

FREE PDF GUIDE · OCTOBER 2026

TEF Canada Preparation Guide 2026

Format, scoring, strategy for all four modules, model answers and an 8-week plan to NCLC 7

Level B1–B2

10 chapters

TEF Canada & TCF Canada

WHAT'S INSIDE

- The TEF Canada format: 4 modules, question counts and timings, all on one day
- Listening and reading strategy with a time budget per question
- Speaking Section A (obtain information) and Section B (convince): structures and phrase banks
- Common mistakes, a self-check list and an exam-day checklist
- Ancien score vs /699, and the full IRCC NCLC 4 to 10 table
- Writing Section A (continue a news story) and Section B (argue a view): plans, templates and model answers
- An 8-week study plan with weekly tasks and a checkpoint mock
- How to book a seat when centres sell out

Contents

Who this is for: Anyone taking TEF Canada for Express Entry, PR or citizenship, especially learners between A2 and B2 aiming for NCLC 7.

01 TEF Canada in one page

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

02 The format, module by module

Four modules, about 2h55, one day. Know exactly what's coming.

03 Scoring: ancien score, /699 and NCLC

Your attestation shows two numbers per skill. IRCC uses only one of them.

04 Listening and reading strategy

80 multiple-choice questions in 100 minutes. Technique adds points fast here.

05 Writing Section A: continue the news story

25 minutes, at least 80 words. Write like a journalist, not like yourself.

06 Writing Section B: argue your point of view

35 minutes, at least 200 words. A clear side, three reasons, real examples.

07 Speaking: Section A and Section B

About 15 minutes with an examiner: first you ask, then you persuade.

08 Your 8-week plan

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

09 Common mistakes and exam-day checklist

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

10 Book your exam seat

In busy cities, finding a seat can take longer than the preparation.

CHAPTER 01

TEF Canada in one page

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

TEF Canada (Test d'évaluation de français) is a French test made by Le français des affaires (CCI Paris Île-de-France). IRCC accepts it as proof of French for **Express Entry, permanent residence and citizenship**. It tests four skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. You take all four modules **on the same day**, in about **2 hours 55 minutes**.

~2h55

Total testing time, all on one day

4

Modules, each converted to NCLC separately

**249 / 207
/ 310 / 310**

NCLC 7 minimums (L / R / W / S, ancien score)

2 years

Result validity, from the test date

Who needs TEF 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).
- **Francophone Mobility work permit** applicants, who need NCLC 5 in speaking and listening.



Book TEF Canada, not TEF Québec

Centres often list several TEF versions on one page. IRCC accepts only **TEF Canada** (and TCF Canada). Check the exam name on your booking and on your convocation. Fees are usually non-refundable.

What score are you aiming for?

For most readers, the target is **NCLC 7 in every skill**. NCLC is the French name for the Canadian Language Benchmarks, so NCLC 7 = CLB 7, roughly a B2 level. IRCC converts each skill on its own and **never averages**. One skill at NCLC 6 means no French bonus, however strong the other three are.

Module	French name	Scored out of	NCLC 7 minimum
Listening	Compréhension de l'oral	360	249
Reading	Compréhension de l'écrit	300	207
Writing	Expression écrite	450	310
Speaking	Expression orale	450	310

Your four NCLC 7 targets (ancien score)



TEF or TCF?

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. If TEF seats are hard to find near you, compare the formats in [TEF vs TCF Canada](#) or take the [TEF or TCF quiz](#). There's also a free [TCF Canada preparation guide](#).

CHAPTER 02

The format, module by module

Four modules, about 2h55, one day. Know exactly what's coming.

Module	What you do	Time	Ancien score max
Listening (compréhension de l'oral)	40 multiple-choice questions on recordings	40 min	360
Reading (compréhension de l'écrit)	40 multiple-choice questions on written texts	60 min	300
Writing (expression écrite)	Section A + Section B	25 + 35 min	450
Speaking (expression orale)	Section A + Section B, with an examiner	5 + 10 min	450

TEF Canada at a glance

Writing: two sections, two clocks

Section	Task	Time	Length
A	Continue a news article (a <i>fait divers</i>) from its opening	25 min	80 words minimum
B	Express and justify a point of view, often as a letter	35 min	200 words minimum

Speaking: about 15 minutes with an examiner

Section	Task	Time	Who talks most
A	Obtain information: ask questions about a situation or an ad	5 min	You, with questions
B	Persuade or convince: the examiner plays a role and pushes back	10 min	You, with arguments



Paper or computer

Some centres run a computer-based **E-TEF Canada**. It is still taken at the centre, under supervision, and speaking is still a live conversation with an examiner. Ask your centre which version you're booked on, and if it's on computer, practise typing French accents before the day.

1

Listening (40 min)

About a minute per question. The pace is steady. Your attention is what you need to protect.

2 Reading (60 min)

About a minute and a half per question. The risk is spending ten minutes on one hard text.

3 Writing (60 min)

Section A then Section B, with separate clocks. B is longer and carries your argument skills.

4 Speaking (~15 min)

First you ask (A), then you argue (B). Your convocation tells you when your slot is.

The full breakdown is in the [TEF Canada exam format guide](#), and there's a one-page [TEF Canada exam format chart](#) to pin above your desk.

CHAPTER 03

Scoring: ancien score, /699 and NCLC

Your attestation shows two numbers per skill. IRCC uses only one of them.

TEF Canada now reports each skill on a **/699 scale**. Next to it, the attestation prints an **Équivalence ancien score**: your result on the older scale. IRCC's equivalency table for TEF Canada is written against the ancien score, so **that is the only TEF number that converts to NCLC**. Enter it in Express Entry, never the /699 number.

1

Find the four modules

Compréhension de l'oral, compréhension de l'écrit, expression écrite, expression orale.

2

Skip the /699 column

Note it if you like. IRCC doesn't use it for TEF Canada.

3

Read the Équivalence ancien score

One number per module: listening up to 360, reading up to 300, writing and speaking up to 450.

4

Sanity-check the maximums

A reading number above 300, or listening above 360, means you're reading the wrong column.

5

Convert each skill on its own

Use the table below or the [TEF Canada score converter](#). There's no averaging.

NCLC	Listening /360	Reading /300	Writing /450	Speaking /450
10 and above	316–360	263–300	393–450	393–450
9	298–315	248–262	371–392	371–392
8	280–297	233–247	349–370	349–370
7	249–279	207–232	310–348	310–348
6	217–248	181–206	271–309	271–309
5	181–216	151–180	226–270	226–270
4	145–180	121–150	181–225	181–225

TEF Canada → NCLC (IRCC equivalency, ancien score)

Your NCLC level for a skill is the highest row where you meet or beat the minimum. Below the NCLC 4 minimum, a skill counts as below NCLC 4. A one-page version is in the [TEF Canada score chart](#).

Ancien scores (L / R / W / S)	NCLC per skill	French bonus?
260 / 215 / 320 / 312	7 / 7 / 7 / 7	Yes: +25, or +50 with English CLB 5+
300 / 250 / 305 / 350	9 / 9 / 6 / 8	No: writing is NCLC 6
412 / 380 / 330 / 330	Wrong column: 412 and 380 are above the maximums	Re-read the attestation

Worked examples



The gaps are big in writing and speaking

In writing and speaking, NCLC 6 starts at 271 and NCLC 7 at 310. That's a 39-point jump out of 450. Aim comfortably above the minimum in practice, because nerves on the day can cost a few points.



Tested between Dec 11, 2023 and May 6, 2024?

CCI Paris Île-de-France temporarily changed TEF scoring in that window, then reverted it. Affected candidates were emailed updated scores and must update their Express Entry profile. Details are in the [ancien score vs /699 guide](#).

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.

CHAPTER 04

Listening and reading strategy

80 multiple-choice questions in 100 minutes. Technique adds points fast here.

Module	Questions	Time	Per question	NCLC 7 target
Listening	40	40 min	About 1 min	249 / 360
Reading	40	60 min	About 1 min 30	207 / 300

Your time budget

Listening: protect your attention

1

Read ahead

Use every gap before a recording to read the question and options. Knowing what to listen for is half the job.

2

Predict the type of answer

A time? A price? A reason? An opinion? Decide before the audio starts, then listen for that.

3

Listen for the change

Answers often hide after *mais*, *en fait*, *finalement* or *pourtant*. The first thing a speaker says is often not the final answer.

4

Let lost questions go

If you miss one, choose your best guess and move on. Dwelling on one answer costs you the next two.

5

Never leave a blank

A guess can score. A blank can't.



Train at real speed

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

Reading: control the clock

1

Question first, text second

For longer texts, read the question before the passage. You'll skim for the answer instead of reading every word twice.

2

Spot the text type

An ad, a notice, an email, an article, an opinion piece. Each one puts key information in a predictable place.

3 Watch for paraphrase

The right option rarely repeats the text's exact words. The option that copies a word from the text is often a trap.

4 Use a 3-minute rule

If a question has taken three minutes, pick your best guess, mark it mentally and move on.

5 Finish every question

The last questions are worth the same as the first. Don't run out of time on question 30.

French	English	Why it matters
ne... plus	no longer	Something 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

Words that flip the meaning (read slowly when you see them)

Practise with timed sets, then review every wrong answer: was it vocabulary, a trap option, or time? The free [French reading practice test](#) is a good first check.

CHAPTER 05

Writing Section A: continue the news story

25 minutes, at least 80 words. Write like a journalist, not like yourself.

You get the opening of a news story, a *fait divers*, and write what happens next. The marker checks that you continue **logically**, in the **same journalistic style**, and that your French is clear and correct. Keep the same names, places and facts as the opening, write in the **third person**, and don't add your opinion.

1 Reread the opening (2 min)

Note who, what, where and when. Underline every name and detail you must keep.

2 Plan three moves (2 min)

What happened next → a reaction (witness, official, expert) → a consequence or what happens now.

3 Write (15–17 min)

Two short paragraphs. Use the passé composé for events and the imparfait for background.

4 Check (3–4 min)

Agreements, past participles, and that you're past 80 words.

Phrase bank: news-story language

Selon la police, ...

According to the police, ...

... a déclaré le maire.

... the mayor said.

Peu après, ...

Shortly afterwards, ...

Personne n'a été blessé.

Nobody was hurt.

La mairie a annoncé que...

The town hall announced that...

D'après un témoin, ...

According to a witness, ...

« ... », a expliqué une voisine.

"...", a neighbour explained.

Les secours sont arrivés sur place vers...

Emergency services arrived at around...

L'enquête se poursuit.

The investigation is continuing.

Cet événement a suscité de nombreuses réactions.

This event caused many reactions.

Practice opening (original): « Sherbrooke, le 4 février. Un autobus scolaire transportant vingt-deux élèves est resté bloqué pendant plus de deux heures, mardi matin, à cause d'une tempête de neige imprévue. »

MODEL ANSWER Model answer, Section A: the school bus in the snowstorm

119 words

Le véhicule a quitté la route peu après sept heures, près du chemin du Lac, après avoir glissé sur une plaque de glace. Selon la police, personne n'a été blessé. Le conducteur a immédiatement prévenu l'école, puis il a laissé le moteur allumé pour que les enfants n'aient pas froid.

La dépanneuse n'est arrivée qu'en milieu de matinée, car plusieurs routes de la région étaient fermées. « Les élèves sont restés très calmes et ont même chanté pour passer le temps », a raconté une enseignante présente dans l'autobus. D'après la direction de l'école, les parents ont reçu des nouvelles toutes les vingt minutes. La commission scolaire a annoncé qu'elle allait revoir ses règles de transport pour les jours de tempête.

120 words. Same place and facts as the opening, third person throughout, two sources (the police, a teacher), a direct quote and a clear consequence. No personal opinion.

Section A self-check

- ☐ Same names, place and date as the opening
- ☐ Third person only: no « je pense que »
- ☐ Events in a logical order, then a reaction, then a consequence
- ☐ At least one source or quote (selon..., a déclaré...)
- ☐ Passé composé for events, imparfait for background
- ☐ 80 words or more, and finished within 25 minutes



Don't let A eat into B

Section A is short on purpose. Spending 30 minutes polishing it and rushing Section B is one of the most common ways to lose points.

CHAPTER 06

Writing Section B: argue your point of view

35 minutes, at least 200 words. A clear side, three reasons, real examples.

You react to a statement, often by writing a letter to a newspaper or a post on a forum, and defend your position. The marker looks for **a clear stance**, **organised arguments** with **examples**, good **linking words**, and the right register. You don't need rare vocabulary. You need a structure you can produce under pressure.

1 Plan (5 min)

Pick your side, even if you half agree. Note three arguments with one example each, and one counter-argument you'll answer.

2 Introduction (2–3 sentences)

Refer to the statement and give your position clearly.

3 Three argument paragraphs

One idea each, opened with *tout d'abord*, *ensuite*, *enfin*. Add a concrete example: your life, your city, your country.

4 Concession

Certes... mais... Show you understand the other side, then answer it or propose a solution.

5 Conclusion

Restate your position in new words. End with a wish, a call or a proposal.

6 Check (3–5 min)

Agreements, verb endings, register, and that you're past 200 words.

MODEL ANSWER Template: letter to a newspaper (fill in the brackets)

81 words

Madame, Monsieur,

J'ai lu avec intérêt votre article affirmant que [reformulez l'affirmation]. Je [partage entièrement / ne partage pas du tout] cet avis, et je souhaite expliquer pourquoi.

Tout d'abord, [argument 1]. Par exemple, [exemple concret].

Ensuite, [argument 2]. En effet, [explication ou chiffre].

Enfin, [argument 3]. C'est le cas notamment de [exemple].

Certes, [argument du camp adverse]. Cependant, [votre réponse ou votre solution].

En conclusion, [position reformulée]. J'espère que [souhait ou proposition].

Veuillez agréer, Madame, Monsieur, l'expression de mes salutations distinguées.

A frame, not a model. The fixed phrases are only a small part of the 200 words; your arguments and examples must do the rest.

Phrase bank: arguing in writing

Je suis entièrement d'accord avec...

I fully agree with...

Il me semble essentiel de...

It seems essential to me to...

De plus, ... / Par ailleurs, ...

Moreover, ... / Besides, ...

Bien que ce soit coûteux, ...

Although it's expensive, ... (subjunctive)

Il faudrait que les autorités prennent...

The authorities should take... (subjunctive)

Je ne partage pas cet avis.

I don't share this view.

Prenons l'exemple de...

Take the example of...

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

It's true that..., but...

Par conséquent, ... / C'est pourquoi...

Consequently, ... / That's why...

En conclusion, je reste convaincu(e) que...

In conclusion, I remain convinced that...

Practice statement (original): « Les villes devraient interdire les voitures dans leur centre. » You write to the newspaper that published it.

MODEL ANSWER Model answer, Section B: letter to a newspaper

217 words

Madame, Monsieur,

Votre journal a publié la semaine dernière un article selon lequel les villes devraient interdire les voitures dans leur centre. Je partage entièrement cet avis et je souhaite expliquer pourquoi.

Tout d'abord, une telle mesure protégerait notre santé. Moins de voitures, c'est moins de pollution et moins de bruit. Ma fille souffre d'asthme, et je constate qu'elle tousse beaucoup moins lorsque nous nous promenons dans les rues piétonnes.

Ensuite, un centre-ville sans voitures est plus vivant. À Montréal, par exemple, plusieurs rues deviennent piétonnes chaque été : les familles s'y promènent, les terrasses s'agrandissent et, d'après les commerçants que je connais, les ventes augmentent.

Enfin, c'est une question de sécurité. Chaque année, de nombreux accidents graves impliquent des piétons ou des cyclistes. Réduire la circulation, c'est protéger les plus vulnérables, notamment les enfants et les personnes âgées.

Certes, certaines personnes ont réellement besoin de leur véhicule, comme les livreurs ou les personnes à mobilité réduite. Il faudrait donc prévoir des exceptions, des transports en commun plus fréquents et des parkings à l'entrée de la ville.

En conclusion, interdire les voitures au centre-ville n'est pas une punition, mais un investissement pour la qualité de vie de tous. J'espère que nos élus auront le courage de prendre cette décision.

Veuillez agréer, Madame, Monsieur, l'expression de mes salutations distinguées.

217 words (205 without the greeting and closing formula). Position in the first paragraph, three arguments each with an example, a concession with a solution, a conclusion and a formal close.

Lower score	Higher score
« Je pense que c'est bien et aussi c'est mal. »	A clear side in the first paragraph
One long argument	Three short, separate arguments
General claims only	A concrete example in each paragraph
et... et... et...	Varied connectors: ensuite, en revanche, par conséquent
Present tense only	Some conditional and subjunctive: il faudrait que...
Stops at 180 words	Past 200 words, with time left to check

What lifts a Section B answer

Practise Section B against the real 35-minute clock with the [writing practice timer](#), which counts your words as you type. More formal openings and closings are on the [formal letter phrases sheet](#), and linking words on the [French connectors chart](#).

CHAPTER 07

Speaking: Section A and Section B

About 15 minutes with an examiner: first you ask, then you persuade.

Section A: obtain information (5 min)

You're given a situation (in practice material, usually a short ad or notice) and you call or meet the person behind it to find out more. The examiner plays that person. **Your job is to ask questions:** many of them, in a sensible order, in varied forms, reacting to each answer. Long speeches about yourself lose marks here.

1 Open politely

Greet, say why you're calling: « Bonjour, j'appelle au sujet de votre annonce... »

2 Cover the basics

Où, quand, combien, comment, pour qui, qu'est-ce qui est inclus, comment réserver.

3 Vary the form

Est-ce que...?, inversion (Pourriez-vous... ?), and indirect questions (J'aimerais savoir si...).

4 React, then follow up

« Ah, d'accord. Et dans ce cas... ? » A follow-up shows you understood the answer.

5 Close

Sum up, thank the examiner, say what you'll do next.

Phrase bank: asking for information

Bonjour, j'appelle au sujet de votre annonce.

Hello, I'm calling about your ad.

J'aimerais savoir si...

I'd like to know whether...

Est-ce que c'est compris dans le prix ?

Is that included in the price?

Comment est-ce qu'on s'inscrit ?

How do you sign up?

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

OK, so if I understand correctly, ...

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

Could you tell me... ?

Quels sont les horaires / les tarifs ?

What are the times / the prices?

Y a-t-il une réduction pour... ?

Is there a discount for... ?

Et si je dois annuler, comment ça se passe ?

And if I have to cancel, what happens?

Merci beaucoup, je vais y réfléchir et je vous rappelle.

Thanks a lot, I'll think about it and call you back.

MODEL ANSWER Sample Section A: a weekend cooking class (candidate's side)

151 words

Document (original) : « Atelier cuisine du monde. Tous les samedis. Groupes de 8 personnes.

Renseignements par téléphone. »

« Bonjour, je vous appelle au sujet de votre atelier de cuisine. J'aimerais avoir quelques renseignements. D'abord, quelles cuisines est-ce que vous proposez ? ... Ah, c'est intéressant. Et les cours commencent à quelle heure ? ... D'accord. Combien de temps dure un atelier ? ... Quel est le tarif pour une séance ? ... Est-ce que les ingrédients sont compris dans le prix ? ... Très bien. Faut-il apporter quelque chose, un tablier par exemple ? ... Est-ce qu'il y a une réduction si on vient à deux ? ... Parfait. Et pour réserver, est-ce que je peux le faire en ligne ? ... Dernière question : si je dois annuler, est-ce que je suis remboursé ? ... Donc, si je comprends bien, c'est le samedi à dix heures, les ingrédients sont compris et je peux réserver en ligne. Merci beaucoup, madame, je vais en parler à mon mari et je vous rappelle demain. »

An original practice situation. Ten questions in varied forms, short reactions between them, and a summary before closing.
« ... » marks where the examiner answers.



Prepare a question list you can reuse

Most Section A situations need the same ten topics: what, when, how long, where, price, what's included, discounts, what to bring, how to book, cancellation. Learn one question for each and you'll never run out.

Section B: convince the examiner (10 min)

You're given a situation (in practice material, often an ad for an activity or a plan) and you try to convince the examiner, who plays someone who isn't convinced and pushes back. In practice prompts the person is often a friend or relative, so **tu** is common; if the role is a stranger or a manager, use **vous** and keep it consistent. Ten minutes is long. What gets you through is **structure**, not vocabulary.

1

Present the idea (1 min)

Say what it is, the key details from the document, and why you're excited.

2

Give three reasons

Prepare them as you read: a benefit for them, a practical advantage, a shared experience. One concrete example each.

3

Handle each objection

Acknowledge it, answer it, then bring it back to one of your reasons.

4

Keep proposing

Offer a solution to every doubt: a trial session, a cheaper option, going together.

5

Close

« Alors, qu'est-ce que tu en penses ? On essaie ? »

Phrase bank: presenting and persuading

Écoute, j'ai vu une annonce qui devrait te plaire.

Listen, I saw an ad you should like.

Ce serait l'occasion de...

It would be the chance to...

En plus, ça ne coûte presque rien.

Plus, it costs almost nothing.

Imagine un peu : ...

Just imagine: ...

Le grand avantage, c'est que...

The big advantage is that...

Tu te souviens quand on... ? Eh bien, ...

Remember when we... ? Well, ...

Phrase bank: answering objections

Je comprends ta crainte, mais...

I understand your worry, but...

Justement, c'est pour ça que...

Exactly, that's why...

Je te propose une chose : ...

Here's what I suggest: ...

Allez, tu ne le regretteras pas.

Come on, you won't regret it.

Tu as raison sur ce point. Cela dit, ...

You're right about that. That said, ...

Et si on essayait une seule fois ?

What if we tried just once?

Qu'est-ce qui te ferait changer d'avis ?

What would make you change your mind?

MODEL ANSWER Sample Section B: a hiking club (extract)

161 words

Document (original) : « Club de randonnée du dimanche. Sorties d'une journée en forêt. Débutants bienvenus. Première sortie gratuite. »

Candidat : Écoute, j'ai trouvé une annonce pour un club de randonnée, et j'ai tout de suite pensé à toi. Ils organisent des sorties en forêt tous les dimanches, et les débutants sont les bienvenus.

Examineur : Bof, je ne suis pas très sportif, tu sais.

Candidat : Je comprends, mais justement, ce n'est pas une compétition. On marche à son rythme, et il y a des pauses. Et puis, tu me disais l'autre jour que tu passais trop de temps devant ton ordinateur. Ce serait l'occasion de prendre l'air.

Examineur : Oui, mais le dimanche, c'est mon seul jour de repos.

Candidat : Tu as raison, c'est important de se reposer. Cela dit, une journée dans la nature, c'est aussi du repos, non ? On revient fatigué, mais l'esprit tranquille. Et la première sortie est gratuite : si tu n'aimes pas, tu n'y retournes pas. Qu'est-ce que tu en penses ?

An original practice exchange. Each objection is acknowledged, answered, then linked back to a reason. The candidate ends with a question to keep the exchange going.

**Reuse, don't run out**

When the examiner objects for the third time, you don't need a fourth argument. Rephrase one of your three with a new example. That's exactly what real persuasion sounds like.

Rehearse both sections with the real timings on the [speaking practice timer](#). Better still, practise with a friend who argues back on purpose. More ready-made lines are on the [French opinion phrases sheet](#).

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 [3- or 6-month TEF Canada plan](#) shows how. Not sure of your level? Take the [5-minute level check](#).

8 weeks to TEF Canada

When	Focus	Do this
Week 1	Diagnose	- One full timed mock: listening 40 min, reading 60 min, writing 25 + 35 min, speaking A and B out loud - Convert each skill to NCLC and rank them from weakest to strongest - Learn the Section A and Section B structures in this guide
Week 2	Grammar for writing and speaking	- Passé composé vs imparfait, agreement of past participles - Conditional (il faudrait, ce serait) and the subjunctive after il faut que, bien que - One Section A text, corrected
Week 3	Build your weakest skill	- Half your hours on your weakest skill - Daily: 20–30 min of natural-speed audio and one news article - One Section B letter, corrected; note every repeated error
Week 4	Speaking routines	- Write your 10-topic question list for Section A and practise it on 3 different ads - Three 10-minute Section B rehearsals with someone who argues back - One Section A and one Section B text
Week 5	Checkpoint mock	- Second full timed mock - Within one level of NCLC 7 in every skill? Keep the date. If not, look at moving it - Rewrite your two weakest texts from scratch
Week 6	Exam technique	- Listening and reading in timed sets of 10 questions - Section B in exactly 35 minutes: 5 min plan, 25 min write, 5 min check - Record Section B speaking and listen back for long silences

When	Focus	Do this
Week 7	Full rehearsal	• One or two full mocks in the same order and 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 arrival time • 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. Budget for at least one corrected text a week.

Turn your exam date into study phases with the [exam prep planner](#), or estimate your hours with the [French study hours calculator](#).

CHAPTER 09

Common mistakes and exam-day checklist

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

Module	Mistake	Fix
All	Entering the /699 score in Express Entry	Use the Équivalence ancien score only
Listening	Dwelling on a missed question	Guess, move on, read the next options
Reading	Ten minutes on one hard text	3-minute rule, then guess
Writing A	Giving your opinion, changing facts	Third person, same facts, a quote and a consequence
Writing A/B	Polishing A for 35 minutes	Respect the 25 + 35 split
Writing B	No clear side, or only one argument	Position in paragraph 1, three arguments
Speaking A	Three questions, then silence	A 10-topic question list, plus follow-ups
Speaking B	Giving up when the examiner disagrees	Acknowledge, answer, return to your reason
Speaking	Long pauses hunting for a perfect word	Use a simpler word or a rescue phrase

The mistakes that cost the most

Rescue phrases for speaking

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

Sorry, could you repeat that, please?

Qu'est-ce que vous voulez dire par... ?

What do you mean by... ?

Comment dire... je cherche le mot.

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

Autrement dit, ...

In other words, ...

Self-check: am I ready?

- ☐ My last full mock reached NCLC 7 (or my target) in every skill, with a margin
- ☐ I can write a Section A text of 80+ words in under 25 minutes
- ☐ I can write a Section B text of 200+ words in 35 minutes, with time to check
- ☐ I can ask 10 different questions in Section A without notes
- ☐ I can argue for 10 minutes in Section B and answer three objections
- ☐ I know my top five grammar errors and check for them every time

Exam-day checklist

- ☐ Booking says TEF Canada, not TEF Québec
- ☐ The exact ID your centre requires, the same one you registered with (often your passport)
- ☐ Convocation or confirmation, printed or on your phone
- ☐ Know your speaking slot: same day or another time
- ☐ Ate properly: it's nearly three hours of focus
- ☐ 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
- ☐ Raise your hand at once if headphones or equipment fail, and ask the centre to note it before you leave

The full day, from arrival to results, is in [what to expect on exam day](#). Results usually come in about 2 weeks; then check every skill with the [CLB calculator](#).

CHAPTER 10

Book your exam seat

In busy cities, finding a seat can take longer than the preparation.

At many centres, TEF 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 [TEF 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 TCF 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 TEF Canada seat opens

French Exam Alert watches TEF and TCF 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 [French Exam Alert](#), then

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.

TEF Canada score chart

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

TEF Canada exam format

frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets/tef-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 Formal Letter Phrases

frenchexamalert.com/cheat-sheets/french-formal-letter-phrases

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](#)

Fact-checked against the official IRCC and exam-provider sources; rules and fees change, so confirm with your test centre before you pay. © 2026 French Exam Alert. You may print and share this PDF unchanged and free of charge. French Exam Alert is independent and not affiliated with IRCC, France Éducation internationale, Le français des affaires (CCI Paris Île-de-France) or any Alliance Française. TEF Canada and TCF Canada are trademarks of their owners.