



2021

**BACCALAUREAT**

**Questions and Answers**

**> 2021 *baccalauréat***

**[education.gouv.fr/bac2021](https://education.gouv.fr/bac2021)**

FOR A

TRUSTWORTHY SCHOOL



# Contents

<b>What is the <i>baccalauréat</i> and upper secondary school reform .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Who are the students concerned by this reform? .....	1
2. Why this reform? .....	1
3. What new things does the reform of the general and technical <i>baccalauréat</i> introduce? .....	1
4. What does it change for general and technical upper secondary schools? .....	2
5. How does the new <i>bac</i> prepare the students better for higher education? .....	2
<b>The new <i>baccalauréat</i> examination .....</b>	<b>3</b>
6. How does the continuous assessment work? .....	3
7. What subjects are part of the continuous assessment? .....	3
8. Why is there a philosophy test for everybody? .....	4
9. Do all <i>baccalauréat</i> candidates have the same philosophy topics? .....	4
10. How does the new speaking test in Terminale work? .....	4
11. What is the point of having a final speaking test? .....	5
12. Isn't there a risk that a speaking test be discriminating? .....	5
13. As the final speaking test has no dedicated time, how will it be prepared? .....	5
14. How will the student choose the topic for their speaking? .....	5
15. Are resits kept? .....	5
<b>Students' schooling in upper secondary school .....</b>	<b>6</b>
16. What changes in 2 <sup>de</sup> from autumn 2018? What is the "placement test" done at the beginning of 2 <sup>de</sup> ? .....	6
17. Are the streams kept in the technical <i>baccalauréat</i> ? .....	6
18. When do we have to choose between the general or the technical series? .....	6
19. What will be the content of the new "science" subject in the general series?.....	6
20. Have the scientific subjects and particularly maths been reduced with the new <i>baccalauréat</i> ?.....	7
21. Are non-linguistic subjects taught in a foreign language (DNL and international and binational courses) kept? .....	7
<b>Specialisation subjects .....</b>	<b>7</b>
22. What are the specialisation subjects in the technical series? .....	7
23. Will all specialisation subjects of the general series be offered in all upper secondary schools? .....	8
24. Will all specialisation subject combinations be possible in the general series? .....	8
25. In the general series, will it be compulsory for a student to choose their specialisation subjects in Terminale from those taken in Première? .....	8
<b>Methods of organisation .....</b>	<b>9</b>
26. Are the upper secondary school years still organised in terms? .....	9
27. Does the new formula of the <i>baccalauréat</i> change the date classes end?.....	9

28. Is there a risk that the new teaching organisation will make the running of the upper secondary schools heavy? .....	9
29. Is the teachers' marking load made heavy? .....	9

## What is the *baccalauréat* and upper secondary school reform

### 1. Who are the students concerned by this reform?

This reform concerns **students who are currently in 3<sup>e</sup>** and start the 2<sup>nd</sup>e class in September 2018. The first session of the new general and technical *baccalauréat* will be held in 2021.

### 2. Why this reform?

The reform of the general and technical *baccalauréat* aims at strengthening the *baccalauréat*, a national diploma marking the end of the secondary education and the first level of higher education.

This reform answers four purposes.

**It simplifies** the exam, which has become too complex. Students nowadays sit between 12 and 16 final tests depending on their course. From 2021 onwards, they will only sit the French test in Première and 4 final tests.

**It gives the exam new meaning and strength** to help the students to better prepare their future success in their higher studies. Indeed, nowadays 60% of students fail at their Bachelor, which is not acceptable.

**It will help** to better highlight the students' work. The exam will take into account the student's work during their Première and Terminale school years, whereas now they gamble their *baccalauréat* on one week only.

**It will better support** upper secondary school students in the design of their academic project by providing them hours dedicated to academic guidance and giving them more freedom to choose the subjects they are passionate about. For more information, visit

[http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/BAC\\_2021/00/0/DP\\_BAC\\_BDEF\\_web\\_898000.pdf](http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/BAC_2021/00/0/DP_BAC_BDEF_web_898000.pdf)

### 3. What new things does the reform of the general and technical *baccalauréat* introduce?

The *baccalauréat* **comprises of final closer tests** accounting for **60% of the final grade**.

- **1 first French test** in 1<sup>re</sup> (written and speaking).
- **4 tests in Terminale** (2 for the specialisation subjects, 1 philosophy test, 1 final speaking test)
- These tests are organised based on the model of the current *baccalauréat* tests.

The *baccalauréat* includes **a continuous assessment part** representing **40% of the final grade**.

- **10% for the consideration of the 1<sup>re</sup> and Terminale transcripts of results** in all subjects, so as to encourage the students' regular work.
- **30% for common continuous assessment tests** organised within the schools in 1<sup>ère</sup> and Terminale so as to credit the students' work.



#### 4. What does it change for general and technical upper secondary schools?

- The class of Seconde remains the same for both general and technical series. In September 2018, this class is not greatly transformed. Adjustments are made to establish the spirit of the reform. In September 2019, more important modifications will be set up without changing the inherent nature of the Seconde, which is a transition class between the lower secondary and the final cycle and a class which will see a choice made between the general and technical series.
- Regarding the general final cycle (the Première and Terminale classes):
  - **End of the L, ES, and S streams.**
  - **All students study the same common subjects** (French in Première, philosophy in Terminale, history and geography, moral education and citizenship, two foreign languages, physical education, science).
  - **All students choose specialisation subjects: 3** in Première (4hrs each) then they go into 2 of these subjects in depth (6hrs each) in Terminale.
  - **Students who wish to may choose 1 optional subject** (3hrs) studied in both Première and Terminale. A second optional subject may be added in Terminale (3hrs) from a specific list. The Antiquity Languages and Cultures subject may be taken additionally.
- Regarding the technical final cycle:
  - All students now study the same common subjects.
  - The streams are not modified as some have been renewed recently.
  - The students choose 3 specialisation subjects in Première then 2 in Terminale, determined based on their stream. A project carried out by the student is at the heart of the curriculum.

#### 5. How does the new *bac* prepare the students better for higher education?

When preparing the *baccalauréat*, the students work on what will make them succeed in their higher studies. Better mentored since the 2<sup>de</sup>, each student can then gradually design their study course by choosing subjects corresponding to their tastes and aspirations:

- **As early as the Seconde class,**
  - **a placement test** helps the students identify their knowledge and needs in their command of the French language and mathematics.
  - **this is the first step of the individual support enabling the students to** reinforce their mathematics, writing and speaking skills, the last two being decisive in higher studies and the professional world.
  - **a time dedicated to academic choices** helps the students by supporting them in the design of their project.
- **In Première and Terminale,** the time dedicated to **academic guidance** will help the students polish their higher education project. In Terminale, the students shall have two class teachers to be supported in their path towards higher education.
- **The specialisation subjects** enable the students to acquire in-depth knowledge of the chosen subjects.
- **The teaching curricula shall be renewed,** to keep the subject requirements while integrating the issues of today's world (digital, humanities, energy transition, etc.). New subjects appear: a science subject common to all in 1<sup>re</sup> and Terminale of the general series, specialisation subjects to choose from and optional subjects.

## The new *baccalauréat* examination

### 6. How does the continuous assessment work?

Introducing a share of continuous assessment in the *baccalauréat* helps to highlight the student's constant work in 1<sup>re</sup> and Terminale. The **continuous assessment** represents **40% of the final grade**.

- **10% for the consideration of the** 1<sup>re</sup> and Terminale **transcripts of results** in all subjects, so as to encourage the students' regular work.
- **30% for common continuous assessment tests** organised within the schools in 1<sup>ère</sup> and Terminale so as to credit the students' work.

The common continuous assessment tests are new but as their organisation is based on the headmaster's and teachers' experience and know-how in preparing students for the *baccalauréat*, they do not make the organisation of the school year heavy.

- These are **written tests or exercises modelled from the current common tests and mock *baccalauréat***;
- **the schools shall decide of the conditions of organisation within periods** (2 periods in 1<sup>re</sup> and 1 period in Terminale) **which shall give enough time for the students to acquire and learn the knowledge** (no imposed dates at the national level).
- the suggested topics, exercises or wordings for the common continuous assessment tests shall be taken from a **national digital database** designed by the French Ministry of Education and featuring national grading scales;
- the **copies are anonymous**;
- the copies are **marked by other teachers** from the school (as it is already common practice for the mock *baccalauréat*);

These new conditions will thus guarantee equity between the students and the national characteristic of the examination.

### 7. What subjects are part of the continuous assessment?

With the consideration of the **transcripts of results**, all subjects studied by the students account for 10% of the final grade.

**The common continuous assessment** test the subjects which are not assessed in the final tests of the *baccalauréat*, either:

- **In the general series:** History and geography, Modern foreign language A, Modern foreign language B and the new science subject. The specialisation subject which is dropped in Terminale will also be assessed at the end of Première. To leave time for the students to become familiar with the science subject starting in Première, it will be assessed during the common continuous assessment tests organised at the end of Première then again in Terminale.

- **In the technical series:** History and geography, Modern foreign language A, Modern foreign language B, Mathematics, and the specialisation subjects taken solely in Première.

In both series, the physical education remains assessed as it is now during the year of Terminale. It is therefore not subjected to common tests.

### 8. Why is there a philosophy test for everybody?

Philosophy questions all knowledge and practices. This is why it applies to all students, no matter their course in general and technical upper secondary schools.

A subject shaping the spirit, teaching open-mindedness and rigour, philosophy helps the students understanding the world they live in, thinking about their place in it, giving meaning to the knowledge and experience acquired during their studies. Developing autonomy and the regulated use of liberty, it prepares the students for any higher studies.

Finally, it's a centrepiece of the Republican ritual, turning the *baccalauréat* into a strength.

For all these reasons giving it a universal dimension and because it only starts in Terminale, philosophy is a final test for all.

### 9. Do all *baccalauréat* candidates have the same philosophy topics?

The philosophy test of the general series is the same for all the students, no matter their choice of specialisation.

The students who wish to study this subject in depth can now start it as soon as Première by choosing it as the "Humanities, literature and philosophy" specialisation subject which is, like all specialisation subjects, subject to a dedicated test in Terminale.

The topics of the students of the technical series may differ depending on their streams.

### 10. How does the new speaking test in Terminale work?

It is prepared in Première and Terminale.

The test lasts for **20 minutes**. It comprises of:

- **an individual presentation of the project** carried out from the specialisation subjects chosen by the student;
- an **exchange with the jury** based on the project presentation and allowing for an assessment of the candidate's capacity of analysis through mobilising the knowledge - particularly in the scientific and historic fields- acquired during their school years.
- The students in the technical series do this test in the same conditions but with a stronger coefficient in order to take into account the importance of the project in this series.

### 11. What is the point of having a final speaking test?

Expressing oneself in a relevant and accurate French, being able to support an idea and argue are vital skills in one's personal and professional life. The school must prepare all students to acquire a sound command of the speaking skill.

### 12. Isn't there a risk that a speaking test be discriminating?

It is precisely because speaking with poise may be a social indicator that all students should be helped in acquiring such skill.

This is the reason why speaking is practised in primary, lower secondary and during the three years of upper secondary school in all subjects.

There is a clear focus on speaking in 1<sup>re</sup> and Terminale as part of the specialisation subjects, following innovative educational methods.

### 13. As the final speaking test has no dedicated time, how will it be prepared?

As early as the Première class and as part of their specialisation subject, each student will choose a project they will carry out over two years.

They will be supported by their teachers in their endeavour.

In Terminale, once both specialisation written tests done in spring, **the time allocated to the specialisation subjects** will be used to focus on the preparation of the students' presentation for the final speaking test.

Speaking will be practised **as early as Seconde, during the individual support hours and as part of the subjects**. Preparing for the French test in Première will also add to this practice.

### 14. How will the student choose the topic for their speaking?

The speaking test is based on a project carried out by the student since Première and related to their specialisation subjects. Their specialisation subject teachers will help them choose their topic.

### 15. Are resits kept?

They are. Students who receive a grade equal or higher than 8 but lower than 10 out of 20 for the first series of the *baccalauréat* examination may ask for a resit.

Such resit comprises of two speaking **tests**. The candidate will be asked questions in the subjects which were assessed by a final written test: French, philosophy and both specialisation subjects studied in Terminale.

The grades received replace the grades initially received for the written test of these subjects, and the jury recalculates the global grade of the examination with the consideration of the new results.



## Students' schooling in upper secondary school

### 16. What changes in 2<sup>de</sup> from autumn 2018? What is the “placement test” done at the beginning of 2<sup>de</sup>?

The general and technical 2<sup>de</sup> class is the same for both general and technical series; it remains “indistinguishable”.

In 2018, the 2<sup>de</sup> will be evolving in view of establishing the spirit of the 2021 *baccalauréat*.

- Before October, each student will sit a **placement test** helping them to identify their knowledge and needs regarding the command of the French language and mathematics. The results are anonymous, confidential and shared solely with the relevant teachers and the families.
- **This is the first step of the individual support helping the students to consolidate** their command of writing and speaking, which is essential in one's personal and professional life as well as for higher studies.
- **A time dedicated to academic guidance** (54 hours on an indicative basis, depending on the students' needs) enables the students to design their academic project. They can thus think about their technical stream or their general specialisation subjects.

### 17. Are the streams kept in the technical *baccalauréat*?

Yes, the streams are kept in the technical series as some were renewed recently.

At the end of the general and technical 2<sup>de</sup>, the students who choose to go for the technical series must choose among the following streams:

- STMG Management sciences and technology
- ST2S Health and social sciences and technology
- STI2D Industry and sustainable development sciences and technology
- STL Laboratory sciences and technology
- STD2A Design and applied arts sciences and technology

The STHR (Hospitality and catering sciences and technology) and TMD (Music and dance techniques) streams are chosen by students at the end of the Troisième class.

### 18. When do we have to choose between the general or the technical series?

The choice between the general and technical series is made at the end of the Seconde class. Choosing the stream in the technical series and the specialisation subjects in the general stream is done at the same time.

### 19. What will be the content of the new science subject in the general series?

The science subject is the same for all students of the general series, no matter their specialisation subjects.

It will allow the transmission of the main scientific concepts which are essential to understanding and acting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and for students to become familiar with the

building processes of the scientific truth, including the hypothetical-deductive reasoning and the experimentation method.

It will also ensure that all students are familiar with the quantitative issues, especially statistics and margins of error.

This subject will also be an opportunity to comprehend the great issues of our time with a scientific approach, such as the digital transition, the ecological transition, bioethics or artificial intelligence.

## 20. Have the scientific subjects and particularly maths been reduced with the new *baccalauréat*?

Science teaching is reinforced:

- **All students** will study the compulsory science subject for 2 hours per weeks in Première and Terminale. So far, the L-stream students did not have any science teaching in Terminale.
- The students who choose the “Mathematics” specialisation subject in Terminale (6 hours per week) will have the possibility to take also the optional “**Advanced mathematics**” subject (3 hours per week) if they are considering going into an intensive foundation course or maths studies at University.
  - Such students will therefore have 9 hours of maths per week in Terminale (+1 hour compared to the current S-stream students with a maths specialisation).
- The optional “**Additional mathematics**” subject will be offered to all students who did not choose the mathematics specialisation subject in Terminale. Students who will have chosen the Life & Earth Sciences, Physics-Chemistry or Economic and Social Sciences and History, Geography, Geopolitics and Political Sciences specialisation subjects will particularly have the possibility to choose the “Additional mathematics” optional subject to prepare for intensive foundation courses health studies.
- In Première and Terminale, the students who choose science specialisation subjects and an optional one will have about 55% of science teaching each week, as is already the case in the S-stream.

## 21. Are non-linguistic subjects taught in a foreign language (DNL and international and binational courses) kept?

The subjects other than modern foreign languages and taught in a foreign language (called non-linguistic subjects, DNL) are developed, as is the students' international mobility.

## Specialisation subjects

### 22. What are the specialisation subjects in the technical series?

The technical series students choose their stream (ST2S, STD2A, STI2D, STL or STMG) at the end of 2<sup>nde</sup> or at the end of 3<sup>e</sup> for the STHR and TMD streams.

In Première and Terminale, they study common subjects to all streams as well as specialisation subjects depending on each stream. They take three specialisation subjects in Première and two in Terminale.

In STI2D and STMG, the students also choose within their specialisation a specific class to strengthen their profile.

To see the list of specialisation subjects for the various streams, go to:

[http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/05\\_-Mai/18/5/BAC2021\\_6pagesvoie techno\\_941185.pdf](http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/05_-Mai/18/5/BAC2021_6pagesvoie techno_941185.pdf)

### **23. Will all specialisation subjects of the general series be offered in all upper secondary schools?**

Most of the specialisation subjects will be offered to students within their school or in a near geographic area.

Right from Seconde, a time dedicated to academic guidance will support the students in the design of their plans and their choice of specialisation subjects.

### **24. Will all specialisation subject combinations be possible in the general series?**

The students will have the possibility to combine the specialisation subjects offered in their school or nearby ones.

The academic guidance implemented will help each student to choose the relevant specialisations and combination in view of their study and professional projects.

### **25. In the general series, will it be compulsory for a student to choose their specialisation subjects in Terminale from those taken in Première?**

At the end of Première, each student must choose out of the three specialisation subjects taken in Première to two they wish to continue in Terminale.

This is a means for them to polish their study plan by studying in depth subjects they will take in higher education.

This new organisation guarantees students will have a level of knowledge adapted to what is expected in higher education.

A change in specialisation subject between 1<sup>re</sup> and Terminale is possible but only allowed under very exceptional circumstances with the approval of the teachers' conference and the legal guardians.

## Methods of organisation

### 26. Are the upper secondary school years still organised in terms?

Yes, the rhythm of the school year with three terms in Première and three in Terminale remains unchanged. The upper secondary schools which already organise their school years in semesters may continue to do so.

### 27. Does the new formula of the *baccalauréat* change the date classes end?

With one philosophy test and one final speaking test at the end of June, the date classes end for the Terminale students is about the same as the current one.

However, for the Seconde and Première students, classes continue well into June.

### 28. Is there a risk that the new teaching organisation will make the running of the upper secondary schools heavy?

The suppression of the general streams will give the schools more flexibility to organise classes.

From now on, all students in the general series may share the same common subject classes, regardless of their specialisation subjects.

The importance of the common subjects in the students' schedule guarantees the cohesion of the class-group.

### 29. Is the teachers' marking load made heavy?

The common continuous assessment tests may be organised modelled on the mock *baccalauréat* or common written tests already in effect in upper secondary schools.

Reducing the number of final tests enables to distribute the marking during the entire terminal cycle, thus avoiding for most teachers a workload concentrated on a few days.