



**WESTMINSTER  
SCHOOL**

**The Challenge**  
Core Paper

**FRENCH**

**Syllabus and Guidance**

First Examination 2027

# Introduction

The French Challenge paper is designed to test vocabulary acquisition, grammatical awareness, linguistic flexibility, and sensitivity to authentic usage. It rewards intellectual curiosity, precision, and resilience when encountering unfamiliar language, highlighting candidates who can manipulate language independently and accurately across various contexts.

## The paper assesses:

- comprehension of authentic French;
- grammatical awareness;
- accuracy and control of written language;
- flexibility in manipulating familiar structures;
- the ability to communicate clearly and independently in French.

Candidates are not expected to know every item of vocabulary encountered in the paper; the ability to infer meaning from context and grammatical structure is also an important element.

## Structure of the paper

Section	Marks	Suggested Timings
Reading	10	15 mins
Guided Writing	20	20 mins
Use of French	16	15 mins
Dictation	24	10 mins
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1 hour</b>

## Section A: Reading

Candidates read a short authentic French text and translate selected sections into English.

### The exercise assesses:

- comprehension of authentic material;
- ability to infer unfamiliar vocabulary through context;
- recognition of cognates and common language patterns;
- understanding of grammatical relationships;
- sensitivity to register and nuance.

### Candidates should be familiar with:

- common narrative and descriptive vocabulary;
- basic cultural references from the Francophone world;
- recognising tense and agreement within context.

## Section B: Guided Writing

Candidates produce a short piece of writing in French of approximately 100 words using a series of prescribed prompts.

### The task assesses:

- accuracy of communication;
- organisation and coherence;
- manipulation of familiar structures;
- range of vocabulary and connectives;
- awareness of tense and agreement.

### Candidates should be able to:

- write clearly in more than one time frame;
- combine clauses using common conjunctions;
- use familiar verbs accurately;
- express opinions and sequence ideas logically.

## Section C: Use of French

This section assesses grammatical understanding and accuracy.

### Candidates are expected to:

- recognise and correct common grammatical and spelling errors;
- manipulate verbs accurately in context;
- demonstrate awareness of tense, mood and agreement;
- apply grammatical rules independently.

### Question types include:

- error correction;
- sentence completion;
- verb manipulation;
- recognition of common idiomatic constructions.

## **Section D: Dictation**

Candidates hear a series of sentences read aloud twice in French and transcribe them as accurately as possible.

### **The dictation assesses:**

- listening accuracy;
- spelling and accentuation;
- awareness of grammatical agreement;
- recognition of common sound–spelling patterns.

### **Candidates should practise:**

- accurate transcription of familiar structures;
- listening carefully for silent grammatical markers;
- punctuation marks and accents;
- common verb and adjectival agreements.

# Appendix:

## Indicative grammar and language coverage

### Verbs

- Present tense of regular and common irregular verbs
- Common reflexive verbs
- Future forms (*futur proche* and *futur simple*)
- Perfect tense with *avoir* and *être*
- Common irregular past participles
- Imperfect tense
- Common imperative forms (*tu* and *vous*)
- Interrogatives using inversion and *est-ce que*
- Conditional forms such as *je voudrais* and *j'aimerais*
- Infinitive constructions after common verbs and expressions, including *aimer*, *détester*, *préférer*, *vouloir*, *pouvoir*, *devoir* and *il faut*
- Recognition and occasional use of common subjunctive forms
- Present tense with *depuis*

### Negatives

- ne ... pas
- ne ... jamais
- ne ... rien
- ne ... plus
- ne ... personne

### Nouns and Articles

- Gender and plural forms of common regular and irregular nouns
- Definite and indefinite articles
- Partitive articles
- Use of *de/d'* with negatives and expressions of quantity

### Adjectives

- Agreement and position of common adjectives
- Agreement of common irregular adjectives
- Possessive adjectives
- Demonstrative adjectives
- Comparative structures
- Superlative structures

### Adverbs

- Common adverbs, including forms ending in *-ment*
- Common irregular adverbs

## **Pronouns**

- Subject pronouns, including *on*
- Reflexive pronouns
- Relative pronouns, including *qui* and *que*
- Direct and indirect object pronouns
- Disjunctive pronouns

## **Prepositions and Conjunctions**

- Common prepositions of time, place and movement
- Common conjunctions used to link and sequence ideas