



Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

**Singapore–Cambridge General Certificate of Education
Ordinary Level (2023)**

French (Syllabus 3917)

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INTRODUCTION

This document provides details of the Ordinary Level French syllabus for candidates in **Singapore**. This syllabus is available in October/November only.

Note: Centres and candidates should note that the use of dictionaries is not permitted in this assessment.

AIMS

The aims of the syllabus are the same for all students. The aims are set out below and describe the educational purposes of following a course in a language at Ordinary Level.

- To develop the ability to use the language effectively for purposes of practical communication in countries where the language is spoken.
- To form a sound base of skills, language and attitudes required for further study, work and leisure.
- To offer insights into the culture and civilisation of the countries where the language is spoken.
- To develop a fuller awareness of the nature of language and language learning.
- To encourage positive attitudes towards foreign language learning and towards speakers of foreign languages and a sympathetic approach to other cultures and civilisations.
- To provide enjoyment and intellectual stimulation.
- To complement other areas of study by encouraging skills of a more general application (e.g. analysis, memorising, drawing of inferences).

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The examination will assess candidates' linguistic competence and their knowledge of contemporary society by requiring them to:

- understand and respond to the spoken language drawn from a variety of sources and ranging from short to longer extracts
- understand and respond to texts written in the target language, drawn from a variety of sources and ranging from short to longer texts
- communicate in the spoken language
- communicate in writing to narrate events, give factual information and express and justify ideas and points of view.

ASSESSMENT

All candidates take Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4:

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Paper 1		Paper 2		Paper 3		Paper 4	
Duration	Weighting	Duration	Weighting	Duration	Weighting	Duration	Weighting
1 hour 30 minutes	33%	1 hour 15 minutes	33%	approx. 35 minutes	17%	approx. 10 minutes	17%

AVAILABILITY

This syllabus is available in October/November only.

DESCRIPTION OF COMPONENTS

PAPER 1: Writing (1 hour 30 minutes) (60 marks)

All candidates must attempt both questions.

- Question 1 (30 marks): candidates are required to write a composition in French of between 140 and 150 words. The composition must describe the story depicted in a series of 6 pictures given on the question paper.
- Question 2 (30 marks): a directed writing task. Candidates are offered a choice of two tasks (a letter/email and a narrative) and must complete one of these. Between 140 and 150 words are required.

PAPER 2: Reading (1 hour 15 minutes) (45 marks weighted to 60 marks)

The test will be in three sections.

Section 1 (15 marks)

- Short notices, signs, instructions, messages, advertisements, etc. – multiple-choice questions.
- Short statements and complete a matching exercise which tests the main words in these statements.
- A short text in the form of an email, message, postcard, letter, etc. Questions are objective and test the main points and some detail.

Section 2 (20 marks)

- A longer text in the form of a letter, email, etc. Questions test general understanding of the main points, which include recognising simple attitudes and opinions.
- A longer, more complex text. Questions test general and specific comprehension. They will also require candidates to identify attitudes, emotions and ideas. Questions require short answers in the target language.

Section 3 (10 marks)

- A cloze text with 10 gaps, testing knowledge of grammar, e.g. prepositions / particles, verb agreement, tense, conjunctions, vocabulary.

PAPER 3: Listening (approx. 35 minutes) (30 marks)

All questions requiring written answers are to be answered in French. The aim of this paper is to test candidates' listening comprehension skills and therefore they are not penalised for incorrect or inaccurate language unless it makes their answers ambiguous.

Section 1 (15 marks)

Candidates hear short recordings, sometimes involving two speakers, which are tested mainly by visual material. The recordings contain largely factual information about travel, weather, opening times, facilities available, food, etc. and candidates identify main points and some details. Most of the questions are objective, one or two require a very brief written answer.

Section 2 (15 marks)

Candidates hear recordings of two longer and more complex conversations/interviews. They listen for main points and detail. Some of the questions are objective, some require short answers in the target language.

PAPER 4: Oral (approx. 10 minutes) (60 marks weighted to 30 marks)

A local Examiner must be appointed to conduct the Oral. The name and qualifications of the Examiner are to be notified to Cambridge on form NOE (see Appendix B).

Examiners should also consult the Administrative Guidance on the Speaking Test (see pp. 11–12) and the Marking Instructions (see pp. 13–14).

- **Test 1: Topic Presentation/Conversation (approximately 5 minutes, 30 marks)**
- **Test 2: General Conversation (approximately 5 minutes, 30 marks)**

Mark Schemes

Paper 1: Writing

Generic parts of the mark scheme to be used in Questions 1 and 2**1.1 – award a mark out of 10 for Communication****Generic mark scheme for Communication (Questions 1 and 2):**

- (i) There are 5 relevant communication points per question, each worth a maximum of 2 marks
- (ii) For each relevant communication point, use the appropriate numbered tick and place up to 2 of these ticks as close as possible to each relevant communication point

2 ticks	Message clearly communicated. Minor errors (adjective endings, use of prepositions, etc.) are tolerated.
1 tick	Communication of some meaning is achieved but the message may be ambiguous or incomplete.
0 ticks	Nothing of worth communicated.

- (iii) Add up the ticks to give a mark out of 10 for Communication

Total marks for Communication: 10

- Guidance on awarding ticks for Communication**

Example 1: Comment passez-vous les vacances normalement?

Candidate's response	Ticks for Communication	Reason for mark
<i>Oui je passé les vacances</i>	0	Nothing of worth communicated.
<i>Je travaillez dans le bureau de mon père</i>	1	Some meaning conveyed – use of 'travaillez' makes message ambiguous.
<i>Je travaille dans le bureau de mon père</i>	2	Message clearly communicated.

Example 2: Où et avec qui avez-vous fait du shopping?

Candidate's response	Ticks for Communication	Reason for mark
<i>Avec qui j'avez-vous fait shopping</i>	0	Nothing of worth communicated.
<i>J'ai fait du shopping en ville</i>	1	Some meaning is conveyed but the message is incomplete.
<i>J'ai fait du shopping en ville avec mon ami</i>	2	Message clearly communicated.

1.2 – award a mark out of 8 for Accurate use of verbs

Generic mark scheme for Accurate use of verbs (Questions 1 and 2):

- (i) Place a tick above the **first** occurrence of each correct verb up to a maximum of 18 ticks (details of how to award ticks are provided below)
- (ii) Convert the total number of ticks to a mark out of 8 using the Conversion table below

Conversion table for Accurate use of verbs (Questions 1 and 2)

Number of ticks	Mark
18+	8
16, 17	7
14, 15	6
12, 13	5
10, 11	4
8, 9	3
6, 7	2
4, 5	1
0, 1, 2, 3	0

Total marks for Accurate use of verbs: 8

- **How to award ticks for Accurate use of verbs (Questions 1 and 2)**

(a) **Subject (noun or pronoun) + any finite verb**

- both subject and verb must be correct for the verb to score a tick
- verb must be in the appropriate tense to score a tick
- inaccuracies in the use of accents are ignored except for in the case of *-er* verbs and *être* where there must be an accent on the past participle in a compound tense, and the absence of such an accent in the present tense
- do not tick verbs contained in the 'letter etiquette': appropriate beginnings and endings to letters are considered for reward under Other linguistic features.

Tick	No tick	Note
Je suis (✓)		
J'aime (✓)	Je aime (<i>no tick</i>)	
Il est allé (✓)	Il est allée (<i>no tick</i>)	insist on correct agreement
	Le chat (<i>no tick</i>) sont gentils	incorrect subject

With direct and indirect object pronouns

Tick	No tick	Note
Je l'aime (✓)		
Je le joue (✓)	Je se joue (<i>no tick</i>)	«jouer» is not a reflexive verb
Je lave (✓) les voitures	Je me lave (<i>no tick</i>) les voitures	«laver» should not be used reflexively in this statement
Je t'ai dit (✓)		
J'ai te dit (✓)		basic verb formation is correct

With «y» and «en»

Tick	No tick	Note
J'y vais (✓) / Elle en achète (✓)		
Je vais y (✓)		correct «je vais» scores despite incorrect position of «y»
Elle achète (✓) en		correct «elle achète» scores despite incorrect position of «en»

Reflexive/passive

Tick	No tick	Note
Elle s'est levée (✓)	Elle est se levée (<i>no tick</i>)	
Elle a été attrapée (✓)		
Je me lave (✓) les mains		

Impersonal

Tick	No tick	Note
C'est comique (✓)		
Il y a (✓)		but not for expressions meaning 'ago'
Est-ce que (✓)		

With negative

Tick	No tick	Note
Ils ne jouent pas (✓)		tick is awarded for the correct verb; the negative is considered for reward in 'Other linguistic features'
Ils ne pas jouent (✓)		

Sequence of tenses

Tick	No tick	Note
Si j'avais (✓) le choix je voudrais (✓)		
Si j'ai eu (<i>no tick</i>) le choix je voudrais (✓)		sequence must be correct for both verbs to be rewarded

Single auxiliary with multiple past participles

Tick	No tick	Note
Nous avons chanté et dansé (✓) (✓)		Nous avons chanté = tick 1; Nous avons dansé = tick 2

Correct verb within meaningless statement

Tick	No tick	Note
La journée est longue (✓)	La journée est (<i>no tick</i>) intelligente	do not reward correct verb in a meaningless statement

(b) Imperative

Tick	No tick	Note
Viens (✓)		
Ne touche pas (✓)		

(c) Interrogative

Tick	No tick	Note
Tu viens? (✓)		question mark not required for mark to be awarded
Est-ce que (✓) tu viens?(?) (✓)		
Comment ça va(?) (✓)		

(d) Infinitive

Tick	No tick	Note
Je veux (✓) sortir (✓)		
Je veut (<i>no tick</i>) sortir (✓)		
Je veux (✓) sortir (<i>no tick</i>)		
Il a décidé (✓) de sortir (✓)		
Il a décidé (✓) à sortir (<i>no tick</i>)		
Sans hésiter (✓)	Sans hésité (<i>no tick</i>)	

(e) Inversion

Tick	No tick	Note
...a-t-il dit (✓)	... a-t-il dis (<i>no tick</i>)	
...il a dit (✓)		
Viens-tu / Viens tu (✓)		

(f) Participle (past or present)

Tick	No tick	Note
En arrivant (✓)		
Ayant fini (✓)		
Une fois arrivé (✓)		

(g) Reward only the first occurrence of each correct verb, e.g.

- J'aime (✓) la natation. J'aime (*no tick*) aussi le tennis
- J'aime (✓) la natation. Je n'aime (*no tick*) pas le tennis
- Dans ma région il y a (✓) des montagnes et des rivières. Il y a (*no tick*) aussi des...

However,

- Je préfère (✓) la natation et mon frère préfère (✓) le tennis – 2 different persons of the verb
- Mon frère préfère (✓) la natation et ma sœur préfère (*no tick*) le tennis – both third person usage
- Elle est (✓) fâché, ce n'est (*no tick*) pas amusant – both third person usage

1.3 – award a mark out of 12 for Other linguistic features

Generic mark scheme for Other linguistic features (Questions 1 and 2):

- (i) Award a mark out of 12 for Other linguistic features according to the Grade descriptions in the table below (please see *Note on using mark schemes with Grade descriptors* (last page of mark scheme)):

Grade descriptors for Other linguistic features (Questions 1 and 2)

11–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a wide range of structures effectively; produces longer, fluent sentences with ease. • Highly accurate at this level, though not necessarily faultless. • Makes effective use of a wide range of vocabulary fully appropriate to the task.
9–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts a range of structures with a good degree of success. • More complex language usually error-free. • Uses a variety of relevant vocabulary at this level.
7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In control of simple structures. Varied success with more complex structures. • Accuracy is fairly consistent throughout. Errors may occur when more ambitious language is attempted. • Has sufficient vocabulary to add some interest to the writing.
5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts more than basic structures. • On balance, the work is more accurate than inaccurate. • Straightforward vocabulary relevant to the task.
3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliant on basic structures. • Some examples of correct language. Meaning usually conveyed. • Basic vocabulary.
1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few phrases or short sentences are accurate enough to be comprehensible. Very simple sentence structure.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or two disjointed words or short phrases may be recognisable.

- (ii) Consider the extent to which the following are used correctly and appropriately when assessing the candidate's control of structures:

- Adjectives, including possessives and demonstratives. Also comparatives and superlatives
- Object pronouns (*il m'a dit*) and 'strong' pronouns (*chez nous*, etc.)
- Negatives
- A variety of prepositions and adverbs
- Expressions of quantity
- Use of *du, de la, des*
- Use of *pendant, pour, du, au, depuis*, etc.
- Linking words (e.g. *cependant, malheureusement, toutefois*) and conjunctions other than *et*
- Subordinate clauses, including *car / parce que, qui* and *que* (relative pronouns), *ce qui* and *ce que*. Indirect or reported speech (*il a dit que, je pense que*). Time clauses with *quand, pendant que* etc. and *si* (= if)
- Appropriate use of *politeses* in the letter.

Total marks for Other linguistic features: 12

Total for Questions 1 and 2: 30 marks

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE ON THE SPEAKING TEST

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Absentees

Candidates who do not attend the examination must be shown on the mark sheet as 'absent'. If the Examiner knows that they have withdrawn from the examination s/he should indicate this on the mark sheet. If a candidate is absent because of illness and the Examiner makes arrangements to test him/her later at another Centre, this should be noted. Care must be taken to ensure that the marks for any candidate who is transferred and examined at a Centre other than his/her own are entered on one of the blank sheets provided, along with the candidate's full name and index number and the name of the school being quoted.

Additional Candidates

If any candidate is presented for examination whose name is not on the entry form, s/he should be examined in the normal way and a separate mark sheet made out, bearing name, index number and marks.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

1 Dates

The speaking tests take place before the main examination period. Dates for speaking tests are arranged locally.

Dates will be given for the completion of the speaking tests and for the receipt of mark sheets and recordings at Cambridge.

2 Appointment of examiners

The Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB) will appoint the Examiner and make arrangements for candidates to be tested.

3 Size of sample

Each Examiner will be required to record a sample of candidates from the Centre(s) at which he or she examines. The Examiner is asked to select and record six candidates, covering as wide a range of ability as possible (where Examiners examine at more than one Centre, only one sample is required). The candidates selected should be spread as evenly as possible across the range of marks (2 good, 2 middling, 2 weak). This will enable Cambridge to check accurately the standard of assessment. The recording should be carried out in accordance with the instructions headed 'Recording of candidates' (see paragraph 7).

4 The Examiner Mark Sheet

The Examiner Mark Sheet is intended as a working document, on which the marks should be completed at the time of the conduct of the test, as specified in the Marking Instructions. Be very careful to check all additions. A copy of the Examiner Mark Sheet is included in this syllabus and should be photocopied by Examiners for use in the examination, as required.

SEAB will instruct Centres on the procedures for the onward transmission of marks.

5 Despatch and return of mark sheets and recorded sample

Examiners should return mark sheets and SD cards to SEAB for immediate onward transmission to Cambridge. Do not wait until the end of the assessment period before despatching them.

6 Arrangements for the examination

Examination conditions must prevail in the area where the examination takes place. Adequate supervision should be provided to ensure that candidates leaving the interview room do not communicate with those waiting to enter.

7 Recording of candidates

Centres should ensure well in advance of the test that a suitably quiet room will be available and that their recording equipment is in good order. Rooms which are too close to a playground, recreation room or noisy classroom are to be avoided. It is essential that unnecessary background noise should be excluded.

Moderation samples must be recorded onto an SD card as .mp3 files. Each candidate's file must be saved individually so that it can be accessed for the purpose of moderation.

Care should be taken to ensure that recording quality is good. The recording equipment to be used must be tested in situ some time before the actual examination, ideally with one of the candidates. Examiners should take care to avoid long gaps and extraneous noise on the recordings. If Centres are re-using SD cards, any previous recordings on the card must be deleted prior to the examination.

Recording should be done as unobtrusively as possible and candidates who are chosen for recording should not be made to feel that they are being singled out in any way. It should be emphasised that the recording is being carried out to check the standard of assessment and not the candidate.

1 SD card per Centre must be used. The Examiner should introduce each SD card with the following information: Centre Number, Centre Name, Examination Number, Examination Name, Name of Examiner, Date, e.g.

*"S1234
International School
3917
O level French
Mr R Peters
October 17th 2023"*

Each candidate should be introduced as follows:

*"Index Number e.g. 047
Candidate Name e.g. Jane Williams"*

At the end of the sample, please state "End of sample".

The recording must not be stopped once a candidate's examination has started.

Each SD card and case must be labelled with syllabus/component number and Centre number.

Each recorded file on the SD card must be clearly named using the following convention:

Centre number_index number_syllabus number_component number.

Before the SD card is despatched, spot checks must be made to ensure that every candidate is clearly audible.

If by accident it is discovered that a candidate has not been recorded, there is no requirement to redo the test. In such a case, however, a letter must be sent to Cambridge detailing the problems, a copy of which should be included with the SD card.

Tables A and B – Mark Schemes for Test 1: Topic Presentation/Conversation and Test 2: General Conversation (2 × 30 marks)

Each of Tests 1 (Topic Presentation/Conversation) and 2 (General Conversation) is awarded two marks:

- a mark out of 15 for Communication (see Table A)
- a mark out of 15 for Language (see Table B).

Table A – Mark Scheme for Communication

This assesses the candidate's response in terms of comprehension of the Examiner, immediacy of reaction/response, and successful transmission of messages (including presentation of material in the topic).

Outstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A spontaneous interchange between candidate and Examiner. • Candidate responds fully and confidently to all question types. • Most points justified and explained. • Very consistent performance. Not necessarily of native speaker standard. 	14–15
Very good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally understands questions first time, but may require occasional rephrasing. Can respond satisfactorily to both straightforward and unexpected questions. • Often develops own ideas and opinions and provides justifications. 	12–13
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds well to straightforward questions; sometimes responds well to unexpected questions. • Communicates essential elements and can expand occasionally. • Expresses opinions with some simple justifications. 	10–11
Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually responds well to straightforward questions; has difficulty with unexpected questions and needs some rephrasing. • Communicates most of the essential elements. • Can convey simple, straightforward opinions. 	7–9
Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has difficulty with many straightforward questions, but still attempts an answer. • Communicates simple pieces of information. 	4–6
Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently has difficulty understanding the questions and has great difficulty in replying. • Communicates a few facts. 	1–3
	Communicates no relevant information.	0

Table B – Mark Scheme for Language

This assesses the linguistic content of the candidate's answers in terms of complexity, accuracy and range of structures, vocabulary and idiom.

Outstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very accurate use of a wide range of structures, vocabulary and idiom with occasional errors in more complex language. Not necessarily of native speaker standard. 	14–15
Very good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide range of mostly accurate structures and vocabulary. 	12–13
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good range of generally accurate structures, varied vocabulary. 	10–11
Satisfactory*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate range of structures and vocabulary. Can use past and future tenses accurately. Some ambiguity. 	7–9
Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some manipulation of structures and awareness of verbs, though often faulty and/or incomplete. Shows elementary, limited vocabulary. 	4–6
Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows very limited range of structures and vocabulary. 	1–3
	Nothing coherent or accurate enough to be comprehensible.	0

* Candidates who do not show that they are able to use past and future tenses accurately cannot be awarded a mark in the Satisfactory band or above for Language.

COMPLETING THE EXAMINER MARK SHEET

Appendix A is the Examiner Mark Sheet for the Speaking Test for Ordinary Level French. Examiners should copy this for use in the examination, as required. The form should be completed in ink.

- 1 Complete the information at the head of the form.
- 2 List the candidates in index number order.
- 3 Enter the marks for Topic Presentation/Conversation and General Conversation in the appropriate columns.
- 4 Add the marks to give a total out of 60. Enter this figure in the *Total Mark* column.
- 5 Check all additions.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXTERNAL MODERATION

External moderation of internal assessment is carried out by Cambridge.

The internally assessed **total marks** of **all** candidates must be submitted to Cambridge.

The following must be sent to Cambridge:

- the internally assessed **Speaking tests** of a **sample** of candidates. Details of the required sample size and procedures for the recording of candidates can be found on page 11 of this syllabus.
- a copy of the completed Examiner Mark Sheet(s) listing the marks for all candidates.
- a signed printout of the candidates' total marks as submitted to Cambridge.

Copies of the recordings and the *Examiner Mark Sheet(s)* should be kept by the Centre in case of postal loss or delay.

APPENDIX A

**FRENCH (3917/4)
EXAMINER MARK SHEET
GCE O LEVEL (SINGAPORE)**

										October/November	2	0	2	3
Centre Number		S				Centre Name								
										Syllabus Number	3	9	1	7

Index Number	Candidate Name <small>Names should be listed in the same order as they will be written on the entry forms for the written papers. First Name, Initials, Surname</small>	For the use of the Oral Examiner				Total Mark	Comments
		Topic / Topic Conversation (max 30)		General Conversation (max 30)			
		Comm	Lang	Comm	Lang		

Name of Examiner		Signature		Date							
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APPENDIX B

**FRENCH
FORM NOE (EXTERNAL)
GCE O LEVEL (SINGAPORE)**

NOMINATION OF ORAL EXAMINER IN FRENCH

Centre Number	S					
Centre Name						
Language	French			Level of Examination	O-Level	
Syllabus Number	3	9	1	7	Date	

(Separate forms should be used for each examiner.)

NAME OF EXAMINER		
OCCUPATION		
QUALIFICATIONS		
NAMES/CENTRE NUMBERS OF OTHER CENTRES AT WHICH S/HE WILL EXAMINE AND NUMBERS OF CANDIDATES	Centre Name(s)/Number(s)	No. of Candidates

Statement to be signed by the person who has made the nomination shown above.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the person I have nominated on this form is well qualified to undertake the work. The nominee has agreed to undertake the work.

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

OFFICIAL POSITION _____