The National Baccalaureate Exam Specifications -2014 - English Subject - All Streams

INTRODUCTION

The Baccalaureate English exam is a summative written achievement test produced by the Moroccan National Centre of Evaluation and Exams. It is taken for certification purposes at the end of the secondary school education. It is administered to all eligible candidates. The content of the exam paper is directly based on the national curriculum and aims at assessing testees' knowledge and skills in reading, vocabulary, grammar, language functions and writing. The test paper comprises three sections:

Section One: Comprehension

Section Two: Language

Section Three: Writing

1. SYLLABUS BREAKDOWN

Streams	Syllabus and Textbooks	Syllabus coverage
Arts	✓ The syllabus specified in the Guidelines (2007) ✓ The textbook(s) adopted by the Ministry of Education for the second year Baccalaureate.	All learners must cover the **10 units + four supplementary reading texts which are supplied in the textbook(s)**. These reading texts and tasks are related to the themes below : 1. Cultural issues/values. 2. The gifts of youth.

		3. Women and power. 4. Sustainable development.
Humanities	✓ The syllabus specified in the Guidelines (2007) ✓ The textbook(s) adopted by the Ministry of Education for the second year Baccalaureate.	All learners must cover the **10 units** + **two supplementary reading texts which are supplied in the textbook(s)**. These reading texts and tasks are related to the themes below : a. Women and power. b. Sustainable development.
All science, technical and original streams	✓ The syllabus specified in the Guidelines (2007) ✓ The textbook(s) adopted by the Ministry of Education for the second year Baccalaureate.	All learners must cover the **10 units.**

2. COMPLETION TIME AND WEIGHTING

Streams	Weighting	Completion time
Arts	**4**	**3 hours**
Humanities	**3**	**3 hours**
All science, technical and original streams	**2**	**2 hours**

3. EXAM SECTIONS AND WEIGHTING
The weighting for each section is specified as follows:

Stream	Comprehension	Language	Writing
Arts	15/40	15/40	10/40
Humanities	15/40	15/40	10/40
All science, technical and original streams	15/40	15/40	10/40

N.B. There may be partial similarities in exam content between two or more streams. Test papers may share parts of (or whole) sections.

4. SECTIONS, TEST TECHNIQUES AND RUBRICS

4.1. THE COMPREHENSION SECTION

- The reading tasks must aim at testing comprehension and not word recognition *per se*.
- Questions must appear in textual order within the rubrics.
- For word meaning or reference, the relevant paragraph must be indicated.

4.1.1. READING SUBSKILLS

Testees should be able to:

- Identify main idea and details;
- Identify specific information;
- Make inferences;
- Infer word meaning from the context;
- Identify referents;
- Identify discourse markers and their functions in the text;
- Distinguish fact from opinion;
- Identify the author's attitude;
- Identify the author's purpose;
- Transfer information from text to chart, diagram or table;
- Identify the logical order of ideas in the text;
- Evaluate ideas expressed in a text ;
- Draw conclusions from the text.
- Extract information

4.1.2. TEXT TYPES AND TOPICS
The comprehension section can include one or more texts. Texts need to be of an appropriate level of difficulty, and should preferably target issues related to the topics and themes in the syllabus. They should also relate to testees' interests, age, background knowledge and experience.

Reading texts could be in the form of articles, letters, emails, biographies, film/book reviews, reports, advertisements, and may include charts, pictures, maps, diagrams, etc. They can be narrative, informative, descriptive, expository, or argumentative.

4.1.3. LENGTH OF TEXTS
The total number of words in the reading material should observe the following:

Stream	**Total number of words** *(with a margin of 10%)*
Arts	350 – 450
Humanities	300 – 400
All science, technical and original streams	250 – 350

4.1.4. TEST TECHNIQUES

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The following techniques are designed to test various reading sub-skills. They should be varied so that no particular technique would become so predictable. They should also lead to clear and reliable scoring.

- Chart filling
- Gap filling
- Identifying
- Information transfer
- Listing
- Matching
- Multiple choice
- Ordering
- Sentence completion
- Summary cloze
- True/False with justification
- True/False without justification
- Wh-questions

Three to six of the above techniques must appear in the reading comprehension section to guarantee appropriate coverage of the reading sub-skills.

4.1.5. DISTRIBUTION OF BITS

The comprehension section should contain 10 to 24 bits. The bits should sample the reading sub-skills listed above. Over-testing one or two reading sub-skills at the expense of others should be avoided.

4.1.6. RUBRICS

Rubrics are instructions that inform test-takers on how to perform test tasks. They also inform them about the scores. Three to six rubrics from the list below must be used to test reading comprehension:

- **ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.**
- **ARE THESE STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE?**
- **ARE THESE STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE? CORRECT THE FALSE ONES.**
- **ARE THESE STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE? JUSTIFY.**
- **ARE THESE STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE? TICK (√) THE RIGHT BOX.**
- **CHOOSE THE BEST TITLE FOR THE PASSAGE.**
- **CHOOSE THE RIGHT ANSWER FROM THE LIST GIVEN.**
- **COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT.**
- **FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH WORDS, PHRASES OR EXPRESSIONS FROM THE TEXT.**
- **FILL IN THE CHART WITH THE RIGHT INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT.**

- **FIND IN THE TEXT WORDS, PHRASES OR EXPRESSIONS THAT MEAN THE SAME AS**
- **FIND IN THE TEXT WORDS, PHRASES OR EXPRESSIONS THAT MEAN THE OPPOSITE OF**
- **MATCH EACH IDEA WITH THE CORRESPONDING PARAGRAPH.**
- **MATCH THE WORD(S)/PHRASE(S) OR EXPRESSION(S) WITH THE RIGHT EXPLANATION(S) ACCORDING TO THE TEXT.**
- **PICK OUT FROM THE TEXT A SENTENCE OR A PHRASE WHICH SHOWS THAT:**
- **PUT THE FOLLOWING IDEAS/ ARGUMENTS/ SENTENCES/ EVENTS ...IN THE CORRECT ORDER IN WHICH THEY APPEAR IN THE TEXT.**
- **TICK (√) THE QUESTIONS THAT THE PASSAGE ANSWERS.**
- **WHAT DO THE UNDERLINED WORDS IN THE TEXT REFER TO?**
- **WHAT IS THE WRITER'S OPINION/ ATTITUDE/ PURPOSE ...?**

4.1.7. SCORING

Responses may get a score of 0, 0.5, 1, 1.5 or 2 points.
When scoring reading comprehension, students must not be penalized for grammar and/or spelling mistakes.

4.2. THE LANGUAGE SECTION

- This section includes vocabulary, grammar and functions, and aims at testing students' ability to use language accurately and appropriately.
- Items testing vocabulary, grammar and functions should be contextualised.
- Items testing grammar may include affirmative, negative and interrogative forms.
- Items must be receptive and productive.
- Receptive gap-filling items must have the following number of alternatives:
    1 gap: 3 alternatives
    2 gaps: 5 alternatives
    3 gaps: 6 alternatives

4.2.1. DISTRIBUTION AND WEIGHTING

VOCABULARY	GRAMMAR	FUNCTIONS
4 points	7 points	4 points

4.2.2. VOCABULARY

Items testing vocabulary should be related to the topics and themes in the syllabus. They should particularly focus on the following lexical elements:
- collocations
- word associations
- definitions of key terms

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- synonyms/ antonyms
- poly-words
- word formation
- word meaning
- suffixes, prefixes and their meanings
- phrasal verbs
- idiomatic expressions.

4.2.3. GRAMMAR

Grammar items test students' ability to recognize and use language accurately and appropriately. The items should be contextualized. They should target the following:
- tenses and tense aspects;
- wishes (present and past), if only (past), and conditionals ;
- reported speech;
- modals;
- linking words;
- infinitive vs. gerund
- passive with different tenses;
- passive with modals;
- restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.

4.2.4. FUNCTIONS

The functions to be tested are the following:

Social Functions
- Making and responding to requests   - Responding to good and bad news   - Expressing regret   - Complaining   - Apologising   - Asking for advice   - Giving advice   - Expressing opinion   - Asking for opinion   - Agreeing and disagreeing   - Expressing certainty and uncertainty   - Expressing lack of understanding and asking for clarification

4.2.5. TEST TECHNIQUES FOR THE LANGUAGE SECTION

A variety of test techniques should be included in the language section. The overuse of some of these techniques at the expense of others must be avoided.

- providing the correct verb tense/ form
- rewriting sentences
- joining sentences
- completing sentences
- gap filling
- matching
- multiple choice
- cloze procedure with list or with first letter given
- defining key terms
- classifying/categorising
- correcting errors
- responding to situations
- completing dialogues

4.2.6. RUBRICS

The rubrics below are to be used when testing grammar, vocabulary and functions.

- **COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE(S) APPROPRIATELY**
- **CHOOSE THE RIGHT ANSWER.**
- **CORRECT THE ERRORS IN THESE SENTENCES. THERE IS ONE ERROR IN EACH SENTENCE.**
- **CORRECT THE UNDERLINED MISTAKE(S)**
- **FILL IN THE GAPS WITH APPROPRIATE COLLOCATIONS.**
- **FILL IN THE GAPS WITH APPROPRIATE PHRASAL VERBS**
- **FILL IN THE GAPS WITH APPROPRIATE WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS FROM THE LIST**
- **FILL IN THE GAPS WITH APPROPRIATE WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS**
- **GIVE AN APPROPRIATE DEFINITION TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING WORDS**
- **GIVE THE CORRECT FORMS OF THE WORDS IN BRACKETS.**
- **JOIN THE PAIRS OF SENTENCES WITH THE LINKING WORDS GIVEN.**
- **MATCH EACH EXPRESSION WITH ITS APPRORIATE FUNCTION.**
- **MATCH THE EXCHANGE(S) WITH THE APPROPRIATE FUNCTION(S).**
- **MATCH THE WORDS THAT GO TOGETHER TO MAKE APPROPRIATE COLLOCATIONS.**
- **MATCH THE WORDS WITH THE CORRESPONDING DEFINITIONS/ SYNONYMS/ ANTONYMS.**
- **PROVIDE THE APPROPRIATE WORD FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS.**

- **PUT THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGES IN THE CORRECT ORDER**
- **PUT THE FOLLOWING WORDS/PHRASES/SENTENCES IN THE CORRECT ORDER.**
- **PUT THE VERBS IN BRACKETS IN THE CORRECT FORM.**
- **PUT THE VERBS IN BRACKETS IN THE RIGHT TENSE.**
- **REPLACE EACH UNDERLINED VERB WITH AN APPROPRIATE PHRASAL VERB.**
- **REPLACE EACH UNDERLINED VERB WITH THE APPROPRIATE PHRASAL VERB FROM THE LIST.**
- **REPLACE THE UNDERLINED WORDS WITH APPROPRIATE SYNONYMS**
- **REWRITE THE SENTENCES AS INDICATED.**
- **REWRITE THE SENTENCES BEGINNING WITH THE WORDS GIVEN.**
- **THERE ARE ... ERRORS IN THIS PARAGRAPH. CORRECT THEM.**
- **TICK (V) THE CORRECT SENTENCE (S).**
- **WHAT DOES EACH SENTENCE EXPRESS?**
- **WRITE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION(S).**

4.2.7. DISTRIBUTION OF BITS

The language section must contain 10 to 24 bits. The bits must sample the language components (grammar, vocabulary and functions) included in the syllabus.

A minimum of four rubrics must be used in the language section.

4.2.8. SCORING

Responses may be scored 0, 0.5, 1, 1.5 or 2 point(s).

4.3. THE WRITING SECTION

4.3.1. WRITING SUB-SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES

The writing section measures the ability to write in English, including the ability to generate, organize, and develop ideas, to support those ideas with examples, arguments or evidence and to recognise text organisation. This section may include one or two tasks. In case there are two writing tasks, one will be guided or semi-guided and the other free. In this document, a free writing task is defined as a writing task which includes the topic for writing and, sometimes, cues to help the candidate. The target writing sub-skills include the use of

- adequate and relevant content;
- appropriate text structure according to the targeted format ;
- appropriate style according to audience;

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- cohesive devices and transitions to organize their writing;
- correct use of mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization);
- appropriate structures and vocabulary to get the message across;
- variety of sentence structures: simple and complex ones.

Tasks related to writing may include:

- developing a topic sentence;
- writing a topic sentence;
- transferring information;
- completing a paragraph;
- punctuating a paragraph
- rewriting a paragraph;
- writing a paragraph from a given list of words
- completing a dialogue;
- describing a picture;
- describing a process;
- drawing an outline
- filling a diagram
- writing an article;
- writing an ad
- telling a story
- joining sentences
- filling in forms

The following table shows different format/genres and types of writing to be tested:

Format/Genre of Writing	Types of Writing
- formal/ informal letters - film/ book reviews - articles - e-mails - reports - paragraphs - multi-paragraph essays - biographies	- narrative - descriptive - argumentative - expository - persuasive

4.3.2 LENTGH OF THE WRITTEN PRODUCT

The required length of the written product varies with the number of tasks set. When only one writing task is assigned (and this can only be a free writing task), the required length should approximate the number of words indicated in the table below:

Arts	Humanities	All science, technical and original streams
From 100 to 200 words		

When two writing tasks (one free and the other guided or semi-guided) are set, the number of words for the free writing task is indicated in the table below:

Arts	Humanities	All science, technical and original streams
From 50 to 100 words		

4.3.3. SCORING AND CRITERIA

Criteria for scoring must be specified in the marking scale.

Scoring criteria
Relevance to the task(s)
Appropriate paragraphing and organisation
Appropriateness and variety of vocabulary
Accurate use of grammar
Accurate use of mechanics (spelling, punctuation and capitalization)

The rating scale for scoring the writing section will vary with the number of tasks set. When only one free writing task is assigned, it will be graded using a scale ranging from 0 to 10. However, when two writing tasks are set (one free and the other guided or semi-guided) the mark for the free task will range from 0 to 6 points, and the one for the guided or semi-guided task from 0 to 4 points. A score of 0 is given when:

- the candidate does not write anything ,
- the candidate only copies the prompts or the topic,
- the candidate writes in a language other than English,
- the candidate writes about a topic different from the one assigned.

Scorers should reduce the overall mark if the writing product is too short to respond to the number of words recommended above (4.3.2)