PRESENTATIONS

STRUCTURAL OVERVIEW
FINALITY: 10 MINUTE PRESENTATION

- FIND YOUR THEME
- FIND MAIN LITERARY TEXT
- FIND THREE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS
- DO YOUR CREATIVE WRITING
- DOCUMENT ALL SOURCES
YOUR PORTFOLIO

• PORTFOLIO FORMAT
• INTRO
• MAIN DOCUMENT
• SECOND THIRD AND FOURTH
• YOUR CREATIVE WRITING
• YOUR SOURCES

• PORTFOLIO DELIVERY AT ORAL
• EXPLAIN CHOICE OF SUBJECT
• WHAT? GIVE GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PORTFOLIO
• BRIEFLY ENUMERATE EACH DOCUMENT
• EXPLAIN BRIEFLY HOW EACH DOC ILLUSTRATES PART OF THE THEME
• PRESENT AND ANALYZE MAIN DOCUMENT AND SHORT BIO
• CONTRAST AND COMPARE OR SUPPORT THROUGH 1ST 2ND 3RD AND 4TH DOCUMENTS
• EXPLAIN HOW YOU EXPLOIT THE THEME IN YOUR OWN CREATIVE WRITING
• DRAW MEANINGFUL CONCLUSIONS
CONSTRUCTION AND NARRATION

- SPEND THE WHOLE YEAR BUILDING YOUR PORTFOLIO
- SPEND TEN MINUTES NARRATING YOUR PORTFOLIO
INTERVIEW

• LISTEN CAREFULLY TO QUESTIONS FROM THE JURY
• BE SPONTANEOUS AND SINCERE IN YOUR ANSWERS
• LOOK THE JURY IN THE EYE AND EXPLOIT THEIR QUESTIONS
EXTRACTING MEANING

• USE OF LANGUAGE
EXTRACTING MEANING

• CONTEXT
EXTRACTION OF MEANING

• EFFECT
DELIVERY METHOD

• WHAT
• HOW
• WHY
DELIVERY METHOD

- ABCD
The oral exam in the French system, if prepared diligently and pragmatically, can be the key to relatively sought-after places or positions in schools, universities, programmes, companies etc. The stakes can be high, for the candidate and their family, for the future options the candidate may / may not have depending on the admission process, and of course, the reputation of the training course preparing candidates must always be taken into account. The stakes are high...even primordial and this is a one-shot opportunity. Once the fifteen minutes are up, whether we like it or not, it is too late to go back and try again. What the French might call ‘un processus à cliquet’ meaning you can go forward but there is no way of going back.
Notwithstanding the ephemeral nature and, let’s face it, the fairly common perception that evaluation can be unfairly subjective, this paper proposes an integral strategy to succeed within the oral exam framework.

EXAM FRAMEWORK

- Linguistic criteria
- Bi-lingual expectations
- Bi-cultural expectations
- Social skills
- Spontaneity and interaction
- Wealth of knowledge, literary, historic, cultural
- Method, logic and delivery
Putting aside the internal nature of a school’s, university’s approach to evaluation, the truth of
the matter is that any evaluator only has a certain amount of criteria to play with.
This state of affairs presents opportunities for the well-prepared candidate.
It goes without saying that the language examiner, outwith the additional evaluation criteria
listed above, will use, first and foremost, precision of grammar and authenticity of speech as a
basic rule-of-thumb to evaluate the candidate.
These are the tools that the language examiner uses every day.
These language tools are thus the sine qua non, non-negotiables that provide basis for
evaluation.
In this respect the fore-warned candidate would be well-advised to only use those words and
phrases they are absolutely sure of.
Similarly, the candidate should prepare (learn by heart) a whole bundle of common, generic,
sentences and expressions, and stick to them.
The candidate should have clear intent to place as many link words as possible in a coherent
context.
No creative license in the oral.

- The killer-mistakes, of course, are well-known:
  - No ‘s’ at the third person
  - I am born on
  - Incapacity to say the date, or tell the time
  - Present perfect confusion with simple past, I have seen a bus this morning
  - Universal use of ‘gonna’

Etc. etc. etc....

It would be no great stretch of the imagination to suggest, that any one of these has the potential to turn a possible 18 into an 8, or less.

Food for thought.
• The context of recruitment in a fairly prestigious school or establishment reduces the margin for error proportionally to the number of places available, and decrease exponentially pro-rata with the number of candidates applying.

Bi-lingual expectations
As a matter of course, the candidate should demonstrate their command of everyday expressions and conjunctions. The delivery of these must be authentic and immediate, and appropriate to the context.
Again, this sole criteria is a ‘go-no go’ marker for selection.
Bi-cultural expectations

References from holidays, cultural specificities, literary associations, history, way of life, culture etc should be fully-prepared and fully-tuned to authenticity and leave the examiner with the sound impression that the candidate truly masters those elements of knowledge and experience that justify entrance into a bi-lingual, selective entry school, university.
Social skills

One of the most under-rated and almost taboo considerations within oral preparation.

- Look the examiner in the eye
- Confidence and pleasant nature
- Impeccable appearance
- Neatness, appropriate dress, make-up, jewelry
- Posture, erect, alert
- Body language, hands, arms, legs, torso
- Decorum, politeness, consideration
- Clear appropriation of expectations
Spontaneity and interaction

Raphael Nadal could tell us a thing or two about this, that if the ball is not taken on the volley then the point is lost. Fortunately we do not have to play in high-class tennis to do well in an oral exam!!

Every opportunity should be taken, well-in-advance of any selective oral, of providing authentic language situations to candidates. Outwith the school system, in an environment where the candidate can interact in viva’s and real-life situations in a ‘tit for a tat’ communication framework where native speakers exchange ideas and information.
Wealth of knowledge

The minimal expectations require the candidate to share knowledge of the country their language comes from, this can take many forms; culture, history, literature, fashion, films, food, weather, geography, famous people, politics; dare I say ‘Brexit’? This background fabric to the candidate’s profile can be built up over the months, years, preceding oral exams. The over-arching criteria for any candidate should be enthusiasm and GENUINE interest for the role they play during the interview.
Last, but not least, the candidate should seize the opportunity to interact with logical, well-structured replies and comments. If one considers that the oral lasts between ten and fifteen minutes, then the number of comments made by the candidate could be relatively few. It is crucial to make good use of those opportunities. One can only underline the precept that when the candidate does speak, they speak with organized logic and structure at every turn, in order to convince the jury that this candidate, over and above all other criteria, is a person who is capable of clear, clever, thought-out and reasonable comment. This criteria is key. Many methods can be practised, prepared and exploited:
The standard paragraph plan is easy to understand and use:
• A B C D
• A statement
• B example
• C explanation / justification of example
• D mini-conclusion

This should be practised as often as possible (even with parents : ))

This written method is perfectly transferable to the oral.
The main take-away of this method is that the examiner will be able to follow the reasoning and this can only reinforce the positive opinion the candidate needs to show.
Correct use of this simple method shows proof of intellectual and linguistic agility, sound-reasoning and solid preparation, things that are sought-after in many schools.
In short, if serious thought and preparation are to be given to this type of prestigious selective exam, it were better to start sooner, rather than later. A full-spectrum, urgent effort should be made to speak, write and research appropriate themes, messages, comments and techniques in line with the objectives identified above.

As a parting comment, this paper covers the oral only, it should not be forgotten that there is often a written exam too...
HANDS ON APPROACH

• ON YOUR TITLE PAGE, WHY NOT HAVE A PHOTO OR DRAWING OF EACH DOCUMENT TO BETTER ILLUSTRATE WHAT YOU ARE PRESENTING?

• CALQUE YOUR ORAL INTRO OVER THE PORTFOLIO ITSELF

• WALK THE JURY THROUGH YOUR PORTFOLIO PAGE BY PAGE

• WHILE DOING SO READ OUT YOUR NOTES OR, BETTER STILL, JUST USE BULLET POINTS ON FLASH CARDS
IN AN IDEAL WORLD...

The next two slides deal with the nuts and bolts of how you could do your presentation.
NEVER...NEVER...TAKE YOUR EYES OFF THE BALL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT? CLEARLY SAY WHAT YOUR SUBJECT IS AND WHAT YOU WANT TO SHOW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY? INTRO: CHOICE OF SUBJECT / EXPLAIN WHY YOU CHOSE THIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENUMERATE YOUR DOCUMENTS AND SAY WHY AND HOW YOU CHOSE / FOUND</td>
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<td>BEGIN YOUR LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN DOCUMENT: EXPLAIN THE</td>
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<td>PLOT / AUTHORS INTENT AND HOW IT CLEARLY ILLUSTRATES PART OF</td>
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<td>YOUR SUBJECT</td>
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<td>INTRODUCE AND CLEARLY IDENTIFY HOW EACH OF THE FOLLOWING</td>
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<td>DOCUMENTS SUPPORT / CONTRAST / CONFIRM / NEGATE YOUR IDEAS ON</td>
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<td>THE SUBJECT</td>
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<td>DRAW SIGNIFICANT AND MEANINGFUL CONCLUSIONS AND LINK THEM TO</td>
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<td>YOUR OWN PERSONAL WRITING PIECE EXPLAINING WHAT HOW AND</td>
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<td>WHY AND THE EFFECT YOU ARE TRYING TO CREATE</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAKE YOUR FINAL CONCLUSIONS</td>
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In this short presentation I will explain what my subject is, why I chose it, how I chose my documents and how they illustrate something meaningful about the subject. “What is my subject? Well...”; “How did I choose my documents? I chose...”; “How did I come to choose what to write in my creative writing?...”

I react to this on a personal level....

To portray my subject I chose....

The extract I chose is...

I decided to quote from the writer and explain what they are trying to create in terms of effect and how they do it...

I am going to use frequent quotes as roadsigns to structure my presentation...