



AP[®] French Literature 2003 Scoring Commentary

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**AP[®] FRENCH LITERATURE
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ANALYSE

SUBQUESTION 1

BB : Grade 5 out of 5

Very thorough and insightful response that analyzes the wolf's arguments in detail and offers an excellent characterization of his attitude. After a good introduction to the subject, the essay considers each argument and explains why it is not valid. Then, in a different paragraph, it summarizes the response to the first part of the question. In the last paragraph, which is also the conclusion, it explains the wolf's behavior in a very convincing manner. It is especially insightful when it deals with the bad faith of the animal. This excellent essay is also clear and well organized.

B : Grade 4 out of 5

Well-developed analysis of some of the wolf's arguments. The essay first summarizes the arguments and explains why they are not logical and why the wolf uses them. However, it does not say why the first argument (about the water) is absurd and does not take into account the lamb's long answer to it. It also ignores the final argument even though it is three-line long. The description of the wolf's attitude is excellent, especially the conclusion drawn from "l'argument circulaire du loup."

G : Grade 3 out of 5

This essay describes the wolf's attitude toward the lamb very well, but it really deals with only one argument, that of the water. It ignores all the others. It does mention "un argument de l'inferiorite de l'espece d'agneau," but it is an error of interpretation since it is not in the text. The conclusion is interesting but irrelevant to the question.

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ANALYSE

SUBQUESTION 2

CC : Grade 4 out of 5

Short but good discussion of some of the techniques used to characterize the lamb. Except for the remark about the contrast between the lamb who drinks in pure water and the wolf who “cherchait aventure,” it mainly deals with the vocabulary of the lamb as it shows his subordinate position, his respect for the wolf, his weakness, his innocence and his youth. It uses precise examples and deals with the main aspects of the animal’s personality. However, it ignores the logic of his answers and his ability to reason and could have been more specific and more detailed. It also ends on an irrelevant note about the wolf’s decision to eat the lamb.

C : Grade 3 out of 5

This is a basically satisfactory response that shows that the student has understood the text, but it is brief and superficial. It accurately describes the lamb as candid, naive, polite and innocent, but, except for the reference to “Votre Majeste”, it is not based on precise examples. In addition, it only identifies, and barely discusses, two or three techniques.

M: Grade 2 out of 5

This essay does not deal with the subject satisfactorily. It starts by stating that the lamb is intelligent, but with no justification from the text. It then identifies a technique, “la personnification,” but does not say why it is relevant to the subject. The next sentence does not make much sense. It is only in the second paragraph that the student indirectly but correctly identifies a couple of techniques, but without showing how they characterize the lamb. The following sentences are general and draw a few conclusions that fail to address the subject.

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ANALYSE

LANGUAGE

K : Grade 5 out of 5

This essay is remarkably written and reflects outstanding control of the French language. It uses a rich and varied vocabulary and shows a superb sense of style. Indeed, it includes many long, varied and complex sentences with various subordinate and/or relative clauses. Yet, it was clearly written by a non-francophone student since it contains some awkward constructions (“l’agneau a dit mal de lui,” “au debut de l’an,” il se sert des termes du logique”) and a few grammatical inaccuracies.

B : Grade 4 out of 5

This essay reads easily and reflects good control of the French language. It uses some interesting vocabulary (“l’argument circulaire,” “procedes,” “renforce”) and shows a good sense of style. It also strives for a varied syntax, with many sentences composed of relative and subordinate clauses. However, it contains a number of serious errors (“de le” instead of “du” four times!) and quite a few awkward sentences.

D : Grade 3 out of 5

This easy-to-understand essay reflects an adequate knowledge of the French language and grammar, but its syntax is often quite elementary and its vocabulary rather limited. In addition, it is marred by some serious errors, such as “avec il” or “de le mangeant,” and a number of basic mistakes.

E : Grade 2 out of 5

Although most of this essay is understandable, it has clearly been written by a student who has not mastered many basic points of French grammar. It is very long and often uses a complex syntax, but it does not contain one single correct sentence. It is filled with serious errors (spelling, agreements, tenses, conjugations...) and anglicisms. The last sentence of the first part even includes three relative pronouns together (“que lesquelles qui”)!

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ESSAI

Une si longue lettre

R **Grade: 9 content / 4 language**

A succinct introductory paragraph states that the family of the narrator of *Une si longue lettre* is a source of both support and constraint throughout her life and letter. This thesis gives cohesion to the essay. It is supported by four paragraphs, each of which develops a particular dimension of Ramatoulaye's complex family. The first of these takes the reader back to the conflict between Ramatoulaye and her mother over the choice of Modou as a husband: Ramatoulaye's scorn for the mother's objections makes it impossible for the mother to be a source of support later when she is proven to have been right. The next paragraph focuses on Ramatoulaye's marriage with Modou, the ideal of family defined in terms of monogamous marriage as a source of support and happiness, and her deception when years later Modou takes a second wife, betraying this ideal. A particularly strong fourth paragraph deals insightfully with a multiplicity of constraints created by the various members of the "*belle-famille*" (Modou's people) both during their marriage and following Modou's death. The writer identifies several important themes: the working mother/wife, materialism, envy, and polygamy, concluding that the *belle famille* offers neither support nor respect. A concluding paragraph examines Ramatoulaye's life with her children, a source of concern and support, through which she evolves into a strong, wise and independent woman. Throughout this essay the writer cites pertinent examples from the text to support his or her insights.

A language grade of 4 recognizes good control of the French throughout a long and complexly argued essay. The vocabulary is excellent and the syntax varied. There remain fairly numerous grammatical errors which, while they do not prevent the text from reading smoothly, keep it from meriting a 5.

Exam GG **Grade: 6 content / 3 language**

This essay offers a satisfactory discussion of the role of the family including a good number of precise examples of problems caused by family situations, which the student relates to a variety of themes (polygamy, betrayal, role of women) in the novel. In the course of the essay the student looks first at the situation of Ramatoulaye – responsibility and constraint without recognition – and then at Aïssatou, who chooses to liberate herself from her family (i.e. husband). The essay discusses well the changing role of women within African society as seen through the juxtaposition of Ramatoulaye and Aïssatou. It is a quite satisfactory essay despite some minor interpretive flaws (no credit for her work; seems to suggest that Aïssatou has no family after divorcing Mawdo), a rather unfocused introduction and the lack of a comprehensive conclusion.

The language in this essay is a strong example of a "3". The student has excellent control of basic French syntax but rarely attempt complex subordination. The vocabulary, on the other hand, is ambitious, which unfortunately often leads to a lot of anglicisms and other incorrect word choices.

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Une si longue lettre (cont'd.)

Exam B **Grade: 4 content / 2 language**

The student has reduced the complexity of the theme of family to “good” and “bad”, offering a weak thesis for the essay. For Ramatoulaye, and for the family, Modou is bad because he destroys the family; her daughter is good because she helps and supports. The paragraph on Aïssatou touches on the more complex issue of the role of the mother-in-law and marriage within the proper *caste* (problems of vocabulary here) but contains a major misunderstanding (Mawdo’s mother wants them to divorce) and does not mention the role of polygamy. While the essay stays focused on the positive and negative role of family, or at least family members, it treats theme minimally and contains a major interpretive flaw.

The French here is basically understandable but characterized throughout by transposition of English syntax, although there are also some occasional very good sentences. (*Elle veut qu’ils se divorcent.*)

Pierre et Jean

Exam H **Grade: 8 content / 4 language**

This very well developed essay views the role of the family in relation to three aspects of the novel: the personality of Pierre, the theme of jealousy, and the values of the society in which it is set. The paragraph on Pierre is particularly sensitive, nuanced and detailed as it explores Pierre’s “soul”, seeing in him not only hurt and jealousy as motivating forces, but also his love for Jean. It takes an insightful look at what Pierre does not do that he might have done to destroy the family. A second long and strong analytical paragraph on the theme of jealousy shows the effect of this emotion on each of the main characters. A third paragraph gives many precise and pertinent examples of the societal values that come into play in the novel: money, family name, marriage within one’s own social “circle” (class), as well as the importance attached to the integrity of the family. The student generously interprets Pierre’s decision to leave as motivated by the importance of preserving the family, whose desires are ultimately more important than his. This excellent essay falls short of meriting a “9” because of a weak introduction and conclusion. The introduction takes six lines to restate the question before the final rather poorly phrased statement of intent, failing to offer a thesis which would have made the paper more cohesive. The concluding paragraph merely restates what has been covered in the essay.

The French here is characterized by a rich and usually (but not always: e.g. *ignorance* = ignoring) apt vocabulary. It reads smoothly and generally uses varied syntax well. A major exception to this is the student’s failure to use the conditional in the second paragraph, where the interpretation of Pierre involves what he could have done but did not. Faulty use of object and relative pronouns also mars the quality of the language.

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Pierre et Jean (cont'd.)

Exam J Grade: 5 content / 3 language

This essay offers a well-structured discussion of the role of the family before and after the discovery that Maréchal is Jean's father. The introduction states the student's interpretation of the question, the family is a source of both support and constraint, support for both brothers before the discovery and "unhappiness" for Pierre afterwards. A short paragraph paints a perhaps too rosy portrait of the Roland family, insisting rather unduly on the young men's desire to spend time with the family, but this was not seen as a major interpretive flaw. The following paragraph on the change in the role of the family is more accurate but has changed the concept of constraint to unhappiness and misery. Without the very strong concluding paragraph, this essay would have fallen in the "4" category. The conclusion begins with the apt image of the double edged sword to describe the effect of the family on individuals. The student states correctly that the family as a source of stability is what Pierre has lost, which relates well back to the "rosy" picture of paragraph 2, and goes on to point out that as a result Pierre is no longer the same person. Although the student does not deal explicitly with theme, the structure of the essay touches on thematic elements such as happiness, loss, and transformation. The weaknesses already mentioned plus a general lack of precise references place this essay in the just-barely-satisfactory category.

Exam J (continued) Grade: 5 content / 3 language

The syntax and vocabulary are simple, creating a text that is clearly understandable. It is, however, marked by frequent careless errors (lack of agreements, incorrect verb forms). Some attempt at a more sophisticated syntax is made (e.g. *avant que*) but not very successfully (verb not in subjunctive).

Exam L Grade: 4 content / 3 language

This essay does a good job of addressing the role of the family and its effect on Pierre through plot summary, but offers minimal discussion and only refers to theme in the introduction. Despite its relative brevity, the essay states a clear thesis and reflects a good basic knowledge of the story and characters in *Pierre et Jean*. The introduction is promising: family plays primarily a constraining role and is more of a source of unhappiness for Pierre than of joy for Jean. The second paragraph, while largely plot summary, does connect Mme Roland's love for Jean with her love for Maréchal. A third paragraph talks about M Roland, his character and why he doesn't especially like Pierre. The student tacks his/her conclusion onto this paragraph: having shown through plot summary that Pierre is alone, without family, love or hope, (s)he concludes that it is the family that forces him to leave on the ship.

The French is adequate to the ideas expressed. The syntax is simple but basically correct and serves to connect ideas satisfactorily. Vocabulary is appropriate but limited.