

FRENCH HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE USA



French High School covers the last three years of secondary education (10th, 11th and 12th grades). The curricula are designed and issued by the French Ministry of National Education. Most subjects are taught in French.

Over the course and at the end of the 11th (première) and 12th (terminale) grades, students sit for a series of extensive national exams, covering all areas of study, which make up the French Baccalauréat. Created in 1808, this diploma possesses two special features : it marks the successful conclusion of secondary studies and opens access to higher education.

Courses taken by students in the 11th and 12th grades are taught at the college level. As a result, both Canadian and American colleges and universities often grant college credit to the French Baccalauréat holders on the basis of their performance on the exams.

Most of the students in French high schools in the United States have followed a bilingual curriculum (which is accredited by the French Ministry of National Education) from the pre-K level. Besides, they all master a third language since this is one of the Baccalauréat requirements. In the United States, because the majority of French Baccalauréat students are bilingual, French High Schools offer more than one level of English in the standard Baccalauréat program.

Internationally-minded bilingual students may also elect a different Baccalauréat specialization:

- **The French Baccalauréat with "Option Internationale" (OIB)** . It is entirely different from the International Baccalaureate (IB), which is unrelated to the French educational system. In the OIB, students take two courses and exams in English: OIB American Literature and Language in lieu of the regular English as a foreign language, and OIB History and OIB Geography courses and exams, which cover both the regular French curriculum and a U.S. History curriculum.
- **The French-American Baccalauréat (FAB)** is the synthesis of France's Baccalauréat and the College Board's **Advanced Placement program**. In collaboration with the College Board, the French Ministry of National Education has devised a special diploma recognizing an excellent mastery of the French language as well as of the English language and American culture. Within the FAB, students take three or four AP courses corresponding to their compulsory elective, in lieu of three corresponding French courses, towards their Baccalauréat.



In sum, the French Baccalauréat from a French international high school in the United States is a diploma that reflects success in a demanding, comprehensive, integrated, internationally-based college preparatory program unique in the U.S. In addition, most students from these high schools simultaneously earn their U.S. high school diploma by meeting any extra state or local requirements. In France, the success rate on the Baccalauréat is an average of 85%. In the U.S. the success rate ranges from 95% to 100%.

Worldwide, over 800.000 students take Baccalauréat exams every year, more than 12,000 working towards the diploma in 250 accredited French high schools in more than 100 countries. In the United States, there are 11 International high schools averaging a passing rate on the Baccalauréat of 98% to 100%. More than 83% of U.S. - based students graduate with honors, of them 35% earn "summa cum laude".

Starting in 2021, in order to better prepare students for their higher education pursuits, and in a spirit close to North American practices, the French Baccalauréat overall grades will include ongoing assessments as well as final examinations.

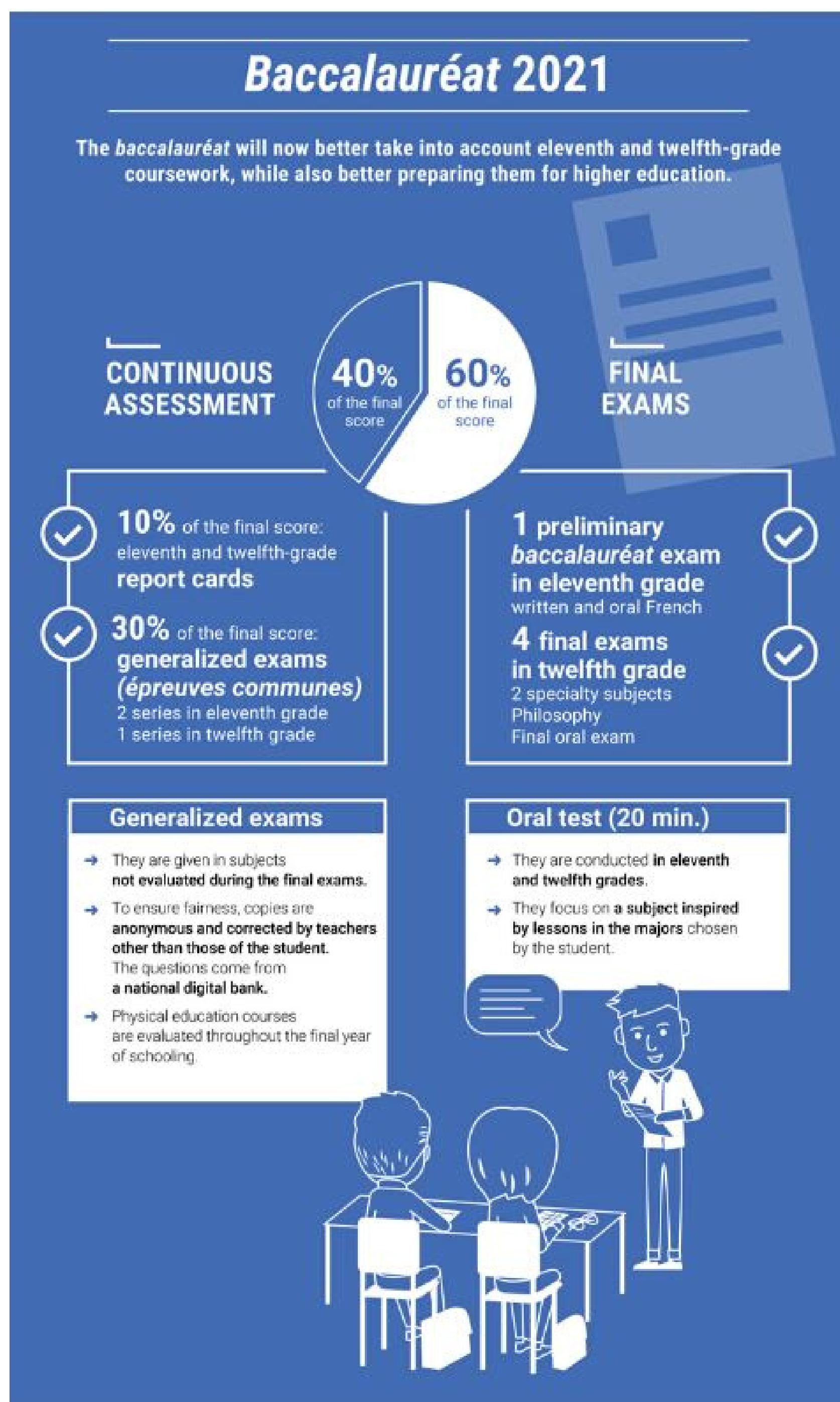
• **continuous formal assessments (le “contrôle continu”):**

In the course of 11th and 12th grades, students will take different formal assessments based on nationally designed subjects, focusing on History and Geography, Foreign languages A and B, Scientific culture, PE and one academic elective. Formal assessments will count towards 30% of the final grade. Other assessments, in the form of tests, are given by the subject teachers for each mandatory course. These tests (reported in the “livret scolaire”) will count towards 10% of the final grade.

• **Final examinations (nationally designed exams):**

At the end of 11th grade, students take a French language and literature final exam in June, as the first part of the Baccalauréat. They are tested on their written skills and on an oral presentation of a text.

At the end of 12th grade, students take three written exams (Philosophy + two specialty elective they will have studied in 11th and 12th grade) as well as one oral examination about a personal project related to a specialty elective. Final exams count 60% towards the final grade.



GRADING IN THE FRENCH BACCALAURÉAT

It is important to point out a very significant conceptual difference in terms of grades between the French and U.S. educational systems. The French grading scale in secondary education is strictly numerical and ranges from 0 to 20 out of a maximum of 20. It would be inaccurate to merely multiply a French grade by a factor of 5 to find its American percentage equivalent. A score of 20 out of 20 means perfection, therefore such a grade is very unusual and almost unimaginable in certain subjects such as Literature or Philosophy. Written examinations call for essay responses and problem solving and never on multiple choice answers. The elegance, form, reasoning ability and written expression in all subjects are also graded.

Letter Grades	Numeric Grades
A+	16-20
A	14-15.9
A-	13-13.9
B+	12-12.9
B	11-11.9
B-	10-10.9
C	8-9.9

Numeric Grades	Honors
16-20	Summa Cum Laude
14-15.9	Magna Cum Laude
12-13.9	Cum Laude
10-11.9	Passing without honors
8-9.9	Students earning these scores may take a second round of evaluation