Pocket money
- The weather
- Simple health problems

THEME B: COMMUNICATING IN MORE FORMAL SITUATIONS

Achieving a purpose when:

- Visiting a café or restaurant
- Shopping (for food, clothes, presents, souvenirs etc.)
- Booking accommodation (hotel, campsite etc.)
- Using public transport
- Giving and understanding directions
- Seeking medical assistance (doctor, pharmacist, dentist etc.)
- Visiting tourist attractions (asking for and understanding information, buying tickets etc.)

THEME C: CULTURAL INSIGHTS

For the countries and communities where the language is spoken, learning about:

- Daily life
- Local/national cuisine
- Traditions, customs and festivals
- Places of interest (towns, regions, iconic sights etc.)

APPENDIX II

GRAMMAR

(*for recognition only OR where appropriate to candidate's ability OR senior school requirements)

At Level 1, the past tenses are not required in any paper.

Pupils entering for Level 2 assessments will be required to know all grammar and structures listed for Level 1, in addition to the new grammar and structures listed for Level 2.

Pupils entering for the CASE paper will be required to know all grammar and structures listed for Levels 1 and 2, in addition to the new grammar and structures listed for CASE.

| | LEVEL 1 | LEVEL 2 | CASE |
|--------------|--|---|--|
| Verbs | <p>present tense, all persons:</p> <p>(i) regular and common irregular verbs</p> <p>(ii) common reflexive verbs</p> <p>future tense with <i>aller</i>¹</p> <p>negative forms</p> <p>one imperfect form: <i>c'était</i></p> <p>two conditional forms: <i>je voudrais, j'aimerais</i></p> <p>infinitive after <i>aller, aimer, détester, préférer, je voudrais</i></p> <p>*imperative</p> <p>*infinitive after <i>vouloir, pouvoir, devoir</i></p> <p>interrogative using <i>est-ce que</i></p> | <p>perfect tense with <i>avoir/être</i>²</p> <p>*perfect tense of reflexive verbs</p> <p>imperfect: <i>avoir, être</i> and <i>faire</i></p> <p>*imperfect: other common verbs</p> <p>infinitive after <i>il faut</i></p> <p>*interrogative using inversion</p> | <p>tenses:</p> <p>imperfect</p> <p>future</p> <p>conditional</p> <p>pluperfect</p> |

¹ Required for access to the top mark bands in open-ended Speaking and Writing tasks

² Required for access to the top mark bands in open-ended Speaking and Writing tasks

LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2

CASE

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Verbs (cont'd) | negative expressions: ne ... pas; *ne ... jamais, *ne ... rien idiomatic expressions: e.g. avoir chaud/froid/faim/soif/mal, faire + weather | negative expressions: ne ... plus ; *ne... personne *depuis and present tense | idiomatic expressions: e.g. après avoir/être ; venir de ; en + present participle |
| Articles | definite and indefinite article partitive article, including use of de/d' after negatives | use of de/d' after quantity | |
| Nouns | gender singular and plural forms | | |
| Adjectives | regular: agreement and position agreement and position of common irregular adjectives: e.g. blanc, beau, nouveau, vieux demonstratives: ce, cet, cette, ces possessives comparatives: regular and meilleur *interrogatives: quel, quelle, quels, quelles | irregular adjectives: agreement and position superlatives demonstrative adjectives | |
| Adverbs | common adverbs *adverbs ending in -ment adverbs of time: e.g. aujourd'hui, demain quantifiers: e.g. assez, beaucoup, plus, moins, très, trop | *comparative adverbs | |
| Prepositions and Conjunctions | common prepositions: e.g. après; avec; chez; dans; derrière; devant; pour; sur; sous common conjunctions: e.g. et; mais; ou; parce que, puis | wider range of prepositions and conjunctions | |

LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2

CASE

Pronouns

personal pronouns, including *on*
modes of address: *tu/vous*
reflexive pronouns
relative pronouns: *qui* and **que*
disjunctive pronouns: *moi, toi*

direct object pronouns
*indirect object pronouns
disjunctive pronouns

**Number, quantity,
dates and time**

cardinal numbers: 0-1000
mille(s) and *million(s)*
 $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$
*ordinal numbers: 1-10
dates, including years
time, including 24-hour clock

APPENDIX III

MARK SCHEME: SPEAKING (LEVELS 1 AND 2)

Section 1: Role Play

The role play is marked out of 9, according to the following descriptors. There is a total of 6 marks for the tasks and up to 3 marks for the quality of language throughout the role play.

| Mark (per task) | Completion of tasks |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Full communication |
| ½ | Task partly carried out; there may be considerable hesitation. |
| 0 | Failure to communicate. |

| Mark (overall impression) | Quality of Language |
|---------------------------|---|
| 3 | High level of accuracy with no significant errors. |
| 2 | Level of language generally good but with a number of errors. |
| 1 | Marked weaknesses in the use of language. |
| 0 | Little or no effective use of the language. |

Section 2: Text-based task

This section is marked out of 8, according to the following descriptors. There is a total of 5 marks for the tasks and up to 3 marks for the quality of language throughout the task.

| Mark (overall impression) | Completion of tasks |
|---------------------------|---|
| 5 | Very good: full responses given, in a natural, fluent and confident manner; all, or virtually all, of the stimulus material successfully communicated. |
| 4 | Good: responses are good and generally well developed; delivery is natural, with little hesitation; most of the stimulus material successfully communicated. |
| 2-3 | Satisfactory: a mixture of good and brief responses; delivery may be less natural, with some hesitation; the stimulus material is generally well communicated. |
| 1 | Limited: responses are simple but brief; delivery is hesitant, with some prompting required; some elements of the stimulus material effectively communicated. |
| 0 | Very weak: very brief, often single word responses. Interaction is limited. |

Mark (overall impression)

Quality of Language

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 | High level of accuracy with no significant errors. |
| 2 | Level of language generally good but with a number of errors. |
| 1 | Marked weaknesses in the use of language. |
| 0 | Little or no effective use of the language. |

Section 3: Open Conversation

The open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion is marked out of 8, according to the descriptors below. (A best fit policy should be used and ½ marks may be awarded.)

Mark (overall impression) Mark Descriptor

| | |
|-----|---|
| 8 | Excellent: a lot of information communicated; good pronunciation and at least a reasonable attempt at intonation; a high level of accuracy; a range of tenses attempted, including accurate use of the perfect, as well as the present and near future tenses; opinions and justification offered; errors may exist but only in the most ambitious language. |
| 7 | Very good: ready responses, mainly accurate including some successful use of the perfect and near future, as well as very good use of the present tense; a wide range of vocabulary; good pronunciation. |
| 6 | Good: generally ready responses, though with some hesitation and a number of errors; a good range of vocabulary; a reasonable attempt at pronunciation. NB a range of tenses is not required. |
| 4-5 | Satisfactory: adequate responses; some hesitation; some significant errors. |
| 3 | Limited: hesitant and probably with serious errors; prompting required. |
| 2 | Very limited: very hesitant, with prompting needed; relatively little accurate usage. |
| 0-1 | Very weak: little or no communication; not easily understood; much prompting needed. |

APPENDIX IV

MARK SCHEME: WRITING - LEVEL 1

Section 1:

one mark for each correct item of vocabulary, up to a maximum of 5

Total 5 marks.

Section 2:

one mark per question

Total 5 marks.

Section 3:

up to 2 marks per sentence, awarded according to the following descriptors.

| Mark | Response |
|------|---|
| 2 | Good: a straightforward sentence containing a conjugated verb and conveying a clear message; generally accurate |
| 1 | Reasonable: a very basic sentence containing an attempt at a conjugated verb and conveying some meaning; some inaccuracy |
| 0 | Little of merit: disjointed words make the message unclear; frequent errors |

Total 10 marks.

Section 4:

One mark for a simple sentence which is completely correct, **or** for a longer one which has very minor errors. ½ marks may be awarded, as appropriate.

Total 5 marks.

APPENDIX V

MARK SCHEME: WRITING - LEVEL 2

Section 1:

Up to two marks per sentence, awarded according to the following descriptors.

Please note: perfection is **not** required for full marks; occasional missing/incorrect accents should be tolerated, except where these change the meaning of a word (e.g. *a/à* and *ou/où* etc.). However, incorrect word order and errors associated with the manipulation of the vocabulary provided should be taken into consideration when awarding marks.

| Marks | Grammatical Knowledge and Accuracy |
|-------|---|
| 2 | Very good: highly accurate. |
| 1½ | Good: generally accurate. |
| 1 | Reasonable: more accurate than inaccurate. |
| ½ | Limited: generally inaccurate. |
| 0 | Little of merit: highly inaccurate. |

Total 10 marks.

(Section 2 continued on next page)

Section 2:

This section is marked out of 15, according to the following descriptors. (A 'best fit' policy should be used when deciding which band, and ½ marks may be awarded.)

Total 15 marks.

| Marks | Content and Communication |
|-------|--|
| 5 | Responds fully to the task and communicates with no ambiguity in a coherent and detailed way. |
| 4 | Communicates relevant information clearly and elaborates all points. |
| 3 | Reasonable communication, but either one point not covered or the general coverage of the points lacks detail. |
| 2 | Communication takes place, but with limited coverage of the required points and there may be instances of repeated or irrelevant material. |
| 1 | Partial communication and some attempt to respond to the task. |
| 0 | Communicates no relevant information. |

| Marks | Quality of Language |
|-------|--|
| 9-10 | Excellent: a good range of grammar, vocabulary, idiom and structures, used confidently and accurately, including use of past, present and near future tenses; fluent, controlled and varied; errors may exist, but only in the most ambitious language. |
| 7-8 | Very good: a good level of accuracy, fluency, range of vocabulary and grammar, including some successful attempts at using different tenses. |
| 5-6 | Good: uses a range of straightforward structures and vocabulary, which may include an attempt to use different tenses; more right than wrong; reasonably coherent and accurate. |
| 3-4 | Satisfactory: some awareness of verbs, but inconsistent overall; some range and variety of idiom, vocabulary and structures, but generally a weakness in application and accuracy. |
| 1-2 | Weak: inaccurate, very simple sentence structure and very poor range of vocabulary; much repetition; limited knowledge of the language; only a few phrases or short sentences accurate enough to be recognisable. |
| 0 | Little of merit: nothing coherent or accurate enough to be comprehensible. |