



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Assessment Report

Scholarship, 2006

French

French Scholarship, 2006

Commentary

The format of the 2006 French Scholarship examination was different to previous years as it called for two separate responses: one in which the candidates were asked to show understanding of the passage and one in which they had to develop their own ideas, using their own language. The reading and listening information presented intended to act as a stimulus, rather than to test their knowledge on the topic.

The purpose of this examination structure was to encourage candidates to put forward opinions, based on the articles given and on their own personal knowledge and experiences, which reflected their knowledge and command of the French language. This knowledge, as well as the ability to present the content in an organised and coherent manner, was fundamental to allowing the communication between the candidates and the examiners to be achieved.

Although most candidates were able to provide satisfactory responses to the questions, targeting understanding of the text, the second part was more demanding. A thorough knowledge of structures and language up to level 8 of the curriculum, as well as being able to approach a question critically, were needed. Candidates also needed to be familiar with French culture in order to respond to unfamiliar topics.

Many candidates, especially in the writing tasks, showed a lack of preparation in how to answer an essay question. This question required candidates to give advice to a person, in letter form, to someone who had just won lotto. The best candidates in the country critically analyzed the question and answered in the manner required.

Candidates need to be made aware of changes in the exam format, and need practice in essay writing as well as practice in speaking on fairly demanding topics when only a limited preparation time has been allowed. These skills might not have been practised at Level 3 to the extent required.

The best-performing candidates most commonly demonstrated the following skills and / or knowledge:

- a mastery of vocabulary and structures allowing a thorough understanding of both passages, and of level 3 structures and grammar allowing them to use such structures as the subjunctive and “si” clauses, followed by an appropriate tense
- in the written response, demonstrated essay writing skills and an ability to develop their own ideas in detail. They clearly identified the importance of “giving advice” rather than emphasising the letter writing aspect. They wrote succinctly and did not attempt to write too much.
- in the spoken response to the reading, candidates did not merely paraphrase the text but made an attempt to explain the different points instead of merely identifying them. They answered all questions clearly and were able to develop their own ideas.

Candidates who did NOT achieve scholarship lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge above and in addition they:

- tried to incorporate pre-learned material, usually lacked the ability to expand on their own ideas using their own language and the material was not always relevant to the topic
- lacked the required level of vocabulary and use of idiom

- provided answers that were too short or lacking in ideas and development
- showed a lack of preparation.