



Course report 2025

National 5 French

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative, and to promote better understanding. You should read the report with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2025 appeals process.

For information about the performance–talking, which is internally assessed, please refer to the 2024–25 Qualification Verification Summary Report on the [subject page](#) of our website.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 6,611

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 6,483

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	3,558	54.9	54.9	83
B	1,089	16.8	71.7	70
C	828	12.8	84.5	58
D	586	9.0	93.5	45
No award	422	6.5	100	Not applicable

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

- 'most' means greater than or equal to 70%
- 'many' means 50% to 69%
- 'some' means 25% to 49%
- 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of our website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

The reading question paper was comprised of three texts of equal weight. There were four supported questions. The question paper covered the contexts of society, learning and culture (the three contexts not covered in the listening question paper), and the texts were based on interesting and relevant topics that engaged candidates.

One of the questions in text 1, which offered no optionality, was more demanding than expected. This was considered when setting the grade boundary.

Question paper 1: Writing

In the writing question paper candidates had to reply by email to a job advert. The question paper has four predictable bullet points and two unpredictable bullet points. The two unpredictable bullet points were accessible to all candidates and the paper performed as expected.

Question paper 2: Listening

The listening question paper was comprised of two parts: a monologue and a dialogue, and both parts included a supported question. The paper was based on the context of employability. The paper was accessible to all candidates and performed as expected.

Assignment–writing

The assignment–writing performed as expected.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: Reading

Candidates performed well in the following questions:

Text 1 (society)

- question 1(d), supported question: most candidates answered well and gained the mark

Text 2 (learning)

- question 2(a), supported question: most candidates answered well and gained 2 marks
- question 2(c): this question offered optionality, and many candidates gained the mark
- question 2(d): this question offered optionality, and most candidates gained 2 marks

Text 3 (culture)

- question 3(a)(ii): many candidates gave the detail required and gained 2 marks
- question 3(d)(i): supported question: most candidates answered well and gained the mark

Question paper 1: Writing

Candidates performed well in this question paper, with most being well-prepared to tackle the unpredictable bullet points. Many candidates addressed the four predictable bullet points in a balanced manner and used detailed vocabulary and grammatical structures expected at this level.

Most candidates were prepared for the two unpredictable bullet points and addressed these.

Question paper 2: Listening

Candidates performed better in this question paper compared to previous years and did particularly well in the following questions.

Monologue

- question 1(c): supported question: most candidates gained the mark
- question 1(f): the answer required a job, and many candidates gained the mark

Dialogue

- question 2(b)(i): this question offered optionality, and most candidates gained 2 marks
- question 2(c): this question offered optionality, and many candidates gained 2 marks
- question 2(d)(ii): this question offered optionality, and many candidates gained 2 marks

Assignment–writing

Most candidates covered the topics of health, family, school or holidays. Many candidates produced an accurate piece of writing including detailed language and structures expected at this level. Most candidates performed well in this component with many achieving full marks.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Reading

Candidates found the following questions more demanding.

Text 1 (society)

- question 1(a): some candidates misunderstood *informatique* and thought it meant 'information' and did not gain the mark
- question 1(b)(ii): most candidates mistranslated *faire les courses* and thought it meant 'running' and did not gain the mark. Many candidates thought *mon fis* was in the plural form and did not gain the mark

Text 2 (learning)

- question 2(f): many candidates did not give sufficient detail to gain the mark

Text 3 (culture)

- question 3(a)(i): many candidates mistranslated *s'exprimer librement* and/or did not give sufficient detail to gain the mark
- question 3(c)(ii): many candidates did not give sufficient detail to gain the mark

Question paper 1: Writing

Some candidates used the past tense to write about related work experience (bullet point 4) but did not use this tense correctly and made many errors that detracted from the overall impression.

Although most candidates answered bullet points 5 and 6, some candidates penalised themselves through dictionary misuse. There were more instances of illegible handwriting than in previous years.

Question paper 2: Listening

Monologue

- question 1(a): this question offered optionality, but many candidates did not give sufficient detail to gain the marks
- question 1(b): most candidates misunderstood *en ligne* and did not gain the mark
- question 1(d): most candidates did not understand *gratuit* or *environnement* and did not gain the marks

Dialogue

- question 2(a): supported question: candidates had to tick true or false. Many heard the word *anglais* referring to the language spoken rather than the nationality of the speaker's mother and did not gain the mark
- question 2(d)(i): many candidates did not give sufficient detail to gain the mark

Assignment-writing

Some candidates wrote about the topic of holidays in the past, present, future and conditional tenses. This sometimes led to serious grammatical errors and repetitive language, detracting from the overall impression of the piece and impacted on the mark awarded.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- read each question carefully and underline the key word or words in the question that leads them to the answer in the text
- check their own answers carefully to ensure they make sense in English
- are being guided by the number of marks available for each question and give as much detail in their answer as they have understood
- do not give extra information as this could negate any correct information and result in not gaining the marks
- have a good knowledge of verb conjugation, adjective endings, and the comparative. This minimises mistranslation if using a dictionary for comprehension
- use the dictionary carefully and not always choose the first definition listed
- are aware of common 'false friends' and encourage them to check these carefully in the dictionary
- have legible handwriting and if not, make alternative arrangements

Question paper 1: Writing

As the writing is in the form of an email, there is no requirement for candidates to use the formal beginning and endings. Many candidates who include these formal beginnings and endings often make errors in these parts.

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates:

- read the job advert carefully
- answer all six bullet points
- know that there is no requirement to write about both skills and interests in bullet point 3, and it is written as 'skills/interest' to allow for choice
- are aware that bullet point 4 (related work experience) does not need to be in the past tense as candidates who write in the past tend to make grammatical errors
- only write about a past professional experience if candidates can use the past tenses in French accurately
- write enough detailed language accurately for the unpredictable bullet points
- write in a structured way, and include paragraphs and appropriate punctuation
- use the dictionary to check the accuracy of what they have written (spelling, accents, genders) and not to create new sentences
- ask questions regarding the job, as this could be one of the unpredictable bullet points
- leave time to read through their piece of writing to ensure they have covered all bullet points and not made any basic mistakes, for example spelling, adjective endings, accents and words missed out
- are familiar with the assessment criteria in the marking instructions for the writing paper so that they are aware of what is required in terms of content, accuracy and range and variety of language to achieve high marks
- have legible handwriting and if not, make alternative arrangements

Question paper 2: Listening

Listening is a skill that candidates find challenging, and it is clear candidates made progress in this skill this session.

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- regularly practise listening and use French as often as possible in the classroom to reinforce listening strategies
- do more practise involving note-taking to improve their listening skills
- read all the questions carefully and underline the key words so they can find the correct answer in the text
- know that they hear both the monologue and conversation three times and should make use of the third listening to check the accuracy and specific details of their answers
- are being guided by the number of marks available for each question and should give as much detail in their answer as they have understood
- answer every question; however, candidates should not give extra information or long lists of possible answers. This could negate any correct information, and they could miss out on marks
- give accurate answers through confident knowledge of numbers, seasons, months, common adjectives, nationalities, school subjects, weather expressions, days of the week and question words, so that some of the more accessible points of information are not lost through lack of sufficiently accurate details

Assignment–writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- cover the language for the chosen scenario as part of teaching and learning and ensure the scenario gives them opportunities to use detailed language
- write in a structured way including paragraphs and punctuation
- use a range of tenses, where appropriate and relevant, and only if the candidate can use these accurately
- use the dictionary to check the accuracy of their writing (spelling, accents, genders) and not to create new sentences
- are discouraged from writing lists for example school subjects, places in the town
- do not use repetitive language, for example the same activities on past, present and future holidays, what they eat or drink for every meal
- read through their piece of writing to ensure basic mistakes have not been made, for example spelling, adjective endings, accents and words missed out
- are familiar with assessment criteria in the marking instructions
- have legible handwriting and if not, make alternative arrangements

We remind teachers and lecturers to use SQA’s writing improvement code, or equivalent, when reviewing candidates initial draft and have follow-up conversations with candidates.

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

Our main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and to maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, we aim to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject, at every level. Therefore, we hold a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of our Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. We can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).