

EXAMEN DE FIN D'ÉTUDES SECONDAIRES CLASSIQUES
Sessions 2023 – QUESTIONNAIRE ÉCRIT

Date :	08.06.23	Durée :	14:15 - 16:45	Numéro candidat :	
Discipline :	Anglais	Section(s) :	CB / CB-4LANG / CC / CC-4LANG / CD / CD-4LANG / CE / CE-4LANG / CE-MATF / CF / CG / CG-4LANG / CG-COMED / CG-URBS / CI		

Task 1: Reading comprehension (10 marks)

Are cows at sea the future of farming?¹

Samuel L Jackson can have his snakes on a plane. Peter and Minke van Wingerden have **concocted** something even wilder: a herd of cows floating on the sea.

The Dutch husband-and-wife team's experiment on sustainable agriculture, a hi-tech micro-dairy called Floating Farm, can be found bobbing in the port of Rotterdam. The modernist structure
5 houses 40 Maas-Rijn-Ijssel cows, which collectively produce some 200 gallons (757 litres) of milk a day. In addition to helping nourish the local community, the waterborne farm is playing a part in the global conversation about how the climate crisis is pushing farmers to reconsider how – and where – they produce food.

Floods, extreme heating, megadroughts and even rising night temperatures have sent the food
10 system off its axis and cost the US farm industry alone over \$1bn. The race to outsmart the constant **onslaught** of extreme weather is well under way: **__(A)__,** while Jack's Solar Garden in Longmont, Colorado, is a testbed for the emerging method of agrivoltaic² farming – a space-efficient system that allows for solar arrays and traditional farming to coexist on the same patch of land, a multi-tasking innovation that proponents say results in a greater crop **yield** than traditional farming. "If
15 you have a strong ecological system underneath the solar panels", says Byron Kominek, Jack's third-generation owner, "you're able to have a win-win for climate change."

Joshua Faulkner, a research assistant professor and the program coordinator for the University of Vermont's farming and climate change program, says extreme weather has rendered the world of
20 farming unrecognisable from what it was only decades ago. "**__(B)__,** Over the past 10 to 15 years, these assumptions have been thrown out the window and farmers are having to rewrite the book."

For their part, the van Wingerdens are betting on a method that does without the land altogether. A former property developer with a background in engineering, Peter found his inspiration for the Floating Farm in a climate catastrophe half a world away. On a visit to New York City in the aftermath
25 of 2012's Hurricane Sandy, which battered the north-east US, he saw how flooding hampered the delivery of fresh food to millions, a problem he was all but certain would become more severe in the coming years. So he turned to his expertise in aquatic architecture and created nearly 10,000

¹<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/jan/19/floating-dairy-farm-rotterdam-climate-crisis> by Matthew Kronsberg, 19th January 2023 (993 words, adapted)

² **agrivoltaic** – the practice of growing crops underneath solar panels

square feet (929 square meters) of space for farming that floats on the water. If successful, his experiment would not be vulnerable to rising sea levels or destructive floods.

Rotterdam has already established itself as one of the most climate-adaptive places in the world. Everything from office buildings to entire neighbourhoods are built on water in the city, which is 90% below sea level. The van Wingerdens' floating dairy farm was a new but inevitable twist. Should a weather crisis arise, a waterborne farm isn't necessarily stuck in place. **__(C)__** And a farm on water also helps to take a little pressure off the "global land squeeze", a term conservationists use to describe the ever-growing tension that arises when a finite amount of land results in an increasing amount of wild terrain being given over to agriculture in order to serve the appetite for "food, feed, fuel and fibre", explains Janet Ranganathan, the managing director for strategy, learning and results at the World Resources Institute, a global research-based NGO that focuses on sustainable land use.

The van Wingerdens' experimental farm floats on pontoons, rising and falling with the tides. The rubber-floored barn occupying the top level of the structure is where the cows are robotically milked, **mucked** and fed (they can also walk down a gangplank to a waterside patch of pasture). The middle level is where the milk is processed into butter, yogurt and other dairy products. It is on this level where rain and desalinated seawater are purified for the cows' consumption. The animals' manure, meanwhile, is processed for fertiliser that is used on local football pitches and the grass clippings from these return as feed. At the bottom of the structure is a naturally cool space used for ripening up to 1,000 wheels of gouda-style cheese at a time – all for sale through the farm shop. **__(D)__**

The van Wingerdens' model is ripe for reproduction – which is exactly what the Floating Farm's team of fourteen are working on now. Plans are in the works for a floating vegetable farm to move into the space next to the current Floating Farm. Permit applications are also out for similar dairy farms in Dubai, Singapore and the Dutch cities of Haarlem and Arnhem.

The new ventures will apply lessons learned from the original Rotterdam project. "You need to build a house in order to know how to build a house," Peter says. Some of his key takeaways have been practical, such as those to do with mechanics on how farm materials flow through a waterborne structure. He's also learned a great deal about dealing with bureaucracy and **entrenched** thinking.

The biggest obstacles he sees ahead are not financial or physical, but rather political and administrative. "As a world, we are in such a need to find solutions for the upcoming 30 years," Peter says. **__(E)__** Cities need to have disruptive thinking. Cities need to have disruptive departments. Cities need to have areas where you can say: OK, this is the experimental zone." Because what Peter and his team are pulling off is of a different order than your typical sustainability measures. "We are not innovative," he says. "We are disruptive."

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READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

A) 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 other words, it's a circular system that is self-sustaining – not just ecologically, but economically
2. A team of scientists in Mexico is developing wheat strains that are climate-resilient
3. It's also important to maintain pressure on manufacturers, retailers and associations
4. An urban farm that serves city dwellers also reduces carbon emissions associated with food transportation
5. One of the biggest challenges we come across worldwide is regulations
6. Farmers used to be able to count on certain things being normal, like dates of planting or dates of harvesting
7. The use of pesticides should be avoided if possible and they should only be used in targeted applications

Write your answers here:

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

B) Vocabulary (-1 per wrong or missing answer)

Match the expressions from the article with the definition/synonym that is closest to their meaning in the text. Circle the best option – a, b or c. There is only ONE correct answer per example.

1. In line 1, "to concoct" is closest in meaning to:
 - a) to be unexpectedly faced with
 - b) to create or devise
 - c) to provide funding for

2. In line 11, “onslaught” is closest in meaning to:
- a fierce or vigorous, often destructive attack
 - a state or fact of existing, occurring, or being present
 - a beginning of something, especially something unpleasant
- 3) In line 14, “yield” is closest in meaning to:
- the process of increasing in size or of developing physically
 - the use of something to gain an unfair advantage for oneself
 - the amount produced of an agricultural or industrial product
- 4) In line 40, “mucked” (to muck) is closest in meaning to:
- to fill a container with an adequate amount of food
 - to cause air to enter and circulate freely in a building
 - to remove manure and other dirt from a stable
- 5) In line 54, “entrenched” is closest in meaning to:
- firmly established and difficult or unlikely to change
 - relating to a widely held but oversimplified idea
 - expressing or implying denial, disagreement or refusal

C) True, false or not stated? (-1 per wrong or missing answer)

Match the expressions from the article with the definition/synonym that is closest to their meaning in the text. Circle the best option – a, b or c. There is only ONE correct answer per example.

1) Maas-Rijn-IJssel cows were selected for the project due to their particularly high milk production.	T	F	NS
2) Traditional farming can easily be combined with solar panels, but it results in a poorer harvest.	T	F	NS
3) Peter van Wingerdens found inspiration for his floating farms in the aftermath of a natural catastrophe.	T	F	NS
4) The smooth functioning of Floating Farm ideally includes interaction with local associations.	T	F	NS
5) Permit applications for the construction of floating vegetable farms in Dubai, Singapore and other Dutch cities have been sent out.	T	F	NS

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Task 2: Reading into writing (20 marks)

You are going to read two texts in which the authors give their views on attention spans.

Text 1: Your attention didn't collapse. It was stolen.³

by Johann Hari

When he was nineteen years old, I noticed my godson Adam spent almost all his waking hours alternating blankly between screens. He seemed to be whirring at the speed of Snapchat, and nothing still or serious could gain any traction in his mind. This fracturing seemed to be happening to many of us.

At first, I thought my attention was failing because I wasn't strong enough and because I had been taken over by my phone. I went into a spiral of reproaching myself. I thought the solution was obvious: be more disciplined, and banish your phone. So I went on a digital detox. I hoped that if I stripped everything back for a time, I might start to glimpse the changes we could all make in a more sustainable way.

In my first webless week, I stumbled around in a haze of decompression. Everything radically slowed down. Every few hours, I would feel an unfamiliar sensation gurgling inside me: calm.

Later, I realised this experience taught me about "switch-cost effect". Prof Earl Miller, a neuroscientist at MIT, explained our brain can only produce one or two thoughts in our conscious mind at once. But we have fallen for an enormous delusion. The average teenager now believes they can follow six forms of media at the same time. When neuroscientists studied this, they found that people are juggling. "They're switching and reconfiguring their brain moment-to-moment, task-to-task – [and] that comes with a cost." It means that if you check your texts while trying to work, you aren't only losing the little bursts of time you spend looking at the texts themselves – you are also losing the time it takes to refocus afterwards.

For the first time in a very long time, I was doing one thing at a time. I was living within the limits of what my brain could actually handle. I felt my attention growing and improving with every day, but then experienced an abrupt setback. I realised that to heal my attention, it was not enough to strip out distractions. I had to fill the vacuum left by doing so.

I started to think a lot about the science of flow, the deepest form of attention human beings can offer. From Prof Csikszentmihalyi, who was the first scientist to study flow states, I learned there

³<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2022/jan/02/attention-span-focus-screens-apps-smartphones-social-media> by Johann Hari, 2nd January 2023 (527 words, adapted extract)

are three key factors: first you need to choose *one* goal, second that goal needs to be meaningful to you, and third it helps if what you are doing is at the edge of your abilities.

So every morning, I started to write – a different kind of writing, one that stretched me. Within a few days, I started to flow, and hours of focus would pass without it feeling like a challenge. I had feared my brain was breaking. I cried with relief when I realised that in the right circumstances, its full power could come back.

Some scientists say these worries about attention are a moral panic and that the evidence is shaky. Other scientists say these anxieties are like the early warnings about the climate crisis. I think that given this uncertainty, we can't wait for perfect evidence.

Text 2: Is modern life ruining our powers of concentration?⁴

by Elle Hunt

In *Attention Span*, cognitive psychologist Gloria Mark dismantles common misconceptions about our attention and claims that reality is more nuanced.

Mark has been studying distraction since 2004. Her studies showed that workers shifted their attention, on average, every three minutes or so. When restricted to just computer activity, it was about 30 seconds quicker. With developments in tracking technology, Mark was able to repeat the study with greater precision, finding shifts relatively consistently at just 47 seconds. "Simply put," Mark concludes in her book, "our personal use of technologies affects our ability to pay attention."

But, Mark cautions, it's not a straightforward trade-off. "There are so many things in our culture and society that collude to make us distracted – it's more than just targeted algorithms." In film and TV, for example, shot lengths have been getting pacier over decades, and on social media, we consume and produce content in bite-size chunks, at a frenetic pace.

Further complicating the issue is that we are not equally susceptible. Personality plays a part in how we use the internet. Some people find it easier than others to recover from interruptions, others are innately predisposed towards self-regulation. For some, individual traits coalesce with context to create a perfect storm of distraction. Stress and exhaustion further exacerbate the problem, diminishing our ability to resist temptation.

The many influences Mark identifies on our attention emphasise not only the scale of the challenge, but the limits of zeroing in on any one influence for a potential solution. Distraction isn't a tech problem, or a people problem – it's both, inextricably intertwined. Indeed, one of Mark's most disquieting findings is that we have become so accustomed to being interrupted, we do it to ourselves, without external triggers. It's proof that even if we turn off notifications, we can't escape those internal triggers.

⁴<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/jan/01/is-modern-life-ruining-our-powers-of-concentration> by Elle Hunt, 1st January 2023 (490 words, adapted)

The salve often proposed for fragmented focus is flow, the psychological state of being so engrossed in your work that you lose track of time. But what Mark discovered is that most work nowadays requires analytical thinking that precludes us from getting swept away. In addition, flow depends on a certain level of challenge, whereby we feel pleasurable engaged and extended, making us happy, but also causing low-level stress. "It's a myth that we should be continually focused – it's too stressful," says Mark.

Though mindless digital diversions, like scrolling social media, might seem like exactly the kind of time-wasting that we should be striving to avoid, they actually serve a valuable function. That kind of easy, rote activity is not only enjoyable, it replenishes our cognitive resources, necessary for us to be productive later on.

The fact that flow is not only rare, but draining; and that taking a break to scroll a different screen or play a game on your phone can be restorative is proof of the need for nuance. The moralising over productivity and screen time is unhelpful when it comes to finding solutions.

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 **± 2/3 of your answer**, i.e. **± 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 **± 1/3 of your answer**, i.e. **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.

Indicate your total word count at the end.

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. Overall, online shopping has caused more harm than good. Discuss.
2. In how far can it be argued that the fight for equal rights is far from over?
3. There is an alarming trend of teenagers requiring professional help to deal with mental health issues. How could this be explained and what possible remedies are there?