

# Results from the 2014 AP French Language and Culture Exam

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# Overview

## 2014 AP French Language and Culture Exam

- ▶ 2014 exam information
- ▶ 2014 score distributions
- ▶ Comments on each Free Response Question and Advice to AP French Teachers

# AP French Language and Culture Exam

2014: AP French Language and Culture  
Multiple Choice Section

**Interpretive Communication:  
Print**

**Interpretive Communication:  
Print and Audio**

**Interpretive Communication:  
Audio**

**= 50% total**

# AP French Language and Culture Exam

2014: AP French Language and Culture  
Free Response Section

**Interpersonal Writing:  
E-Mail Reply**

**Presentational Writing:  
Persuasive Essay**

**Interpersonal Speaking: Conversation**

**Presentational Speaking:  
Cultural Comparison**

**= 12.5% each**



# Score Distributions

2014 AP French Language and Culture

# Score Distributions – Standard Group

## Standard Group Explanation

- Only the scores of the **Standard Group** students are used to determine the score distributions (AP 5/4/3/2/1)
- In 2014, the **Standard Group** comprised approximately 75% of test takers
- **Standard Group** students answered “NO” to the following questions on their answer sheet:
  - Do you hear or speak the target language regularly at home?
  - Have you lived for more than a month in a country where the target language is spoken?

# Score Distributions – Standard Group

2014 French Language and Culture Exam – Standard Group (75% of test takers)

## ➤ 2014 French Operational Exam

- Standard Group comprised approximately 75% of all test takers
- 5: 12.4%
- 4: 25.4%
- 3: 37.2%
- 2: 19.6%
- 1: 5.4%

With this score distribution, 75% of the students in the standard group scored 3 or higher.

# Score Distributions – Standard Group

## 3 Year Data

AP Score	2012	2013	2014
5	12.8%	14.1%	12.4%
4	25.4%	25.1%	25.4%
3	35.2%	35.5%	37.2%
2	20.2%	20.1%	19.6%
1	6.4%	5.2%	5.4%

# Score Distributions – Total Group

## 2014 French Language and Culture Exam – Total Group

### 2014 French Operational Exam

- 5: 18.3%
- 4: 26%
- 3: 33.6%
- 2: 17.2%
- 1: 4.9%

With this score distribution, 77.9% of the students in the total group scored 3 or higher.

# Score Distributions –Total Group

## 3 Year Data

AP Score	2012	2013	2014
5	18.2%	19.3%	18.3%
4	26.4%	26.2%	26%
3	32.7%	32.5%	33.6%
2	17.5%	17.5%	17.2%
1	5.2%	4.5%	4.9%



# Chief Reader Comments & Advice to Teachers

## 2014 AP French Language and Culture

# Free Response Questions: E-Mail Reply

The course theme for the e-mail reply was “*la vie contemporaine*”, and the task required students to use the formal register to respond to two questions from a person in charge of recruiting interns interested in working for a European company. It was implied that students has previously shown interest in such a possibility. The two questions were the following: “In what field do you consider working and why?” and “What has been your language experience so far?” Students were also required to ask for more details about some point mentioned in the e-mail.

The Standard Group’s mean score was 2.96 out of 5 points.

# Free Response Questions: E-Mail Reply

## Common Errors or Omissions

- Comprehension errors
- Omission of the request for further details
- Use of anglicisms and English words
- Lack of vocabulary

# Free Response Questions: E-Mail Reply

## Advice for Teachers

- Remind students that they must respond to the specific questions asked in the email and not forget to ask for more details
- Since the topics of emails are often job-related, teachers should practice examples in class. They should also practice email examples in the exam conditions
- Do not encourage students to use ready-made sentences with idioms. Most of the time, those sentences do not fit the topic
- Ask students not merely to recycle language from the stimulus but to answer the questions directly and to try and include words and expressions beyond those included in the stimulus
- Work with students on finding alternatives to giving list-like responses

# Free Response Questions: Persuasive Essay

The course theme for the persuasive essay task was “*la famille et la communauté*.” Students had to write a persuasive essay on the following topic: “Should the voting age be lowered to 16?” The first source was a 2012 online article, titled “No to the Voting Right at 16: Impossible to Exercise Political Judgment at Such a Young Age.” The article argues against lowering the voting age to 16 mainly because young men and women below the age of 18 still go to school and are not part of the national political community. The second source was a graph showing the percentage of the French population that voted in the 2007 presidential election according to sex and age. The third source was a radio interview of a high school student leader who supports the right to vote at 16.

The Standard Group’s mean score was 3.03 out of 5 points.

# Free Response Questions: Persuasive Essay

## Common Errors or Omissions

- Many students did not have the proper vocabulary or grammar to answer the question in a satisfactory manner
- Failure to integrate information from all three sources
- Failure to read the graph correctly
- Failure to present own point of view

# Free Response Questions: Persuasive Essay

## Advice for Teachers

- Plan listening exercises with authentic resources and acquaint students with interpreting graphs
- Use authentic resources for instruction and assessment frequently in class
- Make sure that students know how to organize their essays (use of paragraphs and of transitional words and phrases)
- Teach and practice uses of the subjunctive
- Classroom practice with planning and writing persuasive essays, with particular emphasis on using information from all three sources and discussion of strategies for incorporating them, are highly recommended. Teach vocabulary in context
- Teach register appropriate for this presentational task
- Encourage students to write as legibly as possible

# Free Response Questions: Conversation

The course theme for the conversation task was “*la famille et la communauté*.” In this task, the student receives a phone call from Martine, the daughter of the family with which the student will spend one year in France. Since the departure date is getting close, Martine calls to check a few points about the student’s stay. The student needed to respond to the following five audio prompts:

1. Martine says that she is calling to check a few things and asks the student if he/she is getting ready for his/her year in France. The student had to respond to the question and show his/her enthusiasm.
2. Martine mentions that the student will be able to meet her entire family on the Sunday following his/her arrival since her family gets together on Sundays. She asks the student if his/her family does the same. The student had to respond with a few details.
3. Martine adds that her friends are eager to meet the student, briefly explains the type of activities she does with them and asks the student what he/she likes to do with his/her own friends. The student had to provide specific examples.
4. Martine then explains that there are a lot of short vacations in France and that she often takes trips with her family. She then asks the student where he/she would like to go or what he/she would like to do with Martine’s family. The student had to make a few suggestions.
5. Martine adds that the trunk of her family’s car is rather small and that the student should keep that in mind when packing. She also says that she looks forward to seeing the student and asks him/her to contact her if he/she has questions. The student had to react to the comments and end the conversation in an appropriate manner.

The Standard Group’s mean score was 2.93 out of 5 points.

# Free Response Questions: Conversation

## Common Errors or Omissions

- The first prompt was not always well understood. Many students did not understand the verb “accueillir” and thus did not understand the basic situation, which created confusion throughout the conversation
- Few students knew how to express enthusiasm or emotions in general. Consequently, many just said: “Je suis très excité(e)”
- Students had problems reacting to the final comment, besides saying “d’accord” and “au revoir”

# Free Response Questions: Conversation

## Advice for Teachers

- ▶ Remind students to carefully read the instructions and listen to the prompts, to concentrate and to provide responses that are appropriate to the situation and are long enough
- ▶ Practice the task with students so that the students are used to giving 20-second answers. Advise students to elaborate as much as possible rather than give simple and brief answers
- ▶ Make students practice sentences with difficult verbs and common prepositions (for example, “en France,” “aux USA”). They should also include conversational exercises in class so that students can acquire and assimilate colloquial vocabulary and expressions
- ▶ Spend time correcting the pronunciation of students, to prevent them from saying things like “temPZ” or “allonZ”
- ▶ Have students practice using the same equipment they will use during the exam under exam conditions

# Free Response Questions: Cultural Comparison

The course theme for the cultural comparison was “*la science et la technologie*.” Students had to respond to the following question: “How have recent scientific innovations affected people’s lives in your community?” Students had to compare their observations of their own community to their observations of a Francophone country or region. Students could make reference to what they had studied, observed, and/or experienced in order to support their arguments.

The Standard Group’s mean score was 2.98 out of 5 points.

# Free Response Questions: Cultural Comparison

## Common Errors or Omissions

- Many students did not identify their culture
- Many students did not explicitly make a comparison but rather presented a series of facts characteristic of each culture
- Many students gave an unbalanced response, spending too much time on one of the two cultures
- Most students only considered technological devices, such as iPhones, as scientific innovations
- Instead of elaborating or developing specific examples, many students just gave a list of technological devices that can be found in each culture
- Too many students presented cultural stereotypes, often wrong, rather than specific examples (for instance, there is no internet in Africa or Haitians are poor and do not have cell phones)
- Some students, especially in a Francophone environment, did not understand that they had to compare their community “to an area of the French-speaking world”

# Free Response Questions: Cultural Comparison

## Advice for Teachers

- Teach various Francophone cultures in as much depth as possible, using authentic material, and make sure that students have an understanding of the various cultures that goes beyond the stereotypes
- Remind students to carefully read the instructions as well as the subject of the presentation
- Encourage students to take notes, organize their thoughts and make an outline during the 4-minute preparation period
- Give students various strategies for making an effective comparison, introducing transitional phrases, vocabulary to present one's opinion, and structures needed to compare and contrast
- Practice the task with students and ensure that their responses are well balanced
- Emphasize that an effective comparison requires the students to discuss both their own community and a Francophone community and that they must explicitly articulate the points of similarity and difference between them

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