

vhlcentral

CULTURE À LA LOUPE

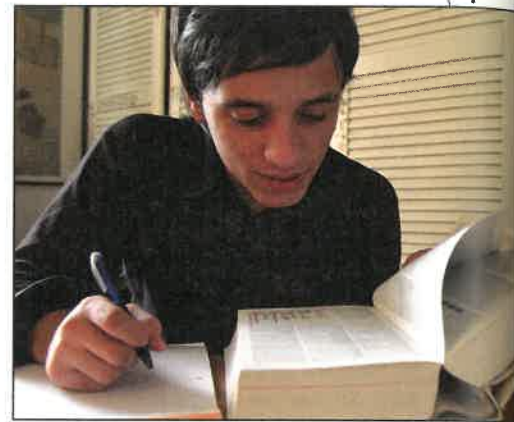
Le bac

The three years of **lycée** culminate in a high stakes exam called the **baccalauréat** or **bac**. Students begin preparing for this exam by the end of **seconde** (10th grade), when they must decide the type of **bac** they will take. This choice determines their coursework during the last two years of **lycée**; for example, a student who plans to take the **bac S** will study mainly physics, chemistry, and math. Most students take **le bac économique et social (ES)**, **le bac littéraire (L)**, or **le bac scientifique (S)**. Others, though, choose to follow a more technical path, for example **le bac sciences et technologies de l'industrie et du développement durable (STI2D)**, **le bac sciences et technologies de la santé et du social (ST2S)**, or **le bac sciences et technologies du management et de la gestion (STMG)**. There is even a **bac technique** for hotel management and music/dance!

The **bac** has both oral and written sections, which are weighted differently according to the type of **bac**. This means that, for example, a bad grade on the math section would lower a

student's grade significantly on a **bac S** but to a lesser degree on a **bac L**. In all cases, the highest possible grade is 20/20. If a student's overall score on the **bac** is below 10/20 (the minimum passing grade) but above 8/20, he/she can take the **rattrapage**, or make-up exam. If the student fails again, then he/she can **redoubler**, or repeat the school year and take the **bac** again.

Students usually go to find out their results with friends and classmates just a few days after they take the exam. This yearly ritual is full of emotion: it's common to see groups of students frantically looking for their results posted on bulletin boards at the **lycée**. Over 80% of students successfully pass the **bac** every year, granting them access to France's higher education system.



Students can pass the bac with:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 18/20 - 20/20 | mention Très bien et félicitations du jury |
| 16/20 - 18/20 | mention Très bien |
| 14/20 - 16/20 | mention Bien |
| 12/20 - 14/20 | mention Assez bien |
| 10/20 - 12/20 | no special mention |

Coup de main

In French, a superscript * following a numeral tells you that it is an ordinal number. It is the equivalent of a th after a numeral in English: 10* (dixième) = 10th.

1 Vrai ou faux? Indicate whether each statement is **vrai** or **faux**. Correct the false statements.

- The **bac** is an exam that students take at the end of **terminale**.
- The **bac** has only oral exams.
- The highest possible grade on the **bac** is 20/20.
- Students decide which **bac** they will take at the beginning of **terminale**.
- Most students take the **bac technique**.
- All the grades of the **bac** are weighted equally.
- A student with an average grade of 14.5 on the **bac** receives his diploma with **mention Bien**.
- A student who fails the **bac** but has an overall grade of 8/20 can take a make-up exam.
- A student who fails the **bac** and the **rattrapage** cannot repeat the year.
- Passing the **bac** enables students to register for college or to apply for the **grandes écoles**.