

EXAMEN DE FIN D'ÉTUDES SECONDAIRES – Sessions 2024**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Date :	07.06.24	Horaire :	14:15 - 16:45	Durée :	150 minutes
Discipline :	ANGLA	Type :	écrit	Section(s) :	CB / CB-4LANG / CC / CC-4LANG / CD / CD-4LANG / CE / CE-4LANG / CE-MATF / CF / CG / CG-4LANG / CG-COMED / CG-SPO / CG-URBS / CI
				Numéro du candidat :	

I. Task 1: Reading comprehension (10 marks)**Disinformation reimaged: AI and politics¹**

A banal dystopia where manipulative content is so cheap to make and so easy to produce on a massive scale that it becomes omnipresent: that's the political future digital experts are worried about in the age of generative artificial intelligence (AI).

5 In the run-up to the 2016 US presidential election, social media platforms were routes for misinformation as far-right activists, foreign influence campaigns and fake news sites worked to spread false information and sharpen divisions. Four years later, the 2020 election was overrun with conspiracy theories and unsupported claims about voter fraud that were amplified to millions, fuelling an anti-democratic movement to overturn the election.

10 Now, the 2024 presidential election is fast approaching. **__(A)__. AI-generated disinformation not only threatens to deceive audiences, but also destroy an already **embattled** information ecosystem by flooding it with inaccuracies and deceptions, experts say. "Degrees of trust will go down, the job of journalists and others who are trying to publish actual information will become harder," said Ben Winters, a senior counsel at the Electronic Privacy Information Center, a privacy research non-profit. "It will have no positive effects on the information ecosystem."**

15 Artificial intelligence tools that can create photorealistic images, mimic voice audio and write convincingly human text have surged in use this year, as companies such as OpenAI have released their products on the mass market. The technology, which has already threatened to **upend** numerous industries and worsen existing inequalities, is increasingly being employed to create political content.

20 In past months, an AI-generated image of an explosion at the Pentagon caused a brief dip in the stock market. **__(B)__. AI-generated images that appeared to show Donald Trump fighting off police officers trying to arrest him circulated widely on social media platforms. The Republican National Committee released an entirely AI-generated ad that showed images of various imagined disasters that would take place if Biden were re-elected, while the American Association of Political Consultants warned that video deepfakes present a "threat to democracy".**

25 In some ways, these images and ads are not so different from the manipulated images and videos, misleading messages and robocalls that have been a feature of society for years. But disinformation campaigns formerly faced a range of practical hurdles. **__(C)__. Now, though, generative AI has made the creation of such content**

¹ Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/jul/19/ai-generated-disinformation-us-elections>
by Nick Robins-Early, 19th July 2023; shortened and adapted

30 accessible to anyone with even basic digital skills, amid limited **guardrails** or effective regulation to control it. The potential effect, experts warn, is a sort of democratization and acceleration of propaganda right at a time when several countries enter major election years.

__(D)__. Social media bots that pretend to be real voters, manipulated videos or images, and even deceptive robocalls are all easier to produce and harder to detect with the help of AI tools.

35 There are also new opportunities for foreign countries to attempt to influence US elections or undermine their integrity, as federal officials have long warned Russia and China are working to do. Language barriers to creating deceptive content are weakening, and tell-tale signs of scammers or disinformation campaigns using repetitive phrasing or strange word choices are being replaced with more believable texts. “If you’re sitting in a troll farm² in a foreign country, you no longer need to be fluent to produce a fluent-sounding article in the language of your target audience,” said Josh Goldstein, a research fellow at Georgetown University’s Center for Security and Emerging Technology. __(E)__.

40 AI technology may also intensify voter suppression campaigns to target powerless communities. Experts such as Winters note that AI could hypothetically be used to create and spread election misinformation to minorities on a greater scale with more personalized information. Audio that mimics elected leaders or trusted personalities could tell select groups of voters misleading information about polls and voting, or cause general confusion.

45 During the 2016 and 2020 elections, Trump’s campaign leaned heavily on memes and videos made by his supporters – including deceptively edited videos that made it seem like Biden was slurring his words or saying that he shouldn’t be president. The AI version of that strategy is creeping in, election observers warn.

The creation of misleading AI-generated content alone doesn’t mean that it will have an effect on elections, researchers say, and measuring the impact of disinformation campaigns is a particularly difficult task. It’s one 50 thing to monitor the engagement of fake materials but another to **gauge** the secondary effects of polluting the information ecosystem to the point where people generally distrust any information they consume online.

55 But there are concerning signs. Just as the use of generative AI is increasing, many of the social media platforms that bad actors rely on to spread disinformation have begun cutting back on some of their content moderation measures – YouTube reversed its election integrity policy, Instagram allowed the anti-vaccine conspiracy theorist Robert F Kennedy Jr back on its platform and Twitter’s head of content moderation left the company in June amid a general fall in standards under Elon Musk.

60 It remains to be seen how effective media literacy and traditional means of factchecking can be in pushing back against a **deluge** of misleading text and images, researchers say, as the potential scale of generated content represents a new challenge.

(871 words)

² a **troll farm** – an organisation that employs people to make online posts that are deliberately offensive in order to cause conflict or change public opinion.

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

I.1. Insert sentences into the text (-1 per wrong or missing answer)

Choose which sentences (1-7) best fit into the gaps (a-e) in the text. Write the correct numbers into the box below. There are two sentences which you do not need to use.

1. In light of this, experts warn that advances in AI have the potential to take the disinformation tactics of the past and breathe new life into them
2. In fact, the potential harms of AI on elections can read like a greatest hits of concerns from past decades of election interference
3. Political advisers worry that AI companies see a tempting opportunity for profit
4. You can just have a language model spit out an article with the grammar and vocabulary of a fluent speaker
5. Creating individualized messages for social media was incredibly time-consuming, as was photoshopping images and editing videos
6. AI audio parodies of US presidents playing video games became a viral trend
7. Many voters do not understand foreign languages and will easily be fooled by lower quality political content

Write your answers here:

Gap in text:	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
Sentence:					

I.2. Vocabulary (-1 per wrong or missing answer)

Circle the best option – a, b, or c. There is only ONE correct answer per example.

1. In line 10, “embattled” is closest in meaning to:
 - a. strengthened
 - b. fought over
 - c. demolished

2. In line 17, “to upend” is closest in meaning to:
 - a. to affect drastically
 - b. to put an abrupt end to
 - c. to improve radically

3. In line 28, “guardrails” (a guardrail) is closest in meaning to:
 - a. a company spy who illegally monitors AI activity online.
 - b. a device used to trace AI activity back to its origin.
 - c. a form of cyber-protection against harmful AI and its uses.

4. In line 50, “to gauge” is closest in meaning to:
 - a. to place a bet on
 - b. to estimate correctly
 - c. to offer a guarantee

5. In line 59, “a deluge” is closest in meaning to:
- a. an overwhelming amount or number
 - b. something that is falsely believed or spread
 - c. the condition of being defeated in expectation or hope.

I.3. True / False / Not Stated (-1 per wrong or missing answer)

Decide if the statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Stated (NS) in the text. For each statement, circle T, F, or NS.

1.	Manipulative imagery and media misinformation existed before there was easy access to generative AI.	T	F	NS
2.	US presidential candidates are now actively investing in the development of AI programmes to design their political campaigns.	T	F	NS
3.	Rich white communities and minorities might equally become targets for disinformation tactics such as AI voice fakes.	T	F	NS
4.	The standard of social media companies' content moderation has not been adapted appropriately to the increased presence of AI on their platforms.	T	F	NS
5.	Extensive educational programmes in AI propaganda detection are being rolled out to teach media literacy in the run-up to elections.	T	F	NS

II. Task 2 – Reading into writing (20 marks)

You are going to read two texts in which the authors tackle the issue of **the disclosure and respect of gender pronouns**.

He, she, they ... should we now clarify our preferred pronouns when we say hello?³

Little attention used to be paid to pronouns. In recent years, however, they have become a cornerstone of the culture wars. Pronoun preferences are a favourite joke among unimaginative reactionaries who use them as proof that “snowflake millennials” just want to feel special and impose their ideologies.

While accidental misgendering happens, some people view pronoun changes as inconvenient and forced and might use the wrong gender for people as an intentional form of discrimination or so-called “resistance”. This can lead to several mental health issues in the misgendered person and can contribute to gender dysphoria: a sense of unease that a person may have because of a difference between their biological sex and their gender identity.

Meanwhile, pronoun introductions have become an established feature of some progressive spaces and university campuses. Many view this as a positive step towards a more nuanced understanding of gender. As Darius Hickman, a 23-year-old non-binary⁴ poet in New York says, these introductions mean people who don't conform to traditional views of gender don't feel excluded. “Relying on figuring out people's gender based on appearances is harmful, especially since some people – oftentimes non-binary folks – can happen to look strictly male or female, and a simple pronoun check makes things easier for everyone, including people whose gender isn't easy to tell.”

But with gender being so complex and personal, it feels like a pronoun check cannot ever be “simple”. We can't escape the fact that pronouns play an important role in how we see the world. Like it or not, we tend to take a lot of social cues from pronouns. Even hearing a pronoun in a sentence can make you picture someone very differently.

Pronoun introductions are also not entirely without difficulty. Sometimes pronoun introductions only happen when a gender non-conforming person is in the room, for example. Naturally, that person can feel singled out and put on the spot. Pronoun introduction and declaration should be normalised for everyone, so it is clear that it is standard and hasn't been brought up for someone specifically.

In any case, being more mindful about how we use pronouns and aiming to get them right challenges people's ideas about how gender and biological sex work in a fundamental way — a thought process that shouldn't be hard but is a battleground for many people. We manage to learn a lot of names over the course of our lives, names that are unusual or hard to pronounce. We recognize that's just part of being a human being and having positive relationships with other humans. It is time to apply the same attitude to pronouns.

There is no tidy conclusion to this issue. Gender is messy and complicated and incredibly emotional. Pronouns are personal and everybody's relationship with them is different. The key message in all of this, however, is to acknowledge a person's request to be respected in the identity that best represents them and treat each other with kindness and respect.

(486 words)

³ adapted from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/sep/13/pronouns-gender-he-she-they-natalie-wynn-contrapoints> by Arwa Mahdawi, 13th September 2019

⁴ **non-binary** – a term to identify genders that do not conform to the categories of male or female.

The liberal case against pronouns⁵

As with so many debates in the culture wars, the issue of pronouns has been misrepresented. The criticism of preferred pronouns and their declaration is often construed as being discriminating and “reactionary” when it is essentially liberal and progressive. Activists insist that respecting and offering one’s pronouns is just a way to be inclusive and polite — and in many cases that is clearly the intention. Yet when you ask for someone’s pronouns, you are doing one of two things. You are either saying that you are having trouble identifying this person’s biological sex, or you are saying that you believe in the notion of “gender identity” and expect others to do the same.

Yet gender identity ideology is simply not a belief system that most people share. I am not here talking about gender dysphoria — those people who genuinely feel at odds with their sex and seek to change this either through medical procedures or the way in which they present themselves — but rather the idea that we each have a separate gender that has nothing to do with our biological bodies. In an article in the *Metro* this week, a young person who identifies as non-binary complained about being misgendered by doctors when seeking treatment for endometriosis, a condition of the womb. But for a medical practitioner, biological sex is an important consideration that cannot simply be wished away.

This brings me to the complication of neo-pronouns. “They” and “them” are now routinely used as singular pronouns by the mainstream press and other institutions. On university campuses, it’s not uncommon for badges to be distributed during the first weeks of classes to limit the potential for *faux pas*. “My pronouns are he/him/his,” the badge might say, but it could just as easily be “they/them/their”, “xe/xem/xyr”, “ne/nym/nis”, “ve/ver/vis”, “fae/faer/faers” or “zie/zim/zir”. This kind of cryptic puzzle only causes confusion, especially because announcing one’s own or knowing others’ pronouns has little practical purpose in most scenarios, given that we do not refer to individuals by their pronouns unless we are talking *about* them, rather than *to* them. Moreover, even raising the question can be offensive. Women who reject traditional notions of femininity are frequently told that they “look like men”. To ask such an individual for her pronouns can be construed as a kind of attack.

It is also often forgotten that many transgender people are opposed to pronoun declaration for a number of reasons. It draws needless attention to them when they just want to get on with their lives. It can have the effect of “outing” people against their will, particularly if they are in the early stages of their transition.

Overall, it creates a false impression that gender identity ideology is the norm even though it is a belief system shared by relatively few. Most importantly, forced speech is a fundamentally illiberal prospect, one that should always be resisted by all.

(497 words)

⁵ adapted from <https://unherd.com/2022/03/the-liberal-case-against-pronouns/> by Andrew Doyle, 2nd March 2022

Writing Task

Write a structured **analysis** of **200-250 words** in which you do the following:

- Compare and contrast the overall points of view expressed in the two texts (referring to 2-3 main arguments put forward in each text).

Your analysis must represent $\pm 2/3$ of your answer, i.e. $\pm 140-170$ words.

- Explain which point of view you agree with more, and why. If you agree with both or neither, explain why.

Your personal opinion must represent $\pm 1/3$ of your answer, i.e. $\pm 60-80$ words.

Use your **own words** as far as possible. Do not copy from the texts, except for short quotes (with quotation marks) to support your statements. Include your **word count**.

III. Task 3 – Essay writing (30 marks)

Write a well-structured essay of between 300 and 400 words on **ONE** of the topics below. Indicate your choice of topic clearly and include the word count.

1. Mass sales events such as Black Friday are damaging for humans and the planet. How can people be encouraged to put more thought into how they consume?
2. Recent studies have shown improved studying and memory retention with traditional approaches rather than digital learning. Could it be beneficial to return to pen and paper in education? Discuss.
3. Since censorship limits freedom of expression and access to information, no government or institution should have the authority to ban books. To what extent do you agree?