

Cultural Comparisons

The presentational speaking portion of the AP French Language and Culture examination consists of an oral presentation on a specific topic to your class. For this task, you will have 4 minutes to read the question, organize your thoughts, and prepare your presentation. Then you will have 2 minutes to record your presentation. The presentational speaking task will test your ability to speak about a specific topic. You need to show what you know about French and francophone cultures.

As for any presentation, you must illustrate your points by using precise examples. The prompts are generically designed so that they are subject to interpretation in order for you to pull examples from personal experience or from a variety of sources, including literature, current events, media, movies, and so on.

Remember to use the appropriate forms of address (*vous* forms). Also use effective stylistic devices as you are speaking to your class.

As the task requires you to make a comparison, be sure to include the following in your presentation:

- Your own community (as narrow as your family or as wide as your country)
- A francophone culture you know well and include examples and detailed support
- Differences and similarities between your community as you have defined it and the francophone culture you have chosen to discuss

STRATEGIES AND TIPS

During your 4 minutes of preparation, you should jot down some ideas that will assist you when it is time to speak. Do not attempt to write a script. Instead, prepare a short outline or a list of key terms that will serve as reminders as you speak. Using a small graphic organizer is another strategy that we will demonstrate later in this section.

When it is time to speak, your first task is to describe and explain the cultural point of the prompt as it applies to you and your region or country. Use your own personal experiences as reference points. When you have spoken about your area, then it is time to make comparisons to the francophone world. You will want to use appropriate comparison expressions. (See the list of terms that follows.)

Your second task is to make a comparison between what occurs where you live and similar events in the French-speaking world. You may refer to what you have studied in class, what you have read, what you have viewed in documentaries and movies, and/or in cases where this applies, what you have personally experienced.

Remember the Following Strategies and Tips

PLANNING PHASE

There is **no source material** for this task—**only a prompt**.

- Read the prompt carefully. Underline key words.
- Do not confuse the *general directions* for this task (comparing cultures) with the specific *prompt for this task* (focusing on a precise aspect of culture such as people's attitude toward cultural diversity).
- Relate the topic to your own experience and knowledge of cultures.
- Take notes to organize your oral presentation during the four minutes before you record your voice. Use a graphic organizer such as a Venn diagram to identify similarities and differences.
- You do not need numerous examples. One well-developed example on each side might be sufficient as long as you elaborate and show insight into the reasons for the differences.
- Write a *thesis statement* that clearly demonstrates an understanding of the topic and task and that will introduce your presentation.
- Your first goal in speaking French is to make yourself clearly understood. A more varied and precise vocabulary (including idiomatic expressions and transitional words) and a more varied use of grammatical structures will enhance your performance and your score.
- Map out your oral presentation using key words and phrases to provide *significant and specific examples* (products, perspectives, practices) in your own culture as well as in a francophone culture to support the thesis statement.
- Do a significant number of practice items to be comfortable using the 2-minute time allotment fully and efficiently.
- If you answer the prompt fully, it is likely that you will be stopped midsentence by the beep that signals the end of the 2-minute session. The beep does not mean that your score is penalized.

PRESENTATIONAL PHASE

You have two minutes to make an oral presentation on a specific topic related to one of the six course themes.

- You are making this presentation to your class; in addressing your audience, use the plural *vous* and the formal register required in an academic setting (no slang).
- Use your *thesis statement* to introduce the topic and give a *concise outline* of your presentation.
- Present your ideas in an organized manner, using your outline.
- *Describe and narrate* precise observations and experiences you have had in your own community (*family, school, neighborhood, town, region, state, or country*) within the context of the task (which requires you to focus on a *specific aspect* of culture).
- Try to accurately reference materials you have studied as well as personal observations and life experiences that are relevant to the topic and to the French-speaking world.
- Compare and contrast products, perspectives, and practices in your own community and the francophone region of your choice, avoiding generalizations and stereotypes as much as possible.

USEFUL VOCABULARY

Memorize some of the expressions below. Use them to introduce, connect ideas, make smooth transitions, and conclude your presentation.

To Start Your Conversation

Tout d'abord	<i>First of all</i>
En premier lieu	<i>First of all</i>
Pour commencer	<i>To start off with</i>
Premièrement	<i>Firstly</i>

To State Your Opinion/Point of View

À mon avis	<i>In my opinion</i>
Selon moi	<i>In my opinion</i>
Pour ma part	<i>As far as I'm concerned</i>
En ce qui me concerne	<i>As far as I'm concerned</i>
A mon sens	<i>As I see it</i>
Il me semble que	<i>It seems to me that (+ indicative mood)</i>
J'estime que	<i>I consider that</i>
Je soutiens que	<i>I maintain that</i>

To Add/Connect Ideas

Ensuite	<i>Next</i>
De plus	<i>In addition</i>
En outre	<i>Furthermore</i>
En deuxième lieu	<i>Secondly</i>

To Show a Difference in Opinion or a Contrast

Mais	<i>But</i>
En fait	<i>In fact</i>
Cependant	<i>However</i>
Toutefois	<i>However</i>
Au contraire	<i>On the contrary</i>
Par contre	<i>By contrast</i>
Néanmoins	<i>Nevertheless</i>
Quand même	<i>Nevertheless</i>
Pourtant	<i>Yet</i>

To Conclude

En dernier lieu	<i>Lastly</i>
Enfin	<i>Finally</i>
Pour terminer	<i>To finish up with</i>
Pour finir	<i>To finish up with</i>
Tout bien réfléchi	<i>All in all</i>
Tout bien considéré	<i>All in all</i>
Tout compte fait	<i>When all is said and done</i>
Toute réflexion faite	<i>When all is said and done</i>

En somme	<i>In short, all in all</i>
En fin de compte	<i>When all is said and done, at the end of the day</i>
En conclusion	<i>To conclude/in conclusion</i>
Pour conclure	<i>To conclude/in conclusion</i>

INSTRUCTIONS AND EXAMPLES

Below are the types of instructions you may receive on the exam.

You will make an oral presentation to your class on a specific topic. Take 4 minutes to read the prompt and prepare your oral presentation.

Then take 2 minutes to record it.

In your presentation, compare your own area of the French-speaking world with which you are familiar. Present your ideas in a clear and organized manner.

Vous allez faire un exposé oral à votre classe sur un sujet précis. Passez 4 minutes à lire le sujet et préparer votre exposé oral.

Passez alors 2 minutes à l'enregistrer.

Dans votre exposé, comparez votre propre communauté à une région du monde francophone que vous connaissez. Présentez vos idées d'une manière claire et organisée.

Prompt #1

Thème de cours : Esthétique

Quelle est l'attitude des gens que vous connaissez bien chez vous concernant l'importance de la nourriture et des repas ? Comparez-la avec ce qui se passe dans un endroit du monde francophone.

This question asks you to compare the role played by food and meals in the area where you live as compared with an area in the French-speaking world. Below is a simple graphic organizer that will help you organize your speech. It will also provide you with notes you should refer to during those 2 minutes.

Chez Nous	En France	Au Canada
Un petit déjeuner rapide	Seulement du pain-beurre-confiture et du jus ou du café	Des plats copieux
Un déjeuner qui dure moins d'une heure	Un déjeuner qui peut durer deux heures et qui est souvent en famille	Une cuisine nord-américaine
Un dîner qui a lieu assez tôt	Un dîner assez tard le soir	La bière accompagne souvent les repas
Une cuisine influencée par les immigrants du 20 ^{ième} siècle	Une cuisine variée accompagnée de fromages et de vins	
Une grande quantité de fast food ou de restauration rapide	La cuisine est considérée comme un art	