

FREE PDF GUIDE · OCTOBER 2026

TCF Canada Preparation Guide 2026

Format, scoring, the 3 writing and 3 speaking tasks with model answers, and an 8-week plan to NCLC 7

Level B1–B2

10 chapters

TEF Canada & TCF Canada

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- Listening and reading strategy with a time budget per question
- All 3 speaking tasks: timings, sample answers and phrase banks
- Common mistakes, a self-check list and an exam-day checklist
- How /699 and /20 scoring works, with the full IRCC NCLC 4 to 10 table
- All 3 writing tasks: structures, a 60-minute time plan and model answers inside the word ranges
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CHAPTER 01

TCF Canada in one page

What the exam is, who needs it, and the score most people are aiming for.

TCF Canada (Test de connaissance du français) is a French test run by France Éducation internationale (FEI). IRCC accepts it as proof of French for **Express Entry, permanent residence and citizenship**. All four skills are compulsory: listening, reading, writing and speaking, in a little under **three hours of testing**.

~2h50

Total testing time,
before check-in and
breaks

/699 + /20

The two scoring scales

458 / 453

/ 10 / 10

NCLC 7 minimums (L /
R / W / S)

2 years

Result validity, from the
test date

Who needs TCF Canada?

- **Express Entry candidates** who want CRS points for French. NCLC 7 or higher in all four skills adds a bonus of **+25 CRS**, or **+50** if your English is also CLB 5 or higher in all four.
- **People targeting French category draws**, which need NCLC 7 in all four skills.
- **Citizenship applicants** proving language ability (NCLC 4 in speaking and listening).
- **Anyone who may apply both federally and to Quebec**: Quebec accepts TCF Canada too, so one result can cover both.



TCF Canada, not TCF Tout Public or TCF Québec

IRCC accepts only **TCF Canada** (and TEF Canada). TCF Tout Public is a general French test where writing and speaking are optional, and IRCC won't accept it however high your score. Centres often list several TCF versions on one page, and fees are usually non-refundable. Read the exam name before you pay. More in [TCF Canada vs TCF Tout Public](#).



There is no at-home TCF Canada

You must sit the test in person at an approved centre. "Online" or "computer-based" means you answer on a screen in a supervised room, and speaking is still face to face with an examiner. Any site selling an at-home TCF Canada certificate is a scam. See [can you take TCF Canada online](#).



TCF or TEF?

Both exams convert to the same NCLC scale, so NCLC 7 on one is worth exactly the same CRS points as NCLC 7 on the other. Compare them in [TEF vs TCF Canada](#), or see the free [TEF Canada preparation guide](#).

CHAPTER 02

The format, section by section

Four sections, a little under three hours. No surprises on the day.

Section	What you do	Time	Scored out of
Listening (compréhension orale)	39 multiple-choice questions	35 min	699
Reading (compréhension écrite)	39 multiple-choice questions	60 min	699
Writing (expression écrite)	3 writing tasks, one shared clock	60 min	20
Speaking (expression orale)	3 tasks, face to face with an examiner	~12 min	20

TCF Canada at a glance

Writing: 3 tasks in 60 minutes

Task	What you write	Words
Task 1	A short message: invite, inform, describe, ask	60–120
Task 2	An article, blog post or letter telling an experience, with your comments	120–150
Task 3	Compare two short documents with opposite views, then give your opinion	120–180

Speaking: 3 tasks in about 12 minutes

Task	What you do	Time	Preparation
1. Entretien dirigé	A guided interview about you	2 min	None
2. Exercice en interaction	Ask questions to get information in an everyday situation	5 min 30	2 min, included
3. Expression d'un point de vue	Give and defend your opinion on a question	4 min 30	None



Paper or computer, same scoring

Many centres run listening, reading and writing on computer; others use paper. IRCC treats both the same. Computer sessions often return results faster: at AF Toronto, about 2 weeks on computer vs about 4 on paper. If your writing is typed, practise French accents on a keyboard before the day.

Your centre decides how the day is split and whether speaking happens at a different time, so read your convocation carefully. The full breakdown is in the [TCF Canada exam format guide](#), and there's a one-page

[TCF Canada exam format chart.](#)

CHAPTER 03

Scoring: /699, /20 and NCLC

Each skill converts to NCLC on its own. In writing and speaking, one point can decide everything.

Listening and reading are scored from **0 to 699**. Writing and speaking are scored from **0 to 20**. IRCC converts each skill to an NCLC level separately and **never averages**. Unlike TEF Canada, there's only one number per skill, and it's the one you enter in Express Entry.

NCLC	Listening /699	Reading /699	Writing /20	Speaking /20
10 and above	549–699	549–699	16–20	16–20
9	523–548	524–548	14–15	14–15
8	503–522	499–523	12–13	12–13
7	458–502	453–498	10–11	10–11
6	398–457	406–452	7–9	7–9
5	369–397	375–405	6	6
4	331–368	342–374	4–5	4–5

TCF Canada → NCLC (IRCC equivalency)

Your NCLC level for a skill is the highest row where you meet or beat the minimum. Note that listening and reading have slightly different minimums at most levels. A one-page version is in the [TCF Canada score chart](#).



10 is NCLC 7. 9 is NCLC 6.

In writing and speaking, scores of 7, 8 and 9 out of 20 are all NCLC 6. One point out of 20 decides whether you get the French CRS bonus and access to French category draws. Prepare to land well above 10, not on it.

Scores (L / R / W / S)	NCLC per skill	French bonus?
470 / 460 / 11 / 10	7 / 7 / 7 / 7	Yes: +25, or +50 with English CLB 5+
530 / 510 / 9 / 12	9 / 8 / 6 / 8	No: writing is NCLC 6
455 / 455 / 14 / 14	6 / 7 / 9 / 9	No: listening is 3 points short

Worked examples



No re-marking for sessions from September 1, 2026

France Éducation international stopped accepting TCF re-marking requests for sessions from September 1, 2026, and is expected to restart around fall 2027. The score you receive is the score you keep. If something goes wrong in the room, tell the centre on the day and ask for it to be recorded.

What NCLC 7 is worth

- **French bonus:** NCLC 7+ in all four French skills adds **+25 CRS**, or **+50** if your English is also CLB 5+ in all four. Check yours with the [French bonus calculator](#).

- **French category draws:** NCLC 7 in all four skills makes you eligible. Check with the [French draw eligibility checker](#).
- **Validity:** results are valid for 2 years from the test date, and must still be valid when you create your profile and when you submit your PR application.

Convert your practice results with the [TCF Canada score converter](#).

CHAPTER 04

Listening and reading strategy

78 multiple-choice questions. Listening is tight on time; reading is about pacing.

Section	Questions	Time	Per question	NCLC 7 target
Listening	39	35 min	Under 1 min	458 / 699
Reading	39	60 min	About 1 min 30	453 / 699

Your time budget

Listening: 39 questions in 35 minutes

- 1 Read ahead**
Read the question and options before the audio starts, whenever you get the chance.
- 2 Predict the answer type**
A time, a place, a price, a reason, someone's opinion? Decide before you listen.
- 3 Listen for the turn**
Answers often come after *mais*, *en fait*, *finale*ment or *pourtant*. The speaker's first idea is often not the final one.
- 4 Let lost questions go**
If you miss one, guess and move on. Chasing it costs you the next one too.
- 5 No blanks**
Always choose an answer. A guess can score; a blank can't.



Train at natural speed

Slowed-down learner audio won't prepare you for 35 minutes of real French. Use radio, news and podcasts at natural speed for 20–30 minutes a day, then check yourself with the [French listening practice test](#).

Reading: 39 questions in 60 minutes

- 1 Question first**
For longer texts, read the question before the passage, then skim for the answer.
- 2 Know the text type**
Ads, notices, emails, articles and opinion pieces each put key information in predictable places.

3 Expect paraphrase

The right option rarely repeats the text word for word. An option that copies a word from the text is often a trap.

4 3-minute rule

60 minutes for 39 questions is about a minute and a half each. If one has taken three minutes, guess and move on.

5 Finish the paper

Every question counts. Don't run out of time on the last few.

French	English	Why it matters
ne... plus	no longer	It used to be true, but isn't now
ne... que	only	Looks negative, but it isn't
sauf	except	Removes one case from a rule
à condition que	provided that	Adds a condition
en revanche / pourtant	on the other hand / yet	The real point often follows
il ne s'agit pas de...	it's not about...	Rules out an option that looks right

Small words that flip the meaning

After every timed set, sort your wrong answers: vocabulary, trap option, or time. Fix the biggest group first. The [French reading practice test](#) is a quick first check.

CHAPTER 05

Writing: the hour, and Task 1

One shared clock for three tasks. Plan the hour before you write a word.

Nobody tells you when to move on, so decide your split before you start. This plan is **a suggestion, not an official rule**. It gives the most time to Task 3, which asks the most of you. If you write too little, you haven't shown enough; if you write far too much, you eat the time Task 3 needs. Aim for the middle of each range.

Block	Minutes	What you do
Read all three tasks	2	Underline who you're writing to and every point you must cover
Task 1	10	A quick plan in your head, then write
Task 2	18	1 minute of notes, then write
Task 3	25	3 minutes of notes on both documents, then write
Final check	5	Agreements, verb endings, tu/vous, word counts

A suggested time plan for 60 minutes

Task 1: the short message (60–120 words)

Everyday writing: an email or note to invite, inform, describe or ask. The examiner checks one thing above all: **did you do every job the task lists?** Choose tu or vous from the reader named in the task, and don't switch.

- 1 Greeting**
Salut Marc, / Bonjour Madame Dupont, (match the reader).
- 2 Why you're writing**
One sentence: Je t'écris pour... / Je me permets de vous écrire car...
- 3 Every detail asked for**
When, where, what, why. One or two sentences each.
- 4 A clear ask or next step**
Dis-moi si tu es libre. / Pourriez-vous me répondre avant... ?
- 5 Sign-off**
À bientôt, / Bises, for a friend. Cordialement, for anyone else.

You're writing to	Use	Sign off with
A friend, a family member, a classmate	tu	À bientôt, Bises, Amitiés
A neighbour, landlord, manager, company	vous	Cordialement, Bien à vous

You're writing to	Use	Sign off with
Several readers (blog, newsletter, club)	vous (plural) or nous / on	None needed for an article

Pick the register from the reader, then don't switch

Practice task (original): *Vous partez en vacances deux semaines. Vous écrivez à votre voisine pour lui demander de s'occuper de votre chat. Vous expliquez ce qu'elle devra faire et vous lui proposez quelque chose en échange.*

MODEL ANSWER

Model answer, Task 1: a favour from a neighbour

102 words

Bonjour Madame Leblanc,

Je me permets de vous écrire, car je pars en Inde du 10 au 24 juillet pour rendre visite à ma famille.

Accepteriez-vous de vous occuper de mon chat, Moka, pendant mon absence ? Il suffirait de passer une fois par jour pour lui donner à manger et changer son eau. Je vous laisserai les clés, la nourriture et mon numéro de téléphone. Bien sûr, je serais heureuse de vous rendre le même service lors de vos prochaines vacances. Pourriez-vous me dire si cela vous convient avant la fin de la semaine ?

Je vous remercie d'avance.

Cordialement,

Ananya (appartement 4B)

102 words, inside the 60–120 range. Every job done: the reason, the request, what to do, an offer in return, a deadline for the reply. Vous throughout, because she's a neighbour.

Phrase bank: Task 1

Je t'écis pour t'inviter à...

I'm writing to invite you to...

Est-ce que tu serais libre le... ?

Would you be free on... ?

Il suffirait de...

All you'd need to do is...

Je vous remercie d'avance.

Thank you in advance.

Je me permets de vous écrire car...

I'm writing to you because... (formal)

Accepteriez-vous de... ?

Would you agree to... ?

Dis-moi vite si ça te va.

Let me know soon if that suits you.

CHAPTER 06

Writing Tasks 2 and 3

Tell an experience with your comments, then compare two views and give yours.

Task 2: the article or blog post (120–150 words)

You tell an experience to several readers: a blog, a club newsletter, a letter. Telling the story is only half of it. You also need to say **what you thought of it**.

1

A title

If it's an article or a blog post. It helps the reader and costs only a few words.

2

Context

When, where, who. One or two sentences.

3

What happened, in order

D'abord, ensuite, puis, enfin. Passé composé for actions, imparfait for description.

4

Your reaction

What you liked, what surprised you, what you'd change.

5

A closing line to the readers

Advice or an invitation.

Practice task (original): *Le bulletin d'une association de nouveaux arrivants vous demande de raconter votre premier hiver au Canada et de donner un conseil aux lecteurs.*

MODEL ANSWER

Model answer, Task 2: my first winter in Canada

140 words

Mon premier hiver au Canada

Quand je suis arrivé à Winnipeg en novembre dernier, je n'avais jamais vu de neige. Je voudrais partager avec vous cette expérience, qui m'a beaucoup appris.

Les premières semaines ont été difficiles. Il faisait parfois moins trente degrés et je n'avais pas les bons vêtements. Un matin, j'ai attendu l'autobus pendant vingt minutes en simples baskets : je ne sentais plus mes pieds ! Heureusement, un collègue m'a emmené dans un magasin d'occasion, où j'ai acheté un manteau, des bottes et des gants pour un prix raisonnable.

Ensuite, j'ai découvert les plaisirs de l'hiver : le patin sur la rivière gelée, les soirées chez des amis et le silence des rues sous la neige.

Mon conseil aux nouveaux arrivants : équipez-vous dès votre arrivée et ne restez pas enfermés chez vous. L'hiver devient alors une vraie saison de découvertes.

140 words including the title, inside the 120–150 range. Context, events in order (passé composé and imparfait), a

reaction, then advice. Vous because it's addressed to many readers.

Phrase bank: telling an experience

Je voudrais vous raconter...

I'd like to tell you about...

À ce moment-là, ...

At that moment, ...

Avec le recul, je pense que...

Looking back, I think that...

Tout a commencé quand...

It all started when...

Ce qui m'a le plus surpris(e), c'est...

What surprised me most was...

Si vous en avez l'occasion, n'hésitez pas à...

If you get the chance, don't hesitate to...

Task 3: compare two documents, then argue (120–180 words)

You get two short documents that disagree on a social topic. You write one text that **presents both views** in your own words, then **gives and defends yours**. People who jump straight to their opinion lose marks, because half the task is missing.

Part	Length	What goes in it
1. Compare	About 40–60 words	Introduce the debate; Document 1's view (Selon le premier document...); Document 2's view (En revanche, le second...)
2. Your opinion	About 80–120 words	Your side (Pour ma part...); two reasons with examples; a concession (Néanmoins...); a one-line conclusion (En somme...)

The two-part structure

Practice documents (original). **Document 1:** « Les devoirs à la maison sont indispensables : ils permettent de revoir la leçon du jour et d'apprendre à travailler seul. » **Document 2:** « Les devoirs creusent les inégalités : tous les enfants n'ont pas un parent disponible pour les aider le soir. »

MODEL ANSWER **Model answer, Task 3: should homework be abolished?**

152 words

Faut-il supprimer les devoirs à la maison ?

Les devoirs font débat. Selon le premier document, ils sont indispensables, car ils permettent aux élèves de réviser leurs leçons et d'apprendre à travailler seuls. En revanche, le second document estime qu'ils renforcent les inégalités, puisque tous les enfants ne peuvent pas compter sur un parent disponible le soir.

Pour ma part, je ne pense pas qu'il faille les supprimer, mais plutôt les transformer. D'abord, un exercice court, comme lire dix minutes ou revoir du vocabulaire, aide vraiment à retenir. Mon fils, par exemple, a fait de gros progrès en lecture grâce à ce petit rituel quotidien. Ensuite, les longs devoirs difficiles devraient se faire à l'école, avec l'aide des enseignants. Néanmoins, je reconnais que certaines familles manquent de temps. C'est pourquoi les écoles pourraient proposer une aide aux devoirs gratuite après les cours. En somme, des devoirs courts et adaptés sont utiles à tous.

152 words including the title, inside the 120–180 range. Paragraph 1 reports both documents in new words. Paragraph 2 takes a side, gives two reasons with a personal example, concedes a point, proposes a solution and concludes. Note the subjunctive after « je ne pense pas que » (qu'il faille).

Phrase bank: comparing and arguing

Ce sujet divise l'opinion.

This topic divides opinion.

Le second document, au contraire, affirme que...

The second document, on the contrary, claims that...

Pour ma part, je suis plutôt favorable à...

For my part, I'm rather in favour of...

Néanmoins, il faut reconnaître que...

Nevertheless, we must admit that...

Selon le premier document, ...

According to the first document, ...

Les deux documents s'accordent sur un point : ...

Both documents agree on one point: ...

Je ne pense pas que ce soit la solution.

I don't think it's the solution. (subjunctive)

To...	Use
Order events	d'abord, ensuite, puis, après, enfin
Add an idea	de plus, en outre, par ailleurs
Contrast	mais, cependant, en revanche, par contre, pourtant
Give a reason	parce que, car, puisque, en effet
Show a result	donc, c'est pourquoi, par conséquent, ainsi
Concede	certes, néanmoins, même si, bien que (+ subjonctif)
Give your view	à mon avis, selon moi, pour ma part, je pense que
Conclude	en somme, pour conclure, en bref

Connectors that work in all three tasks

Practise all three tasks in one sitting with the [writing practice timer](#), which counts your words live. More linking words are on the [French connectors chart](#), and the full method is in the [TCF Canada writing tasks guide](#).

CHAPTER 07

Speaking: the three tasks

About 12 minutes with an examiner: interview, interaction, point of view.

Time	Task	What happens
0:00–2:00	Task 1: guided interview	No prep. The examiner asks about you: life, work, studies, plans
2:00–4:00	Task 2: preparation	You read an everyday situation and prepare your questions
4:00–7:30	Task 2: interaction	You ask the examiner questions; they play the other person
7:30–12:00	Task 3: point of view	No prep. You answer a question with a clear opinion and keep going

The 12 minutes, minute by minute

Task 1: the guided interview (2 min)

The warm-up. The questions are about you, so there's nothing to research. Use **vous** with the examiner. For each question: **answer, add a detail, add a reason**. Three or four sentences, not one word and not a memorised speech.

- « Qu'est-ce que vous faites dans la vie ? »
- « Pourquoi apprenez-vous le français ? »
- « Parlez-moi de votre ville. »
- « Qu'est-ce que vous aimez faire le week-end ? »
- « Quels sont vos projets pour les prochaines années ? »

MODEL ANSWER Sample Task 1 answer: « Pouvez-vous vous présenter ? »

73 words

Bien sûr. Je m'appelle Ravi, j'ai trente-deux ans et je viens de Pune, en Inde. Je travaille comme ingénieur informatique depuis huit ans, dans une entreprise qui crée des logiciels pour les hôpitaux. Ce qui me plaît dans mon travail, c'est de résoudre des problèmes concrets. J'apprends le français depuis un an et demi, parce que ma femme et moi voulons immigrer au Canada, et le français nous ouvrira beaucoup de portes là-bas.

About 30 seconds spoken. Answer, details, a reason. Adapt it to your own life; don't recite it word for word.

Task 2: the interaction (5 min 30, including 2 min prep)

You get a situation from everyday life: joining a club, renting a flat, booking a course. The examiner plays the other person. **Your job is to ask the questions**. Many candidates lose marks by describing what they want instead. In the 2 minutes of prep, list 8–10 question topics: price, times, place, conditions, what's included, how to book, discounts.

MODEL ANSWER Sample Task 2: renting a flat (candidate's side)

135 words

Situation (originale) : Vous cherchez un appartement. Vous appelez le propriétaire d'un deux-pièces pour obtenir des informations.

« Bonjour monsieur, j'ai vu votre annonce pour le deux-pièces et je voudrais quelques renseignements. D'abord, l'appartement est-il toujours disponible ? ... Très bien. Il fait combien de mètres carrés ? ... Et le loyer, c'est combien par mois ? ... Est-ce que le chauffage et l'électricité sont compris ? ... D'accord. Il y a combien de mois de dépôt de garantie ? ... L'appartement est à quel étage ? Il y a un ascenseur ? ... Et pour les transports, est-ce qu'il y a une station de métro près de l'immeuble ? ... Les animaux sont-ils acceptés ? J'ai un petit chat. ... Parfait. Est-ce que je pourrais visiter l'appartement cette semaine ? ... Alors si je résume, le loyer comprend le chauffage, mais pas l'électricité, et je peux visiter jeudi à dix-huit heures. Merci beaucoup, à jeudi ! »

An original practice situation. Question, listen, react, follow up, then a summary before closing. « ... » marks where the examiner answers.

Task 3: expressing a point of view (4 min 30)

1

Rephrase the question

Buy's you a few seconds: « Vous me demandez si... C'est une question intéressante. »

2

Give your opinion at once

« Personnellement, je pense que... »

3

Reason 1 + an example

From your life, your city or your country.

4

Reason 2 + an example

A different angle: money, health, family, the environment.

5

The other side

« Certains diront que... mais... » Then answer it.

6

Conclude

« Pour toutes ces raisons, je reste convaincu(e) que... »

MODEL ANSWER Sample Task 3: « Faut-il apprendre une langue étrangère dès l'école primaire ? »

149 words

Vous me demandez s'il faut apprendre une langue étrangère dès l'école primaire. Personnellement, je pense que oui, et pour plusieurs raisons.

D'abord, les jeunes enfants apprennent très vite, surtout la prononciation. Par exemple, mon neveu de six ans parle déjà anglais avec un meilleur accent que moi, simplement parce qu'il l'entend à l'école depuis deux ans.

Ensuite, une langue étrangère ouvre l'esprit. Elle fait découvrir d'autres cultures, d'autres façons de penser, et je crois que cela rend les enfants plus tolérants.

Certains diront que les enfants ont déjà trop de matières et qu'il vaut mieux maîtriser d'abord sa langue maternelle. C'est vrai qu'il ne faut pas les surcharger. Mais quelques heures par semaine, sous forme de jeux et de chansons, ne prennent pas beaucoup de place.

Pour toutes ces raisons, je reste convaincu qu'il faut commencer tôt. Et dans un pays bilingue comme le Canada, c'est encore plus vrai.

About 1 min 30 spoken. The examiner will then ask follow-up questions, so keep one more example ready for each reason.

Phrase bank: speaking

Ce qui me plaît dans mon travail, c'est...

What I like about my job is... (Task 1)

Est-ce que vous pourriez me dire... ?

Could you tell me... ? (Task 2)

D'accord, donc si je comprends bien...

OK, so if I understand correctly... (Task 2)

Par exemple, dans mon pays...

For example, in my country... (Task 3)

Comment dire... je cherche le mot.

How can I put it... I'm looking for the word. (rescue)

Dans cinq ans, j'aimerais...

In five years, I'd like to... (Task 1)

Et si je veux annuler, comment ça se passe ?

And if I want to cancel, how does it work? (Task 2)

Il est vrai que..., mais...

It's true that..., but... (Task 3)

Pardon, pouvez-vous répéter, s'il vous plaît ?

Sorry, could you repeat that, please? (rescue)



Silence hurts more than mistakes

Examiners can only score what you say. A short sentence with a small error is better than a long pause. The examiner may look neutral on purpose; that says nothing about your score.

Rehearse with the real timings on the [speaking practice timer](#).

CHAPTER 08

Your 8-week plan

For a solid B1 aiming at NCLC 7, at about 12–15 hours a week.

Eight weeks works if you're already around **B1 / NCLC 5–6** and can study about **2 hours a day**. From A2, plan on six months or more. The [NCLC 5 to 7 study plan](#) goes week by week over 12 weeks, and [how long it takes to reach CLB 7](#) helps you set a realistic date. Not sure of your level? Take the [5-minute level check](#).

8 weeks to TCF Canada

When	Focus	Do this
Week 1	Diagnose	- One full timed mock: listening 35 min, reading 60 min, writing 60 min, speaking out loud - Convert each skill to NCLC and rank them from weakest to strongest - Learn the structure for each writing and speaking task in this guide
Week 2	Grammar for writing and speaking	- Passé composé vs imparfait, agreement of past participles - Conditional for requests (pourriez-vous, je voudrais) and the subjunctive after bien que, il faut que - Write Task 1 three times: to a friend (tu) and to a stranger (vous)
Week 3	Build your weakest skill	- Half your hours on your weakest skill - Daily: 20–30 min of natural-speed audio and one article - One Task 2 and one Task 3, corrected; note every repeated error
Week 4	Speaking routines	- Prepare answers for 10 common Task 1 questions (ideas, not scripts) - Three Task 2 role-plays with a partner, using the 2-minute prep - Five Task 3 questions, 4 min 30 each, recorded
Week 5	Checkpoint mock	- Second full timed mock - Within one level of NCLC 7 everywhere, and 10+/20 in writing and speaking? Keep the date. If not, look at moving it - Rewrite your two weakest texts from scratch
Week 6	Exam technique	- Listening in timed sets: 39 questions in 35 minutes - All three writing tasks in one 60-minute sitting, with the 2–10–18–25–5 split - Listen back to your Task 3 recordings for long silences

When	Focus	Do this
Week 7	Full rehearsal	• One or two full mocks in exam order, at the same time of day as your exam • Fix only the top three errors from each mock • Re-read the self-check lists in this guide
Week 8	Taper	• Light review: phrase banks, connectors, your error list • Check your ID, convocation, route and speaking slot • Sleep. A last-minute cram costs more than it gives



Get feedback on writing and speaking

Listening and reading can be self-studied well. Writing and speaking improve much faster with a teacher or tutor who corrects you, and with a /20 scale every point matters. Budget for at least one corrected text a week.

Turn your exam date into study phases with the [exam prep planner](#), or set your goal per skill with the [target score calculator](#).

CHAPTER 09

Common mistakes and exam-day checklist

Most lost points come from a short list of avoidable errors.

Section	Mistake	Fix
Booking	TCF Tout Public or TCF Québec instead of TCF Canada	Check the exam name before paying
Listening	Chasing a missed question	Guess, move on, read the next options
Reading	Ten minutes on one hard text	3-minute rule, then guess
Writing 1	Missing one of the points the task asks for	Tick off each point before you sign off
Writing 3	Opinion only, no comparison	Both documents first, then your view
Writing	Copying sentences from the documents	Rephrase in your own words
Writing	Mixing tu and vous	Decide once, from the reader, and check at the end
Speaking 2	Describing your situation instead of asking	Most of your turns should be questions
Speaking 3	A memorised speech, or long silences	Memorise structures and phrases, not speeches

The mistakes that cost the most

Self-check: am I ready?

- ☐ My last full mock reached NCLC 7 (or my target) in every skill, with a margin
- ☐ I can finish all three writing tasks in 60 minutes, inside every word range
- ☐ I can compare two documents in my own words before giving my opinion
- ☐ I can ask 8–10 different questions in Task 2 after 2 minutes of prep
- ☐ I can talk for 4 min 30 on a Task 3 question with two reasons and examples
- ☐ I know my top five grammar errors and check for them every time

Exam-day checklist

- ☐ Booking says TCF Canada, not TCF Québec or TCF Tout Public
- ☐ The exact ID your centre requires, the same one you registered with (some centres, like AF Delhi, require your passport)
- ☐ Convocation or confirmation, printed or on your phone
- ☐ Know where and when your speaking slot is
- ☐ Ate properly, with water, a small snack and a light layer if the centre allows
- ☐ Arrive early: late arrivals can be refused
- ☐ Phone fully off and bags away before the start
- ☐ Test your headphones when invited; raise your hand at once if anything is wrong
- ☐ Report any problem to the centre before you leave: there's no re-marking for sessions from September 1, 2026

The full day, from arrival to results, is in [what to expect on exam day](#). When your results arrive, check every skill with the [CLB calculator](#).

CHAPTER 10

Book your exam seat

At busy centres, finding a seat can take longer than the preparation.

At many centres, TCF Canada seats sell out within minutes of release. Start looking on the first day of your plan, not the last. A fixed date also keeps your study honest. Upcoming sessions are on the [TCF Canada exam calendar](#), and all exams by country on [exam dates](#).

1 Widen the net

Every centre you could reach for a day, and consider TEF Canada too. Both give the same points.

2 Prepare a week before

Account created and tested, name matching your passport, payment method with enough limit.

3 Know the release pattern

Announced windows, live seat counts, waitlists or online stores. Each [centre page](#) shows how it releases seats.

4 Use one tab

Some centres warn that several tabs or repeated refreshing can cancel your reservation.

5 Pay in one go

A seat is only confirmed once payment goes through.

6 Book, then keep watching

Take the first realistic seat. Cancelled and unpaid seats come back, often with no announcement.

The [registration day playbook](#) covers the last ten minutes step by step, and the [sold-out strategy](#) covers the longer game.



BOOKING YOUR EXAM

Get told the moment a TCF Canada seat opens

French Exam Alert watches TCF and TEF Canada booking pages around the clock and alerts you by email and WhatsApp/SMS when a seat or registration window opens at the centres you pick. It's a paid service with a 7-day refund, and it never books for you. Check [upcoming exam dates](#), then [choose the centres to watch](#).

Get seat alerts → frenchexamalert.com/watch

[See upcoming exam dates](#)

Keep going: free one-page cheat sheets

Print them, save them to your phone or pin them. All free at frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets.

TCF Canada score chart

frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets/tcf-canada-score-chart

TCF Canada exam format

frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets/tcf-canada-exam-format-chart

French Connectors Chart

frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets/french-connectors-chart

French Opinion Phrases

frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets/french-opinion-phrases

French Question Words

frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets/french-question-words-chart

CEFR vs CLB vs NCLC chart

frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets/cefr-clb-nclc-chart

CRS points for French

frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets/crs-points-french-chart

Dr & Mrs Vandertramp

frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets/dr-mrs-vandertramp-etre-verbs



BOOKING YOUR EXAM

Your score is half the battle. The seat is the other half.

At many centres, TEF Canada and TCF Canada seats sell out within minutes of a session opening, and cancelled seats come back at random times. French Exam Alert checks centre booking pages around the clock and emails or WhatsApps you the moment a seat, date or registration window opens.

Get seat alerts → frenchexamalert.com/watch

[See upcoming exam dates](#)

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