

Reading tone, irony and hidden criticism

French B2 (upper intermediate) · Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Level: French B2 (CEFR upper intermediate) · **Standards:** CEFR B2, Reading

Problem 1 Name the register (easy)

Write *familier*, *courant* or *soutenu* for each sentence.

1. Il est crevé, le mec.
2. Il est très fatigué ce soir.
3. Il est harassé par la journée.
4. J'ai un boulot d'enfer en ce moment.

Problem 2 Find the standard word (easy)

Write the standard (*courant*) word for each casual word.

1. une bagnole
2. un bouquin
3. les gosses
4. le fric

Problem 3 Tu or vous? (easy)

Choose *tu* or *vous* for the person being addressed.

1. A manager you meet for the first time.
2. Your closest friend from university.
3. A customer in your shop.
4. A classmate who invites you to be informal.

Problem 4 Greeting for the situation (easy)

Choose the best opening: Salut !, Madame, Monsieur, or Coucou !.

1. An email to the town hall about a parking permit.
2. A text message to your sister.

3. A first email to a company's customer service.

Problem 5 Ironic or sincere? (easy)

Write *ironic* or *sincere* for each sentence in its situation.

1. Quel temps magnifique ! (said under a downpour)
2. Quel temps magnifique ! (said on a sunny beach)
3. Bravo, tu as réussi à perdre les clés ! (said to a careless friend)
4. Bravo, tu as réussi ton permis ! (said to a proud cousin)

Problem 6 What does it really say? (easy)

Choose the meaning of each understatement: (a) it is good or (b) it is bad or expensive.

1. Ce n'est pas mauvais, ce gratin.
2. Ce n'est pas donné, cet hôtel.
3. Il n'est pas bête, ce garçon.
4. Ce n'est pas la joie dans le bureau.

Problem 7 Match the polite phrase (easy)

Match each phrase 1-4 with its hidden meaning a-d.

1. Chacun ses goûts.
 2. Vous auriez pu prévenir.
 3. Il fait de son mieux.
 4. C'est... original.
- a. The result is weak.
 - b. I find it strange.
 - c. I do not like it.
 - d. You should have warned me.

Problem 8 Casual to standard (medium)

Rewrite each sentence in standard French.

1. Chais pas ce qu'il veut, ce mec.
2. Y a pas de lumière dans le couloir.
3. On se tire, il est tard.

Problem 9 Standard to formal (medium)

Rewrite each sentence in formal French for a letter, using the verb in brackets.

1. Je veux une réponse rapide. (souhaiter)
2. Merci de répondre vite. (bien vouloir)
3. Je ne peux pas venir. (regretter)

Problem 10 Soften the criticism (medium)

Rewrite each blunt remark as a polite one that still makes the point.

1. Ton rapport est nul.
2. Tu es toujours en retard.

Problem 11 Which sentence is ironic? (medium)

Read, then answer.

Après quatre heures de retard, la compagnie nous a offert un gobelet d'eau tiède. Quelle générosité ! Nous avons ensuite attendu nos valises dans un hall sans chaises.

- a. Copy the ironic sentence.
- b. Explain in English which clue shows irony.

Problem 12 Correct the register (medium)

Each sentence comes from a formal letter but contains a casual element. Correct it.

1. Salut Madame, je vous écris pour vous dire que votre truc ne marche pas.
2. Je kiffe votre proposition.
3. Bisous, Monsieur Roche

Problem 13 Litote or exaggeration? (medium)

Write *litote* or *hyperbole*.

1. Je meurs de faim.
2. Ce n'est pas un cadeau.
3. Un monde fou à la gare !
4. Il n'a pas sa langue dans sa poche.

Problem 14 Translate into French (medium)

Translate into French, keeping the tone.

1. That is not bad at all.
2. Thank you for your patience.
3. You might have called us.

Problem 15 Read the manager's email (hard)

Read the email, then answer in English.

Objet : votre rapport trimestriel

Chère Madame Diallo,
 J'ai bien reçu votre rapport. Il est, disons, très complet.
 Pourriez-vous, la prochaine fois, le résumer en deux pages ?
 Je ne doute pas que ce sera prêt avant jeudi.

 Cordialement,
 Hervé Lacombe

Email from a manager to a colleague.

- a. Is the tone of the second sentence literal? Justify.
- b. What does très complet really suggest?
- c. What instruction is hidden in the question?
- d. How would Madame Diallo reply politely?

Problem 16 A restaurant review (hard)

Read this review, then answer in English.

Le service a été d'une rapidité remarquable : nous avons pu admirer le plafond pendant quarante minutes avant l'arrivée de l'entrée. Le serveur, lui, n'a pas perdu son sourire, ce qui est tout de même un exploit.

- a. Which statement is ironic?
- b. What is the writer really criticizing?
- c. Is the last sentence also ironic? Explain.

Problem 17 One message, three registers (hard)

Ask a neighbor to turn down the music in three versions: *familier*, *courant*, *soutenu*.

Problem 18 Read the notice board (hard)

Look at the notes, then name the register and the probable audience of each.

A	B	C
Merci de ne pas déposer vos encombrants dans le hall.	Les gars, on range ses vélos, svp !	Les résidents sont priés de bien vouloir s'abstenir de tout stationnement.

Three notes in the lobby of an apartment building.

Problem 19 Decline politely (hard)

Write about 60 words in French to a colleague: you decline their plan, which you find unrealistic. Be polite, use *vous* and make the criticism implicit.

Problem 20 A sarcastic dialogue (hard)

Write a four-line dialogue in French in which one speaker makes a sarcastic remark and the other answers. Then explain in one English sentence how the reader knows it is sarcasm.