

Aborder le dossier de synthèse

Rédiger une synthèse implique une prise de recul par rapport au dossier : il faut démontrer au jury que vous avez compris les éléments essentiels du dossier tout en maintenant constamment un regard global sur ce dernier. Mais la longueur des dossiers et la relative difficulté des sujets abordés sont là pour mettre au défi les candidats qui devront tout faire pour ne pas perdre de temps le jour du concours. Faut-il tout lire d'une traite ? Que regarder en premier lieu ? Faut-il prendre des notes immédiatement ? Quand et comment baliser le dossier, le surligner, l'annoter ? Une des clés pour gagner du temps est **d'ordonner son premier examen du dossier**.

I. Première étape : repérer les titres et sources de chaque document, sans s'attarder sur aucun d'entre eux

→ Temps suggéré le jour de l'épreuve :

3'(pour une épreuve de 3h type e3a)

5'(pour une épreuve de 4h type Centrale)

Le but de ce premier survol est de **définir le thème général** du dossier. Vous devez être capable d'expliquer clairement à quoi renvoie le dossier dans son ensemble. Il peut s'agir d'un dossier sur la crise financière, les politiques anti-discriminations, la faim dans le monde, ou tout autre chose. Cette étape dans votre plongée du dossier doit vous permettre immédiatement de **prendre de la hauteur** par rapport à ce dernier et d'être en mesure de relier chaque détail que vous tirerez plus tard de votre lecture suivie à ce plan général qu'est le thème global du dossier. Bien identifier la nature des documents est essentiel : une vignette satirique n'a pas la même portée qu'un nuage de points publié par un ministère, de même qu'un long article de fond peut au final être moins riche qu'un bref éditorial, fort de sous-entendus.

EXERCICE : lisez les listes de documents ci-après et déterminez le thème général du dossier, uniquement à partir de ces indications paratextuelles

Dossier 1



La synthèse

Doc. A: Charles DARWIN, *The Origin of Species*, chapter III “Struggle for Existence”, 1859

Doc. B: diagram: “Various measurements of Global Temperature”, 2010

Doc. C: “Focus on consumer self-interest to win today’s green customer”, *The Guardian*, September 2011

Doc. D: photograph: “I don’t believe in global warming”

Dossier 2

Doc. A: “Cities on the Ocean”, *The Economist*, December 3, 2011

Doc. B: M. N. ROTHBARD, *For a New Liberty, The Libertarian Manifesto*, Revised Edition, [1973] 2002

Doc. C: the Seasteading Institute online, <http://seasteading.org/about-seasteading/introduction>

Doc. D: online presentation of *Bioshock*, a videogame about an underwater city, <http://bioshock.wikia.com/wiki/BioShock>

Dossier 3

Doc. A: “IBM produces first ‘brain chips’”, BBC News, August 18, 2011

Doc. B: diagram: Moore’s Law

Doc. C: “2045: The Year Man Becomes Immortal”, Time Magazine, February 11, 2011

Doc. D: still image from Terminator, *The Sarah Connor Chronicles*, season 2, episode 22 “Born to run”

Doc. E: “Cylons as persons” in J. T. EBERL (ed.), *Battlestar Galactica and Philosophy, Knowledge begins out there*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2008
Réponses : dossier 1 The issue at stake has to do with the environment. Global warming is the object of each document/dossier 2 The dossier deals with offshore cities and how they may allow for new utopias to rise. It may be about the possibility to improve society/dossier 3 The matter revolves around technological progress and machines that might one day be able to think.

II. Deuxième étape : examiner les documents (presque) sans texte – cartoons,



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photographies, statistiques

→ Temps suggéré le jour de l'épreuve :

7'(pour une épreuve de 3h type e3a)

10'(pour une épreuve de 4h type Centrale)

Une fois le thème global défini, penchez-vous sur les documents de type iconographiques ou statistiques. Vous devrez tirer de ces derniers l'essentiel, c'est-à-dire l'idée générale qu'ils illustrent ainsi que des détails pertinents que vous retrouverez sans doute dans d'autres endroits du dossier.

Distinguez ce qui relève du purement factuel de ce qui relève de l'implicite tout en vous demandant toujours ce qu'il y a à dire de plus général sur le document : sa nature bien sûr, s'agit-il d'un dessin humoristique, d'un graphe, d'un tableau, mais aussi sa tonalité : y a-t-il un élément satirique, une critique plus ou moins explicite, ou au contraire une certaine objectivité, s'il s'agit de chiffres officiels par exemple ? Parfois ce n'est pas tel chiffre ou tel message que vous retrouverez ailleurs dans le dossier, mais un ton, un biais, une manière de présenter les choses. Référez-vous au chapitre « Les prérequis : savoir comprendre les textes et les images » pour plus de précisions.

EXERCICE : en vous aidant des ressources données en annexes, tirez l'information principale des documents statistiques ou iconographiques suivants

A





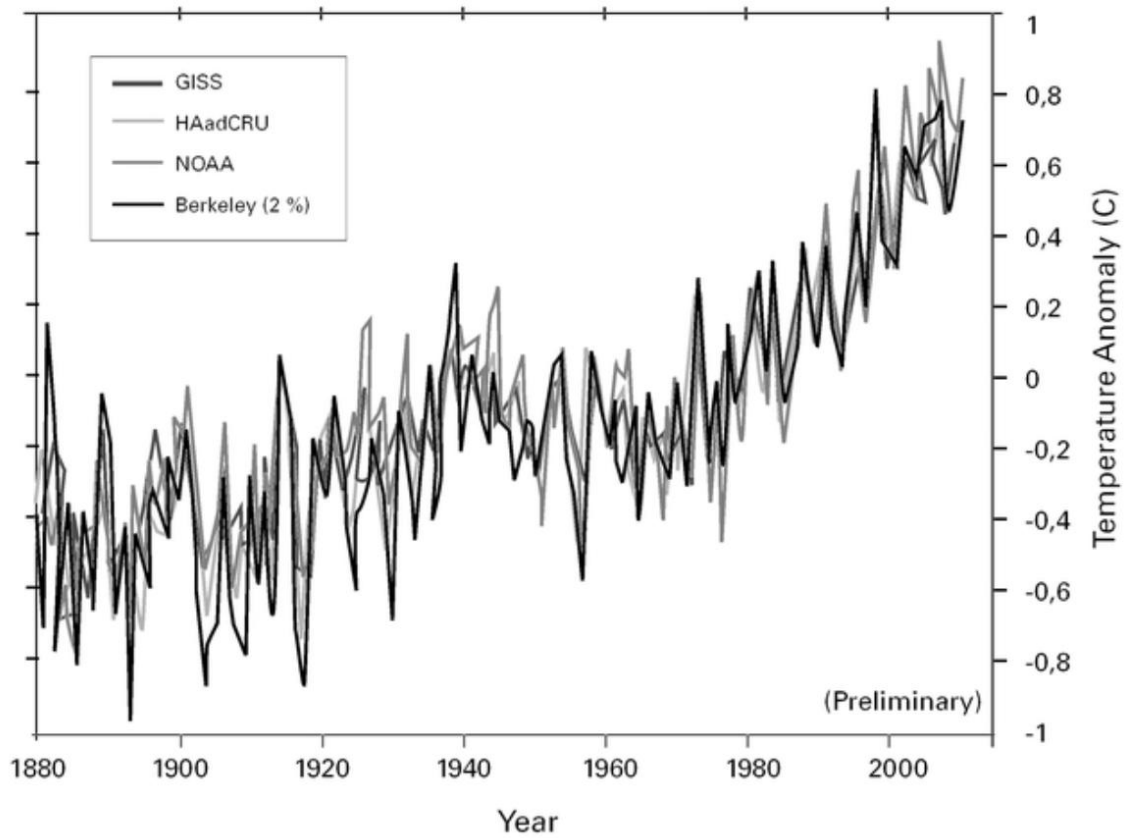
Éléments de réponse :

Synthetic answer: The graffiti denounces the political hypocrisy of thinking global warming may be denied;

Analytic answer: The reference to the global warming in this graffiti is made even more striking with its clever placement just above the water. The very words "global warming" are partly immersed, a situation that refers literally to the issue of the Earth's ice caps currently melting. Ironically, the statement refutes the environmental problem.

B

Land Temperature Average



Éléments de réponse :

Synthetic answer: The graph demonstrates the reality of global warming;

Analytic answer: The variations reflect the steady rise of global temperatures over the 20th century. The results of several studies are superimposed to show that scientific measures and conclusions do converge.

C





Éléments de réponse :

Synthetic answer: The cartoon draws a parallel between the evolution of techniques and the actual regression of man;

Analytic answer: In imitating the iconic drawing of the evolution of Man, but adding the evolution of communication tools to it, the cartoonist denounces the way technology actually compromises people's faculties and awareness.

III. Troisième étape : lire le(s) article(s)

→ Temps suggéré le jour de l'épreuve :

20'(pour une épreuve de 3h type e3a)

30'(pour une épreuve de 4h type Centrale)

Votre première incursion dans le dossier, centrée sur le paratexte et le document iconographique doit déjà vous laisser entrevoir la problématique d'ensemble, le liant du dossier. Cette impression préliminaire va vous être très précieuse puisqu'elle va vous permettre de lire plus efficacement les documents plus longs qui constituent le dossier. Ces derniers seront plutôt des articles de presse, mais peuvent aussi être des essais, des extraits de roman, des manifestes politiques, voire des poèmes. Aucun type de document n'est exclu dans cette épreuve.



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Il est conseillé de lire une première fois sans prendre aucune note et sans annoter non plus. Au terme de cette première lecture, notez au brouillon, sous forme de mots-clés ou de brèves phrases ce dont vous vous souvenez. Repérez grâce à ces notes ce qui vous semble être essentiel et laissez de côté les exemples trop précis. Lisez ensuite le texte une seconde fois et utilisez des couleurs pour mettre en relief les mots-clés dans l'article. Mettez néanmoins le moins d'annotations possibles, de sorte de conserver un regard englobant sur le texte et le dossier. Vous ne devez pas vous perdre en détails mais acquérir un recul critique vis-à-vis du dossier. Profitez de cette seconde lecture pour vous demander concrètement ce qu'il convient ou pas de mettre en valeur, et veillez à en surligner le moins possible, seulement l'essentiel. Vous pouvez également, plutôt que de barbouiller de larges passages, inscrire une accolade en marge du texte et y associer un mot-clé qui vous semble bien recouvrir le passage en question.

IV. Construire un tableau synoptique

→ Temps suggéré le jour de l'épreuve :

25'(pour une épreuve de 3h type e3a)

45'(pour une épreuve de 4h type Centrale)

À l'issue de votre lecture précise du dossier, vous devez compléter un tableau synoptique. Vous pouvez par exemple avoir recours au modèle suivant, comprenant une colonne par document dans lesquelles vous reportez titre, source, puis nature du document telle que vous l'identifiez, et enfin, à l'aide de mots clés et de brèves phrases les idées essentielles.



Problématiser, donner un titre, structurer

Trouver « la problématique » est bien souvent l'étape que les étudiants estiment la plus délicate. Pourtant, rien ne devrait être plus simple : une problématique n'étant que la formulation du questionnement qui sous-tend tel texte ou tel sujet. Dans le cas des dissertations et autres commentaires de texte, il s'agit littéralement de *bâtir* la problématique, d'en trouver les entrées et les articulations. Pour la synthèse en revanche, la tâche est grandement simplifiée : **il s'agit en effet non pas de construire un questionnement, mais bien de le reconnaître**. On pose la question à laquelle semble répondre le dossier de synthèse. On envisage ainsi le dossier comme une réponse, comme une solution. Trouver la problématique c'est donc exprimer le problème qui court dans le document.

Au fond, toute problématique tirée d'un dossier de synthèse sous-entend les questions suivantes : quel est le fil conducteur du dossier ? Quelle réalité interroge-t-il ? Ou encore quel paradoxe met-il en avant ?

I. Formuler la problématique

→ Temps suggéré le jour de l'épreuve :

10'(pour une épreuve de 3h type e3a)

15'(pour une épreuve de 4h type Centrale)

La problématique, c'est :

Une manière de communiquer clairement au lecteur le propos général du dossier ;

Le prisme au travers duquel le dossier est appréhendé : c'est la problématique qui va déterminer quelles informations seront restituées dans la synthèse elle-même. C'est un outil pour déterminer ce qu'il faut **conserver** et **éliminer** dans le dossier.

En somme, pour s'assurer qu'une problématique est adéquate, il convient de vérifier que le questionnement est :

Une phrase qui peut prendre la forme d'une interrogative directe ou indirecte, voire simplement d'une affirmative ;

Un énoncé bref et limpide, immédiatement compréhensible ;



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“Cities on the ocean”, <i>The Economist</i>	<i>The Libertarian Manifesto</i> , Rothbard	Introduction to the Seasteading Institute	Presentation of the <i>Bioshock</i> videogame
Leading article	Political essay	Institutional webpage	Online presentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living on offshore platform is the dream of libertarians. • It is now technically possible. • But there are legal, practical and ideological obstacles. • The Seasteading movement epitomizes a quest for a better world to live in. • Utopian impulse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harsh mistrust of big government. • The government is acting against the individual. • The State is a parasitic body. • Freedom of enterprise. • Absolute right of property. • The real world is dystopian. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floating cities to allow unrestrained progress. • Changing the way people are governed. • Making people freer, giving them more choices. • Utopia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videogame that sets the action in a dystopian underwater city. • The city “Rapture” was originally aimed at realizing utopia. • The plot involves the project of an underwater city in which art and progress would flourish unrestrained.

Le tableau synoptique vous permettra de saisir clairement les grands axes du dossier. Ce dernier devrait, s’il est bien pensé, révéler naturellement la **problématique** du dossier.

Quelques conseils pour compléter efficacement le tableau synoptique :

Repérer les idées traversant le dossier en utilisant un code couleur ;

Rassembler les idées qui tournent autour d’un axe commun ;

Bien distinguer les exemples des idées. Ce n’est pas toujours évident ;

Repérer la hiérarchie des idées. Au sein du dossier, certaines idées peuvent porter sur le même problème, mais à des degrés de précision différents. Il ne faudrait donc pas mettre en avant des détails secondaires sans donner à voir l’essentiel ;

Chercher à voir l’implicite du dossier : l’ironie (qui exprime le contraire de ce qui est explicitement dit), les ellipses (l’absence d’information, ou son omission, peut-être volontaire, est en soi quelque chose à mentionner pouvant éclairer un document).



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Une phrase qui reflète un questionnement, qui manifeste une tension implicite ou explicite entre deux contraires.

La meilleure manière de vérifier l'efficacité d'une problématique est encore de réexaminer le dossier à l'aune de cette dernière. Si le dossier semble réellement constituer une réponse à la problématique, alors le contrat est rempli.

Les mots pour problématiser

Il y a des mots et des amorces de phrases qui inscrivent naturellement les énoncés dans le champ de la problématique. La liste suivante est non exhaustive et a pour but de faciliter la formulation des problématiques. N'oubliez cependant pas que le recours à ces expressions ne suffit pas en soi : c'est la pertinence générale de votre problématique qui sera jugée le jour du concours.

The documents **question** the way crime is dealt with. (To question: *interroger*)

The dossier **raises the issue of** justice and addresses the problem of vandalism. (To raise an issue/problem/question: *soulever un problème*)

To what extent can development be made sustainable? (To what extent: *dans quelle mesure*)

How relevant are repression policies? (How + adjectif *pour interroger le degré d'adéquation d'une qualité avec telle notion*)

Should adoption **be** so strongly regulated?

Is it realistic to want to criminalize abortion?

II. Le titre : objectif et descriptif

→ Temps suggéré le jour de l'épreuve :

10'(pour une épreuve de 3h type e3a)

10'(pour une épreuve de 4h type Centrale)

Le titre est, en soi, la synthèse absolue : en quelques mots, il doit refléter l'ensemble du propos du dossier. À l'épreuve de synthèse, il s'agit de proposer un titre qui soit objectif et descriptif. Il conviendra d'éviter les « titres mots clés », qui seront trop vaguement allusifs, ou les titres à rallonge, souvent obscurs. Un bon titre est une phrase à part entière, qui sous-entend une dynamique et donne un aperçu à la fois sur le dossier proposé et sur la problématique de la synthèse.



EXERCICE : choisissez les titres qui conviendraient à des notes de synthèse de concours

1. The environment and energy issues
2. Offshore floating cities: towards better worlds to live in?
3. Reassessing the role of the British Monarchy
4. Abortion
5. New technologies

Réponse : les titres 2 et 3 semblent convenir. Sans avoir lu le dossier ni même la synthèse, on a déjà une idée de ce dont il retourne. Ni trop courts ni trop longs, ils donnent un aperçu clair et accrocheur du dossier. Les titres 1, 4 et 5 sont trop vagues. Ils ne disent rien d'assez précis pour qu'on perçoive réellement l'enjeu du dossier. Pour les améliorer, il faudrait les étoffer : en ajoutant un verbe et un objet, ou en reformulant sous forme de proposition complète.

III. Élaborer un plan efficace

→ Temps suggéré le jour de l'épreuve :

15'(pour une épreuve de 3h type e3a)

20'(pour une épreuve de 4h type Centrale)

Si les recommandations du jury soulignent que la forme de la synthèse est libre, hâtons-nous de rappeler qu'il ne s'agira pas néanmoins de rédiger au fil de la plume sans avoir établi une stratégie de présentation des différents points de la synthèse. Forme libre, en effet, ne signifie pas « informe ». Par ailleurs, le point du barème « mise en cohérence » est là pour rappeler que tout est dans la rhétorique et la bonne maîtrise de la contrainte d'écriture qu'est la limite de 400 ou 500 mots. Les candidats auront tôt fait de s'apercevoir que la simple lecture du dossier et la rédaction d'une synthèse d'une demi-page est loin de prendre la totalité de la durée impartie pour l'épreuve. Pour rappel, le jury insiste sur la nécessité d'éviter l'écueil majeur que serait une succession de résumés de chaque document. Concevoir une synthèse intelligente, élégante, bien problématisée et bien pensée n'aura donc pas trop de trois ou quatre heures pour être réalisée.

La planification de la synthèse est cruciale. Il existe plusieurs manières de construire un plan, en fonction de la richesse du dossier proposé, de son contenu, de l'homogénéité ou de l'hétérogénéité des informations comprises par ce dernier. Il n'y a donc pas de *bon* plan, mais



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des plans possibles plus ou moins adaptés. En voici quelques-uns.

1. Plan thématique

Aspects historiques/sociaux/idéologiques (ou autres)

2. Plans dits formels

Cause/conséquence/solution

Avantages/inconvénients

Définition/cause/solution

Définition/cause/critique

Les organisations de type thématique ou formelle conviennent bien à des dossiers portant sur un unique problème bien identifié mais s'étalant sur plusieurs plans ou ayant diverses phases. Attention donc à ne pas les utiliser par défaut, car il peut faire passer à côté d'éléments cruciaux.

3. Plan dialectique

Thèse/antithèse/synthèse

Le plan dialectique est le plus connu des étudiants mais aussi le plus mal maîtrisé. Rappelons qu'il s'agit avant tout d'une méthode de pensée. Ce plan doit reposer sur une authentique contradiction et non sur une opposition de termes simple et factice. Il sert à **convaincre** et de ce fait convient moins souvent (mais le peut néanmoins, pour certains dossiers) à l'esprit de l'épreuve de synthèse, qui cherche à prendre un point de vue général et objectif sur un problème.

4. Plan notionnel

Le factuel/le structurel/l'implicite

Ce plan, qui peut être difficile à bien maîtriser et qui nécessite donc un certain entraînement, est très utile car il se prête bien à un grand nombre de dossiers de synthèses. Il procède par lectures successives du dossier, chaque partie reflétant un niveau d'interprétation.

La première partie fait état des aspects pratiques (techniques ou légaux par exemple) que l'on comprend immédiatement dès la prise de connaissance avec le dossier ;

La deuxième partie rend ensuite compte d'une seconde lecture, moins littérale, qui s'attarde sur ce qui relève des qualités structurelles du problème abordé par le dossier : les contraintes sociales ou idéologiques, les forces ou obstacles structurels par exemple ;



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La troisième et dernière partie sert à explorer les dimensions les plus implicites du dossier, ce que ce dernier ne dit pas mais laisse entendre : l'ironie (qui consiste à exprimer autre chose que ce qui est effectivement énoncé), la subversion ou la contestation implicite, ou encore la satire.

Consigne essentielle : chaque partie doit évoquer tous les documents du dossier. Il ne s'agirait donc pas de ne parler que d'un ou deux documents dans chaque partie du plan. Les axes du plan notionnel doivent chacun traverser tout le dossier.

Veillez par ailleurs à ne pas plaquer sur de nouveaux textes des plans d'autres commentaires vus en cours ou ailleurs : cela ne fonctionne jamais. Le jury évalue votre capacité à réagir à des dossiers particuliers, à les expliquer de manière personnelle et sensée.



Rédiger la synthèse

La rédaction de la synthèse n'est, en somme, que la moitié du travail, le moment crucial étant d'abord la bonne prise de connaissance du dossier et le dégagement de ses lignes de force. On ne peut concevoir de commencer à écrire que lorsque cette première étape est complètement achevée. Le travail d'écriture de la synthèse elle-même est cependant à voir comme un travail patient de construction. Chaque moment de la synthèse devant être composé et poli avec soin, il conviendra d'être attentif à un certain nombre de détails livrés ci-après.

I. Introduire et conclure : passages obligés

1. L'introduction

→ Temps suggéré le jour de l'épreuve :

20'(pour une épreuve de 3h type e3a)

25'(pour une épreuve de 4h type Centrale)

L'introduction est le moment critique de tout devoir structuré : bien pensée et clairement écrite, elle montre que le candidat a pris du recul par rapport au dossier et a écrit sa synthèse en toute connaissance de cause.

L'introduction à une note de synthèse devrait donc comprendre :

Une phrase d'amorce pour poser le thème général du dossier et anticiper sur la problématique ;

La problématique ;

Une présentation des documents qui confirme la pertinence de la problématique.

Quelques recommandations :

- *Pour la phrase d'amorce*

Évitez les platitudes du type "*Mankind has always...*" ou "*Over the millenia...*", qui en plus de ne rien dire d'intelligent sont une pure perte d'espace.

Préférez un exemple concret ou une illustration du thème général du dossier qui vous



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permette d'amener habilement la problématique.

- *Pour la problématique*

Évitez de lancer une question au style direct de manière abrupte. Souvent le recours à une interrogative indirecte est plus adroit (voir dossiers corrigés et chapitre sur la problématique).

Assurez-vous que l'annonce de la problématique soit harmonieuse et qu'elle s'inscrive dans une logique de transition entre l'amorce et la présentation des documents.

- *Pour la présentation des documents*

Ne vous contentez pas de recopier tels quels titres et sources des documents. Pur gaspillage d'espace, c'est de plus sans aucun intérêt intellectuel ou rhétorique.

Choisissez en revanche, selon le propos, de mettre en avant ou le titre ou la source ou même la nature de chaque document et accompagnez cela d'une phrase montrant en quoi tel document illustre le questionnement de la problématique (voir dossiers corrigés pour des exemples).

EXERCICE : comparez et jugez les deux présentations de documents suivantes

(1) "Document A, 'A federal report on Women' is a set of statistics; document B is the *Declaration of Sentiment*; Document C is about Wonderwoman and document D is a picture from *Desperate Housewives*."

(2) "A federal report that reveals the persistence of sharp inequalities (doc. A) issued by the US government in 2010 sheds light on discriminations that were already stated as far back as in 1848 in the *Declaration of Sentiments* (doc. B). The question of the very representation of women in fiction, such as comics (doc. C) and contemporary televised series such as *Desperate Housewives* (doc. D) manifests as vividly the issue."

Réponse : la présentation (1) est plus courte mais expéditive : en référant indifféremment aux documents par leur nature ou leur thème, elle ne permet pas de bien cerner l'enjeu du dossier, générant une impression de désordre. La présentation (2) explique chaque fois un enjeu et mentionne les documents comme autant d'illustrations : on découvre alors la logique du dossier.

2. La conclusion

→ Temps suggéré le jour de l'épreuve :



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10' (pour une épreuve de 3h type e3a)

15' (pour une épreuve de 4h type Centrale)

La conclusion est le point final de la synthèse et tâche de refléter la réponse générale que le dossier apporte à la problématique. Pour conclure efficacement, contentez-vous dès lors de répondre directement à la question posée en problématique.

Vous aurez normalement déjà tout dit dans le développement, inutile donc de refaire une synthèse de la synthèse. Quant aux « ouvertures », ces dernières sont souvent hasardeuses, et ne correspondent pas aux attentes du jury (elles pourraient introduire une note subjective, chose proscrite), inutile donc de s'y essayer.

II. Rédaction du développement

→ Temps suggéré le jour de l'épreuve :

45' (pour une épreuve de 3h type e3a)

50' (pour une épreuve de 4h type Centrale)

1. « Restitution des idées » : Tout dire... sans trop dire : stratégies d'écriture

La « restitution des idées », item majeur du barème, n'est « bonne » que s'il y a parfaite cohérence entre les éléments restitués dans la synthèse et la problématique mise en avant par cette dernière. C'est en effet elle qui définit les informations à considérer comme importantes dans la rédaction finale. Cependant, il ne faut pas perdre de vue la limite fixée entre 400 et 500 mots : une certaine intelligence dans l'écriture est à donc à travailler, de sorte d'arriver à tout dire sans trop dire.

Quelques suggestions

Vérifiez bien, d'abord, votre problématique. Est-elle cohérente et suffisamment précise ? Permettra-t-elle d'ouvrir une fenêtre sur l'ensemble des éléments du dossier ?

Assurez-vous que chaque phrase que vous écrivez, chaque exemple que vous reprenez, soient autant de réponses à la problématique. **Tout doit rappeler et renvoyer à la problématique.** Si ce n'était pas le cas, c'est qu'il y a quelques éléments à reprendre dans votre approche. N'oubliez pas que vous avez au moins 3 heures, voire 4. Ce n'est pas pour rien.

Faites se suivre, dans le développement, arguments et exemples. Souvent les candidats confondent les deux ou bien ne donnent que l'un ou que l'autre, de manière déséquilibrée. C'est un écueil rhétorique fatal dans l'exercice de la synthèse.



La synthèse

Utilisez à bon escient les mots de liaison : seulement quand c'est nécessaire, et surtout seulement ceux qui disent quelque chose d'utile. **Bannissez les "so" superflus et autres "thus" futiles.** Notez que souvent, les liens entre les idées ne sont jamais mieux assurés que par la clarté des idées et le bon ordre de présentation de ces dernières...

Tâchez de renvoyer à plusieurs documents à la fois tout en formulant une seule idée, dans la mesure où la référence aux documents peut-être en soi un discours, plutôt qu'une simple citation des sources.

Soupez attentivement le degré de précision de votre propos. Évitez les trop larges généralités autant que les détails insignifiants. Il faudra parfois mettre en avant une figure importante ou un chiffre exact, mais dans l'ensemble, c'est le ton **d'une juste approximation** qui doit dominer votre synthèse.

Et enfin, pour **référer aux documents**, évitez de renvoyer systématiquement et lourdement à chacun de ces derniers, ce qui serait un gaspillage d'espace : on doit comprendre en vous lisant que vous renvoyez à tel article ou telle statistique sans pour autant avoir besoin de faire un travail de bibliothécaire. Le but de la synthèse est de proposer un discours sur un sujet dont on vous a donné les éléments à remettre. Il ne s'agit pas d'un travail fastidieux de référencement. **Il semble en effet assez peu pertinent de renvoyer aux documents, au sein de la synthèse, par leur lettre ou leur chiffre.** Souvenez-vous que la consigne à Centrale stipule explicitement : « **L'ordre dans lequel se présentent les documents est aléatoire.** » En écrivant "in document B, the journalist..." ou encore "as expressed by the cartoonist in the third document", on établit une forme de hiérarchie entre les documents qui trahira pour sûr le propos du dossier. De plus on ne renseigne nullement le lecteur sur le sens du dossier, tout en gaspillant un précieux volume de mots.

Mieux vaut dès lors renvoyer aux documents plus habilement :

Si leur auteur est illustre, par le nom de ce dernier : "Oscar Wilde epitomizes the issue in a pun...", "Tony Blair's speech testifies to..." ;

Ou, dans la majorité des cas, par leur nature : "the statistics issued by the US government reveal...", "the column sharply criticizes the initiative..." ;

Utiliser la présentation des documents, dans l'introduction, pour asseoir et justifier la problématique tout en disant l'essentiel sur chaque document.

2. « Mise en cohérence » : articuler les idées

Que signifie « mettre en cohérence » les idées ? Il s'agit, en somme, de s'assurer que le propos est logique, que les causes et les conséquences sont clairement établies comme telles, que le



La synthèse

propos se déroule comme une démonstration, en procédant par argument puis illustration, en allant du simple au complexe, de l'évident à l'implicite. Pour rappel, rien ne sert d'énumérer un résumé de chaque document, c'est bien un regard transversal sur l'ensemble du dossier qui doit être au centre de la synthèse.

La tâche du rédacteur de la synthèse n'est donc pas limitée à la simple formulation : il s'agit également de concevoir la bonne distribution de l'information. Pour cela, il faut réfléchir posément à la hiérarchie des informations dans le dossier de synthèse, et veiller à ce que la rédaction finale reflète finement cette hiérarchie.

Pour réussir la « mise en cohérence », assurez-vous de :

Rédiger clairement, en vous relisant pour vous assurer que les phrases ont du sens et qu'arguments et exemples sont harmonieusement répartis ;

D'organiser votre synthèse de telle sorte que les idées s'enchaînent logiquement. Mettez en avant les idées fortes en adoptant un style concis. Illustrez chaque idée par des exemples tirés des documents du dossier ;

Bien évaluer l'importance des idées du dossier et à ne pas accorder trop d'espace à des détails secondaires dans la synthèse ;

Ne pas abuser des mots de liaison et autres expressions idiomatiques qui, mal employés, ne font que ternir l'expression et agacer le lecteur.

3. « Qualité de la langue » : de la précision grammaticale à l'élégance

Que les allergiques à l'anglais se rassurent : on peut très bien réussir à l'épreuve de synthèse sans maîtriser tous les détours de la grammaire anglaise. Bien sûr il ne faudra ni omettre de fâcheux -s, ni inventer au hasard mots ou conjugaisons. Un anglais simple et direct peut suffire, à condition que la clarté soit de mise et que la note de synthèse reflète une compréhension précise du dossier. Nous vous aiguillons dans cette section vers différentes annexes du présent ouvrage.

Vous pourrez travailler en amont les points inévitables tels que la valeur des temps, le bon recours au génitif ou encore la syntaxe des interrogatives seul ou en classe, mais un aperçu rapide, dirigez-vous vers **l'annexe grammaticale (#3)**.

Travaillez tout au long de votre préparation des amorces de phrases plus recherchées, élégantes et riches de sens logique, à (re)voir dans **l'annexe "Writing with style" (#2)**.

N'oubliez pas de vous relire en fin d'épreuve pour les ultimes corrections. Pour le faire de manière éclairée, utilisez par exemple **la check-list (annexe #4)** donnée en annexe du présent ouvrage.



La synthèse

4. Gestion du temps : récapitulation de la marche à suivre

Soignez avant tout la langue et la présentation. Demandez-vous si votre synthèse livre un regard objectif et clair sur le dossier.

Suggestion d'organisation du temps de travail le jour de l'épreuve

Épreuve de 3h (type e3a)		
Épreuve de 4h (Centrale)		
Lire		
30'		
45'		
Repérer les titres et sources de chaque document		
3'		
5'		
Examiner les documents type images ou graphes		
7'		
10'		
Lire le(s) article(s)		
20'		
30'		
Reconstruire		
1h		
1h30		
Construire un tableau synoptique		

5. Rédiger la synthèse 53 - 6 of 8



La synthèse

25'		
45'		
Formuler la problématique		
10'		
15'		
Concevoir un titre		
10'		
10'		
Élaborer un plan		
15'		
20'		
Rédiger		
1h15		
1h30		
Rédiger l'introduction		
20'		
25'		
Rédiger la conclusion		
10'		
15'		
Rédiger le développement		
45'		



La synthèse

<i>50'</i>		
Relecture		
15'		
15'		

Les durées en gras sont celles des étapes principales de votre travail, elles-mêmes décomposées en sous-étapes dont les durées sont précisées en italiques.

Important : ces durées ne doivent pas vous faire oublier qu'il va de soi que durant la préparation, en classe et à la maison, il faudra consacrer beaucoup plus de temps à chaque étape : car c'est en forgeant...



La synthèse

forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch – the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

Mary SHELLEY, *Frankenstein, or the modern Prometheus*, Ch. 5, 1818

Document B

Is it O.K. to be a Luddite?

Historically, Luddites flourished in Britain from about 1811 to 1816. They were bands of men, organized, masked, anonymous, whose object was to destroy machinery used mostly in the textile industry. They swore allegiance not to any British king but to their own King Ludd. It isn't clear whether they called themselves Luddites, although they were so termed by both friends and enemies. C. P. Snow's use of the word was clearly polemical, wishing to imply an irrational fear and hatred of science and technology. Luddites had, in this view, come to be imagined as the counter-revolutionaries of that "Industrial Revolution" which their modern versions have "never tried, wanted, or been able to understand". But the Industrial Revolution was not, like the American and French Revolutions of about the same period, a violent struggle with a beginning, middle and end. It was smoother, less conclusive, more like an accelerated passage in a long evolution. [...] In 1779, in a village somewhere in Leicestershire, one Ned Lud broke into a house



La synthèse

and “in a fit of insane rage” destroyed two machines used for knitting hosiery. Word got around. [...] The knitting machines which provoked the first Luddite disturbances had been putting people out of work for well over two centuries. Everybody saw this happening – it became part of daily life. They also saw the machines coming more and more to be the property of men who did not work, only owned and hired. It took no German philosopher, then or later, to point out what this did, had been doing, to wages and jobs. Public feeling about the machines could never have been simple unreasoning horror, but likely something more complex: the love/hate that grows up between humans and machinery – especially when it’s been around for a while – not to mention serious resentment toward at least two multiplications of effect that were seen as unfair and threatening. One was the concentration of capital that each machine represented, and the other was the ability of each machine to put a certain number of humans out of work – to be “worth” that many human souls. [...] By that December, as it happened, Mary Shelley was working on Chapter Four of her novel *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*. If there were such a genre as the Luddite novel, this one, warning of what can happen when technology, and those who practice it, get out of hand, would be the first and among the best. [...] Like their earlier counterparts, 20th century Luddites looked back yearningly to another age – curiously, the same Age of Reason which had forced the first Luddites into nostalgia for the Age of Miracles. But we now live, we are told, in the Computer Age. What is the outlook for Luddite sensibility? Will mainframes attract the same hostile attention as knitting frames once did? I really doubt it. Writers of all descriptions are stampeding to buy word processors. Machines have already become so user-friendly that even the most unreconstructed of Luddites can be charmed into laying down the old sledgehammer and stroking a few keys instead. [...]

Thomas PYNCHON, *The New York Times Book Review*, 28 October 1984, p. 1, 40-41

Document C



La synthèse

intellect?

Tableau de confrontation

Frankenstein		
Luddites		
Moore's Law		
(Gothic) novel		
(Historical) essay		
Diagram		
Creating artificial life is a spectacular scientific achievement.		
The scientist is appalled, disgusted by his creation.		
The passage illustrates how disturbing and dangerous progress can appear to be.		
Progress is seen as causing more harm than good.		
People who believe progress actually damages society call themselves "Luddites".		
The Luddites are scared by the value given to machines, which may be considered to exceed that of a human being.		
The Luddite movement has existed since the Industrial Revolution.		
Is Luddism still relevant in our computer age?		
The fight against the potential threat of progress is questioned.		
The calculation power of computers has been growing exponentially over the past few decades.		
Processors are now a millionth times more efficient than they used to be at the dawn of the democratization of computers.		
The diagram questions the shape of things to come in matters of computers sciences.		



La synthèse

Exemples de problématiques possibles

Is progress always a synonym of improvement?

To what extent may progress lead to actual advancement?

The dossier questions the necessity to seek technical improvement.

The documents at stake epitomize the contradictions of progress.

... or any other way to word the idea that progress is shown as an ambivalent notion.

Exemples de titres possibles

The facts and fate of progress

How far may progress go?

Exemples de plans possibles

Plan antithétique

I. Progress means improvement

II. Progress is potentially dangerous

Plan notionnel

I. What progress achieves

II. The limits of progress

III. The ideological dimension of progress

Le plan antithétique semble le plus accessible et le plus évident. Il a néanmoins l'inconvénient de ne pas vraiment donner l'occasion de parler de la dimension idéologique du progrès.

Suggestion de corrigé

Traitement du sujet selon le plan dit « notionnel ».

The facts and fate of progress

Little did Mary Shelley know, when she wrote *Frankenstein*, that biotechnologies would be one of the most challenging ethical issues of the 21st century. However she, among others in her days, perceived how harmful technical progress might turn out to become, beneficial though it was intended to be. The dossier revolves around the ambivalence of progress: the passage relating Dr Frankenstein being appalled by the creature he has just managed to engineer



La synthèse

illustrates how disturbing scientific breakthroughs may be. By contrast, the Luddite movement which has been more or less actively rebelling against the dangers of progress is seen as less relevant nowadays, in Thomas Pynchon's opinion. The striking evolution of calculation power over the past forty years nonetheless questions the shape of things to come, technologically speaking. To what extent may progress lead to actual advancement? The documents at stake epitomize the contradictions of progress.

Progress can prove spectacular: Pynchon relates how the Industrial Revolution radically transformed people's lives with machines that made workers nearly obsolete. Computers have increased their power million-fold over a few years and are still being improved. Creating life, as Dr Frankenstein does in the eponymous novel, seems more like a fact now than fiction.

However, the dramatic changes that are brought by technological improvement parallel concerns about the limits and dangers of progress. The tragic turn of events in *Frankenstein* mirrors fears and deeply-felt repulsion that too advanced technologies inspire. The Luddites are the real-world counterparts of the Dr Frankenstein who wishes he had never come to achieve technical progress. The diagram somehow implies that, in a near future, computers may become more than what they currently are, which might raise similar concerns.

Ultimately, the dossier implicitly demonstrates that progress is not only about scientific research; it is also about allowing it, making it a reality and a priority. Indeed, Dr Frankenstein immediately questions the relevance of his work and regrets having carried it out. The existence of the Luddites also highlights the political dimension of progress: should technology be allowed to be used if it means impoverishing people and making their lives harder?

To conclude, the dossier may be considered to give a dual vision of progress, both seen as potentially threatening and inevitable.

(377 words)

Remarques sur la langue :

Little did she know: *elle était loin de s'imaginer.*

Structure à retenir : little DO + Sujet + Verbe

How harmful it might become: *la gravité des dommages à venir.*

Structure à retenir : HOW + adjectif + sujet + verbe (pour questionner la mesure d'une qualité)

Beneficial though it was intended to be: *tout bénéfique que cela était censé être.*

Structure à retenir : adjectif + THOUGH + sujet + verbe (pour exprimer une concession)

The dossier revolves around: *le dossier a pour thème central.*



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Vocabulaire : to revolve around: *tourner autour de*.

Dossier II

Document A

To account for, and excuse the tyranny of man, many ingenious arguments have been brought forward to prove, that the two sexes, in the acquirement of virtue, ought to aim at attaining a very different character: or, to speak explicitly, women are not allowed to have sufficient strength of mind to acquire what really deserves the name of virtue. Yet it should seem, allowing them to have souls, that there is but one way appointed by providence to lead MANKIND to either virtue or happiness.

If then women are not a swarm of ephemeron triflers, why should they be kept in ignorance under the specious name of innocence? Men complain, and with reason, of the follies and caprices of our sex, when they do not keenly satirize our headstrong passions and groveling vices. Behold, I should answer, the natural effect of ignorance! The mind will ever be unstable that has only prejudices to rest on, and the current will run with destructive fury when there are no barriers to break its force. Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, OUTWARD obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, every thing else is needless, for at least twenty years of their lives.

Thus Milton describes our first frail mother; though when he tells us that women are formed for softness and sweet attractive grace, I cannot comprehend his meaning, unless, in the true Mahometan strain, he meant to deprive us of souls, and insinuate that we were beings only designed by sweet attractive grace, and docile blind obedience, to gratify the senses of man when he can no longer soar on the wing of contemplation.

How grossly do they insult us, who thus advise us only to render ourselves gentle, domestic brutes! For instance, the winning softness, so warmly, and frequently recommended, that governs by obeying. What childish expressions, and how insignificant is the being – can it be an immortal one? who will condescend to govern by such sinister methods! “Certainly”, says Lord Bacon, “man is of kin to the beasts by his body: and if he be not of kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature!” Men, indeed, appear to me to act in a very unphilosophical manner, when they try to secure the good conduct of women by attempting to keep them always in a state of childhood. Rousseau was more consistent when he wished to stop the progress of reason in both sexes; for if men eat of the tree of knowledge, women will come in for a taste: but, from the



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imperfect cultivation which their understandings now receive, they only attain a knowledge of evil.

Children, I grant, should be innocent; but when the epithet is applied to men, or women, it is but a civil term for weakness. For if it be allowed that women were destined by Providence to acquire human virtues, and by the exercise of their understandings, that stability of character which is the firmest ground to rest our future hopes upon, they must be permitted to turn to the fountain of light, and not forced to shape their course by the twinkling of a mere satellite.

Mary WOLLSTONECRAFT, *A vindication of the rights of woman*, 1792

Document B

Declaration of Sentiments **by Elizabeth Cady Stanton**

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they were accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.



La synthèse

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men – both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right as a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master – the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce, in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given; as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of the women – the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.

He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education – all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in church, as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a



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sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation, – in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

Firmly relying upon the final triumph of the Right and the True, we do this day affix our signatures to this declaration.

Document C

Obama Administration Record for Women and Girls

“I didn’t run for President so that the dreams of our daughters could be deferred or denied. I didn’t run for President to see inequality and injustice persist in our time. I ran for President to put the same rights, the same opportunities, and the same dreams within the reach for our daughters and our sons alike. I ran for President to put the American Dream within the reach of all of our people, no matter what their gender, or race, or faith, or station.”

President Obama, March 8, 2010

Today, more than ever, women are often the breadwinners in many American families. Yet women in our economy and our workforce still aren’t getting a fair shake, earning just 77 cents on every dollar paid to men. Women have been subject to deceptive loan practices, and have paid additional premiums for health insurance coverage. Expanding economic opportunities for women and ending discriminatory practices is critical to building an economy that restores security for middle class families, where hard work and responsibility are rewarded, and where everyone who wants to can find a good job. That’s why President Obama has fought for America’s women by combatting discrimination, increasing access to health care, and supporting women-owned businesses. From creating the White House Council on Women and Girls, which produced the first comprehensive Federal report on the status of American women in almost 50



La synthèse

years, to appointing two women to the Supreme Court and a strong team of women leaders to his Cabinet and White House staff, President Obama has taken concrete steps to ensure that women's voices are heard in government and society. The Obama Administration's record of supporting women and girls includes:

Supporting Women in the Workforce: The Obama Administration has supported women in the workforce by:

Fighting Pay Discrimination: The first piece of legislation President Obama signed into law was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which restored basic protections against pay discrimination. The President continues to advocate for the passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act, which is common sense legislation that gives women the tools they need to fight pay discrimination. And President Obama has convened an Equal Pay Task Force to ensure that existing equal pay laws are fully enforced. Through this Task Force, key agencies in the Federal government are coordinating and enhancing their efforts to protect women from pay discrimination.

Providing Tax Credits For Working Families: In the Recovery Act, the President extended expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for larger families and reduced the marriage penalty, benefiting over 7 million people and making the Child Tax Credit (CTC) available to more low income families, benefiting 14 million children. In December 2010, the President signed the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010. The expansions in the EITC and the CTC that were extended as part of this legislation benefitted an estimated 12 million women – 4 million of them single mothers. [...]

Making Women's Prevention Affordable, Including Contraception: For the first time, the Institute of Medicine has set forth guidelines for women's preventive health care, and, as part of the Affordable Care Act, new insurance plans must cover these services with no deductibles, copayments, or coinsurance [...]. Women typically use contraception for 30 years of their lives, with the average cost of contraception of \$30 to \$50 per month. As of February 2012, due to the Affordable Care Act, 20.4 million women are estimated to have received expanded preventive services coverage in private insurance plans.

Covering Maternity Care: Starting in 2014, many health plans will be required to cover the cost of a pregnancy – a monumental win for women because 68 percent of enrollees in individual market plans today lack such coverage. [...]

Expanding Opportunities for Women-Owned Businesses: The Obama Administration has worked to expand opportunities for women-owned businesses



La synthèse

through increased access to credit and Federal contracting opportunities. [...]

Protecting Women From Violence: Because violence against women remains all too common, the Obama Administration has worked to protect women from violence on college campuses and in their homes [...].

Document D





"Rosie the Riveter", 1943.

Dossier II : commentaires et pistes de correction

6. Dossiers présentés et corrigés 61 - 14 of 27

La synthèse

Remarques préliminaires

This is a rather long dossier that would be treated within 4 hours in exams like Centrale-Supelec.

Tableau de confrontation

Rights of woman	Declaration of sentiments	Obama administration on women	Rosie the Riveter
Pamphlet (1792)	Political manifesto for women's rights (1848)	Presidential speech (2010)	Institutional poster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women should be men's equals. • Women are seen as inferior to men because of nature when it is actually a lack of education that deprives them of equal status. • The whole society is organized so that women are kept in an inferior position. • The biblical and religious discourse on women is fallacious. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are deprived of basic rights such as education and fair remuneration. • Written after the format of the Declaration of Independence (from men! Implicit association between the tyranny of monarchy and patriarchal society). • Women feel unfairly governed by men. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are paid less than men. • Discriminations against women shall be dealt with legally. • Various measures have been taken such as new laws or tax incentives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poster to encourage women to take part in the war effort and work in factories. • The woman pictured is virilised: although she bears very feminine features (make up, narrow wrist and polished nails) she is overly masculine (worker's shirt, determined facial expression, attitude showing off strength and muscles). • The slogan "We can do it" implies "We can be men's equals".

The dossier revolves around women and more precisely the discriminations they suffer from. Feminism is a complex notion that encompasses numerous schools of thought that sometimes contradict each other : make sure your summary strictly sticks to the dossier. Rather disturbingly, the dossier reveals that it took more than 200 years to properly act against women discriminations, as two very early historical documents testify to the vigor of the issue at the dawn of the 19th century. The documents at stake highlight how the differences between men and women tend to be far more ideological than biological.



La synthèse

Exemples de problématiques possibles

Different genders, different treatments?

To what extent may being a man or a woman change the way society deals with people?

The dossier questions the place and status of women in western societies.

Exemple de titre possible

Women, men and ideas, or the pursuit of equality

Exemple de plan possible

Plan notionnel:

I. Inequalities and discriminations

II. Society is structurally discriminative

III. Women are ideological objects

Suggestion de corrigé

Women, men and ideas, or the pursuit of equality

Paradoxically, even though women account for half the global population, they are considered a “minority” in the US. The issue is of course more ideological than numerical: compared to men, women have, for a long time, been disfavoured in many ways. The very existence of a political-philosophical movement named feminism testifies to the long-fought claim for equal rights between men and women. How unfair is the gender divide in the Western world? To what extent may being a man or a woman change the way society deals with people? The documents at hand epitomize the stakes of the debate around women: Obama’s administration’s initiative in favour of women (doc. C) reveals discriminations that were already stated as far back as in 1848 in the *Declaration of Sentiments* (doc. B) or in Mary Wollstonecraft’s pamphlet (doc. A). The strongly ideological overtones of women-related issues are highly perceptible in the portrait of Rosie the Riveter (doc. D) that was meant to encourage women to help during the war effort in the US.

Women have been suffering diverse inequalities for centuries, mainly in terms of education and wages, as stressed by both Mary Wollstonecraft’s pamphlet and the *Declaration of Sentiment*. Obama’s set of measures also reveals less publicized aspects such as the financial aspects of contraception, the issue of childcare and business-related discriminations. The slogan



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of the poster – “We can do it!” – illustrates how women needed, at least in the 1940s, some conviction to be involved in manual tasks, ordinarily reserved to men.

The dossier puts forward the way society itself is built around discriminative values: Wollstonecraft gives ground to the idea that institutions, traditions and religion are all biased so that women are made men’s inferiors. The *Declaration of Sentiments* imitates the style and structure of the Declaration of Independence to further the idea that the whole body of the nation acts as if women naturally depended on men. Nowadays, the very fact that a US president needs to pass laws to make sure women are treated fairly testifies to deeply ingrained discriminative practices. Rosie’s make-up on the poster may also be understood as a way to stress the submission of women through aesthetic imperatives.

The justification of such inequalities has long been anchored in pseudo-biological concerns when actually the whole matter is strictly ideological. Mary Wollstonecraft condemns the way women’s education is neglected and then turned against them to justify their lack of understanding. Simply put, women are often discriminated against for reasons that are created by society itself, as *The Declaration of Sentiments* stresses out too. A national policy of equal treatment for women similarly reveals the purely ideological nature of the issue. The poster’s representation of Rosie rests on a well-mastered use of the codes of the masculine and feminine: some of Rosie’s features are extremely feminine – she wears make-up, has a lean wrist and arm as well as polished nails – while some others are strongly masculine: her worker’s shirt, determined facial expression and attitude showing off strength and muscles. Being a man or a woman is mainly a question of representation.

To conclude, the issue of women discrimination may be seen as far from being solved but it is at least now better understood and taken into account.

(549 words)

Annale Centrale-Supelec 2012

Rédiger en anglais et en 500 mots environ une synthèse des documents proposés. Vous indiquerez avec précision à la fin de votre synthèse le nombre de mots qu’elle comporte. Un écart de 10 % en plus ou en moins sera accepté. Votre travail comportera un titre comptabilisé dans le nombre de mots.

Ce sujet propose les 3 documents suivants :

“Day’s End”, article paru le 27 août 2011 dans le *New York Magazine*, accompagné de deux photographies ;

La critique du livre *The Submission*, parue dans le *International Herald Tribune* du



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17 août 2011 ;

Un extrait du roman *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* de Jonathan Safran Foer, publié en 2005.

L'ordre dans lequel se présentent les documents est aléatoire.

Day's End

The 9/11 decade is now over. The terrorists lost. But who won?

By Franck RICH

Published: August 27, 2011

[...]

Three red-letter days in 2011 have certified the passing of the 9/11 decade as we had known it. The first, of course, was the killing of Osama bin Laden. We demand that our stories have beginnings, middles, and ends. While bin Laden's demise wasn't the final curtain for radical-Islamic terrorism, it was a satisfying resolution of the classic "dead or alive" Western that George W. Bush had dangled so tantalizingly before the nation in 2001, only to let the bad guy get away at Tora Bora. Once bin Laden was gone, he was gone from our politics, too. Terrorism has disappeared as a campaign issue; the old Bush-Cheney fear card can't be found in the playbook of the GOP presidential contenders. Ron Paul's isolationism increasingly seems like his party's mainstream while the neocon orthodoxy of McCain-Palin looks like the cranky fringe.

The other red-letter days were August 5 and 6, with their twin calamities: the downgrading of America by Standard & Poor's and the downing of a Chinook helicopter by the Taliban, making for the single most fatal day for Americans in Afghanistan. Among the fallen in that bloodbath were 17 Navy Seals, some of them members of the same revered team that had vanquished bin Laden (1). Yet their tragic deaths were runners-up in national attention next to our fiscal woes. America may still ostensibly be a country at war with terrorists, but that war is at most a low-grade fever for the vast American majority with no direct connection to the men and women fighting it. The battle consuming our attention and our energies these days is the losing struggle to stay financially afloat. In time, the connection between the ten-year-old war in Afghanistan and our new civil war over America's three-year-old economic crisis may well prove the most consequential historical fact of the hideous decade they bracket.

The hallowed burial grounds of 9/11 were supposed to bequeath us a stronger nation, not a busted one. We were supposed to be left with a finer legacy than Gitmo and the Patriot Act. When we woke up on September 12, we imagined a whole host of civic virtues that might rise from the smoldering ruins. The New Normal promised a new national unity and, of all unlikely



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miracles, bi-partisanship: The still-green president had a near-perfect approval rating for weeks. We would at last cast off our two-decade holiday from history, during which we had mostly ignored a steady barrage of terrorist threats and attacks. We would embrace a selfless wartime patriotism built on the awesome example of those regular Americans who ran to the rescue on that terrifying day of mass death, at the price of their own health and sometimes their lives.

What arrived instead, sadly enough, was another hijacking – of 9/11 by those who exploited it for motives large and petty, both ideological and crassly commercial. The most lethal of these hijackings was the Bush administration’s repurposing of 9/11 for a war against a country that had not attacked us. So devilishly clever was the selling of the Saddam-for-Osama bait-and-switch that almost half the country would come to believe that Iraqis were among the 9/11 hijackers. No less shabby, if far less catastrophic, was the milking of 9/11 for the lesser causes of self-promotion and product placement by those seeking either power or profit. From the Bush-reelection campaign ad with an image of a flag-draped stretcher carrying remains at ground zero to the donning of flag pins by television anchors and pandering politicians, no opportunistic appropriation of 9/11 was too sleazy to be off-limits.

[...]

In retrospect, the most consequential event of the past ten years may not have been 9/11 or the Iraq War but the looting of the American economy by those in power in Washington and on Wall Street. This was happening in plain sight – or so we can now see from a distance. At the time, we were so caught up in Al Qaeda’s external threat to America that we didn’t pay proper attention to the more prosaic threats within.

In such an alternative telling of the decade’s history, the key move Bush made after 9/11 had nothing to do with military strategy or national-security policy. It was instead his considered decision to rule out shared sacrifice as a governing principle for the fight ahead. Sacrifice was high among the unifying ideals that many Americans hoped would emerge from the rubble of ground zero, where so many Good Samaritans had practiced it. But the president scuttled the notion on the first weekend after the attack, telling Americans that it was his “hope” that “they make no sacrifice whatsoever” beyond, perhaps, tolerating enhanced airline security. Few leaders in either party contradicted him. Bush would soon implore us to “get down to Disney World in Florida” and would even lend his mirage to a travel-industry ad promoting tourism. Our marching orders were to go shopping.

From then on, it was a given that any human losses at wartime would be borne by a largely out-of-sight, out-of-mind, underpaid volunteer army and that the expense would be run up on a magic credit card. Even as the rising insurgency in Iraq began to stress American resources to the max in 2003, Bush doubled new Medicare entitlement for

6. Dossiers présentés e...

through a wildly extravagant
is reelection prospects with

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66% through book

6. Dossi

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elderly voters. David Walker, then the comptroller general, called it “the most reckless fiscal year in the history of the republic”. But Americans took the money and ran, and the same partisan voices now screaming about deficits in Washington remained mum as the cascade of red ink soared into the multitrillions.

By portraying Afghanistan and Iraq as utterly cost-free to a credulous public, the Bush administration injected the cancer into the American body politic that threatens it today: If we don't need new taxes to fight two wars, why do we need them for anything? But that's only half the story in this alternative chronicle of the decade's history. Even as the middle class was promised a free ride, those at the top were awarded a free pass – not just with historically low tax rates that compounded America's rampant economic inequality but with lax supervision of their own fiscal misbehavior.

It was only a month after 9/11 that the Enron scandal erupted, kicking off a larger narrative that would persist for the rest of the decade. The Houston energy company was a corporate Ponzi scheme that anticipated the antics at financial institutions, mortgage mills, and credit-rating agencies during the subprime scam. Enron had also been the biggest patron of Bush's political career, and so the president dutifully promised a crackdown, with a new “financial crimes SWAT team” and “tough new criminal penalties for corporate fraud”. But this propaganda campaign was no more reality-based than the one that would promote Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. Once the Enron collapse became old news, federal regulatory agencies and law enforcement were encouraged to go fishing as the housing bubble inflated and banks manufactured toxic paper that would send America and the world into a ruinous dive rivaling bin Laden's cruelest fantasies.

It is that America – the country where rampaging greed usurped the common good in wartime, the country that crashed just as Bush fled the White House – that we live in today. It has little or no resemblance to the generous and heroic America we glimpsed on 9/11 and the days that followed. Our economy and our politics are broken. We remain in hock to jihadist oil producers as well as to China. Our longest war stretches into an infinite horizon. After watching huge expenditures of American blood and treasure install an Iran-allied “democracy” in a still-fratricidal Iraq, Americans have understandably resumed their holiday from history where it left off, turning their backs on the Arab Spring.

Thanks to the killing of the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks and the scattering of Al Qaeda, at least no one can say, ten years later, that the terrorists won. But if there's anything certain about the new decade ahead, it's that sooner or later we will have to address the question of exactly who did.

(1) This article has been corrected to show that 17 Navy Seals were killed by the downing of the Chinook helicopter in Afghanistan, not 22.



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Wrestling with America's post-9/11 traumas

By Michiko KAKUTANI

Published: August 17, 2011

The Submission. By Amy Waldman. 299 pages. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$26; William Heinemann, £12.99.

Ms Waldman, a former reporter for The New York Times, imagines what would happen if a jury in charge of selecting a ground zero-like memorial were to choose, from among the many anonymous submissions, a design that turns out to have been created by a Muslim-American architect.

Though this may sound, in summary, like a contrived, high-concept premise, Ms. Waldman not only captures the political furor and media storm that ensue, but also gives us an intimate, immediate sense of the fallout that these events have on the individuals involved. They include: Mohammad Khan (or “Mo”, as he’s known to family and friends), the architect whose winning design brings him notoriety and condemnation instead of praise; Claire Burwell, a wealthy widow and the families’ representative on the jury, whose early championing of Mo’s design later gives way to nagging doubts; Paul Rubin, the jury’s pragmatic chairman, who’s eager to find a politically viable solution to the whole situation; Sean Gallagher, a protester, whose brother died in the attacks; and Asma Anwar, an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant whose husband was also a victim.

Writing in limber, detailed prose, Ms. Waldman has created a choral novel with a big historical backdrop and pointillist emotional detail, a novel that gives the reader a visceral understanding of how New York City and the country at large reacted to 9/11, and how that terrible day affected some Americans’ attitudes toward Muslims and immigrants.

[...] In these pages she charts how one decision or choice can turn into a billiard ball, ricocheting at unexpected angles and creating chain reactions – especially when it’s been put in play in a tinderbox of ethnic, religious and regional politics, and its impact has been magnified and distorted by the echo chamber of 24/7 news media coverage.

In this case the precipitating event is the jury’s choice of a memorial design referred to as “the Garden”, a rectangular space, divided by perpendicular canals, planted with real trees and steel ones (made from salvaged scraps of the original buildings brought down by the terrorists) and surrounded by a “white perimeter wall”, on whose interior the victims’ names would be listed. Claire lobbies for the Garden, despite objections from other jury members that it is “too beautiful”, too sentimental, too obviously a symbol of healing. The rest of the jury eventually comes around to support her choice, partly because of her impassioned arguments, partly



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because of the emotional authority she embodies as the families' representative.

When word leaks that the winning choice was designed by a Muslim, a nationwide uproar follows, reminiscent of the real-life one last year over plans to build a mosque near ground zero. The jury is dismissed as a bunch of elitist Manhattan artists, oblivious to the nation's feelings. The leader of a group named Save America From Islam calls the garden a "martyrs' paradise" that's been smuggled into the memorial like a Trojan horse. Muslim women are assaulted, their headscarves pulled off in random attacks, and mosques are desecrated around the country.

As for Mo, he suddenly finds himself "analyzed, judged and invented" by strangers. Raised in Alexandria, Virginia, by parents who emigrated from India in 1966, Mo had "barely been to a mosque in his life". His parents "made modernity their religion", and Mo was, "if not an atheist himself, certainly agnostic, which perhaps made him not a Muslim at all".

A graduate of the Yale School of Art and Architecture and a member of a prestigious architectural firm, Mo is a talented yuppie with all-American dreams of success. When the jury waffles on its selection of his design, and it is suggested that he either withdraw or somehow alter it, he grows indignant and increasingly angry. Death threats, pickets and photographers force him to leave his apartment, while denunciations from imams – who accuse him of blasphemy – rain down upon him as well.

The pretentious intellectual squabbles over the choice of the memorial; the cynical attempts by politicians to position themselves on the debate; the tactical maneuverings of special-interest groups; the cascade of inflammatory commentary from pundits on the right and left; and the speculation, lies and rumors fueled by the Internet – all are deftly conjured by Ms. Waldman.

Ms. Waldman tends to favor sympathy over satire when it comes to limning her characters' feelings and motivations, with the notable exception of the fictional New York Post reporter Alyssa Spier, who is portrayed in over-the-top terms as a mercenary tabloid hussy, willing to distort and sensationalize the facts in order to promote her own career. Alyssa asserts that "the problem with Islam is Islam", and goes out of her way to avoid being fair and balanced, including trying to influence Claire's attitude toward Mo.

Although the evolution of Claire's thinking about the memorial may not make that much sense to the reader – this and the cartoony portrait of Alyssa are the novel's two big flaws – Ms. Waldman does an affecting job of showing how people who have lost relatives in the terrorist attack are trying to grapple with their own confusion and conflicting emotions, even as they find themselves caught up in a political conflagration. Indeed, it is Ms. Waldman's ability to depict their grief and anger that lends this novel its extraordinary emotional ballast, and that reminds us how inextricably linked the personal and the political, the private and the public have become in our post-9/11 world.



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The narrator is a nine-year-old boy whose father was killed in the World Trade Center terrorist attack on September 11, 2001.

When Mom tucked me in that night, she could tell that something was on my mind, and asked if I wanted to talk. I did, but not to her, so I said, “No offense, but no.” “Are you sure?” “*Très fatigued*”, I said, waving my hand. “Do you want me to read something to you?” “It’s OK.” “We could go through the *New York Times* for mistakes.” “No, thank you.” “All right”, she said, “all right”. She gave me a kiss and turned off the light, and then, as she was about to go, I said, “Mom?” and she said, “Yes?” and I said, “Do you promise not to bury me when I die?”

She came back over and put her hand on my cheek and said, “You’re not going to die.” I told her, “I am.” She said, “You’re not going to die any time soon. You have a long, long life ahead of you.” I told her, “As you know, I’m extremely brave, but I can’t spend eternity in a small underground place. I just can’t. Do you love me?” “Of course I love you.” “Then put me in one of those mausoleum-thingsies.” “A mausoleum?” “Like I read about.” “Do we have to talk about this?” “Yes.” “Now?” “Yes.” “Why?” “Because what if I die tomorrow?” “You’re not going to die tomorrow.” “Dad didn’t think he was going to die the next day.” “That’s not going to happen to you.” “It wasn’t going to happen to him.” “Oskar.” “I’m sorry, but I just can’t be buried.” “Don’t you want to be with Dad and me?” “Dad isn’t even there!” “Excuse me?” “His body was destroyed.” “Don’t talk like that.” “Talk like what? It’s the truth. I don’t understand why everyone pretends he’s there.” “Take it easy Oskar.” “It’s just an empty box.” “It’s more than an empty box.” “Why would I want to spend eternity next to an empty box?”

Mom said, “His spirit is there”, and that made me *really* angry. I told her, “Dad didn’t have a spirit! He had cells!” “His memory is there.” “His memory is here”, I said pointing at my head.

Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, New York: Penguin, 2005, p. 168.

Annale Centrale 2012 : commentaires et pistes de correction

Remarques préliminaires

The candidates had a full 4 hours to deal with the dossier.

This was the first dossier to be submitted to the candidates to *Centrale-Supelec*, in 2012. It was shorter than announced: three documents, but with nonetheless challenging contents. It would be a mistake just to consider that the dossier revolves around the 9/11 attacks : it actually deals with the reappropriation of the tragedy in the economic, political and ideological matters. Two out of the three documents are or deal with literary works, which is the sign that the point here is to think about how 9/11 survives in memories and how its consequences are dealt with on



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a more ideological, or rather emotional plane.

Tableau de confrontation

An account of the post-9/11 era		
America's post-9/11		
Extremely loud...		
Leading article		
Book review		
Novel		
The consequences of the 9/11 attacks have been reappropriated politically and financially.		
9/11 is seen as a double hijacking: by the terrorists first and then by political reasons.		
The current economic crisis in the US is rooted in the war effort in Afghanistan.		
The US economy was "looted" by the financial world while people's attention was focused on the war against terror.		
Terrorists, but America too, lost the war.		
The Submission is a novel about ideological conflicts and prejudices in post-9/11 America.		
The novel explore the link between the personal experience of loss and grief and the public tragedy of terrorism.		
Emotional and historical realism are at the heart of the novel.		
The memorial is criticized for its beauty, as it fails to mirror the pain caused by the attacks. Healing is denied.		
Political reappropriation of the polemic.		
A personal insight into the consequences of 9/11 attacks.		
Questioning the attitude towards truth : Mistakes in the news, denial of the reality of death and absence.		
Talking about death, accepting it, denying it.		



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Dealing with loss and memory in changing and reinterpreting them.		
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Exemples de problématiques possibles

How has America been dealing with the consequences of the 9/11 attacks?

To what extent have the attacks changed the face of America?

Exemples de titres possibles

Taking stock of the American post-9/11 era

Dealing with the social, economic and ideological consequences of 9/11

Exemple de plan possible

Plan dit « notionnel »

I. 9/11 and its multiple traumatisms

II. Reappropriating the tragedy

III. Processing history

On suivra ici le schéma rhétorique traditionnel factuel/structurel/implicite :

Dans le I, seront évoquées les conséquences immédiates, politiques et matérielles des attentats ;

Dans le II, ce sera la question de la réappropriation politique et idéologique de la guerre contre le terrorisme qui sera développée ;

Et enfin il s'agira de se concentrer sur l'idée de manipulation, de réinterprétation de l'histoire.

N'oubliez pas que d'autres plans sont bien sûr possibles.

Suggestion de corrigé

Traitement du sujet selon le plan dit « notionnel ».

Taking stock of the American post-9/11 era

The 9/11 attacks marked a political and ideological turning point in the US: the dynamic of international relations as well as the perception of what it was to be American changed



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overnight. Tragic events took place in the wake of the attacks, including a very harsh economic crisis somehow linked to them, radically changing the shape of America's ideas. The dossier delves into those matters, raising questions about the way the US has been processing the consequences of the attacks, in deeds as well as in ideas. In other words, to what extent have the attacks changed the face of America? A leading article from *The New York Magazine* documents and traces back the history of the decade that followed 9/11, denouncing the political and economic reappropriations of the tragedy. A book review of the novel *The Submission* by the American journalist and writer Amy Waldman highlights the effects on the public and private side of the ideological turn taken by America after the attacks. The excerpt from the recent novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* stages a bed time discussion between a mother and a little boy who lost his father to 9/11: the passage deals with the way truth and memories may be deformed and twisted.

The 9/11 attacks traumatised America in many ways beyond the loss of thousands of lives. They triggered a war in the Middle East that led to further casualties among Americans and initiated a vicious and cruel hatred that has been targeting Muslims and Islam, as fiction and the news have exemplified. More subtly, Foer's novel translates how the attacks have shockingly brought to fore the devastating experience of loss and injustice in a society that usually denies such things.

Besides, the tragedy of the attacks has proved even deeper than it seemed as it turns out to have been used for financial and political motives. The leading article sharply denounces the intricate and scandalous relations between the war against terror and the financial debacle that has been hurting America ever since. The book review reveals obliquely the terrible prejudices that now shape America's ideas and how they are used politically. In *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, the looming presence of toxic lies and mistakes that bridge the public and private spheres is particularly well illustrated.

Ultimately, the dossier highlights the way the US has processed such tragic events. The victory over terrorists is seen as having turned sour, stained by political and financial scandals and avoidable casualties. The Muslim-American architect in *The Submission* becomes the scapegoat of a whole nation pictured as ideologically confused and torn apart by contradicting motives and interests. The little boy in Foer's novel voices the contradictions of America, which simultaneously points fingers at culprits and denies the reality of loss and death, wishing wounds healed while making sure they stay open.

As a conclusion, the dossier highlights a complex network of conflicting representations all pertaining to 9/11. The face of America definitely remains scarred, or maybe masked by, the multi-layered consequences of a tragedy that turns out to be more ideological than anything else.

(523 words)



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Remarques sur la langue :

a turning point: *un tournant (dans l'histoire)*

deeds: *des actions, des actes*

to turn sour: *tourner au vinaigre*



Annexes

#1 – Vocabulaire : identifier la nature des documents

Documents textuels

• Press articles: *articles de presse*

Leading article: *article de fond*

Factual article: *article factuel*

Editorial: *éditorial*

Column: *chronique*

Review: *critique*

• Papers and studies: *communications scientifiques et études*

Essay: *essai*

Survey: *sondage, étude, enquête*

• Literature: *littérature*

Excerpt, passage: *extrait, passage*

Novel: *roman*

Short story: *nouvelle*

Poetry, poem: *poésie, poème*

Play: *pièce de théâtre*

Tragedy, comedy: *tragédie, comédie*

• Other: *autres*

Speech: *discours*

Diary: *journal (intime, de bord...)*

Ad, advert, advertisement: *publicité*

Map: *carte*

(Auto)biography: *(auto)biographie*

Manifesto: *manifeste*



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Act, legislation: *loi, législation*

Documents iconographiques

Photograph: *photographie*

Still image: *capture d'écran, image tirée d'une vidéo ou d'un film*

Etching: *gravure*

Cartoon: *dessin humoristique*

Poster: *affiche*

Caricature: *caricature*

Drawing: *dessin*

Caption: *légende (d'une image)*

Feature shot: *photo de reportage*

Snapsho: *un instantané*

Comic strip: *vignette de BD*

Documents statistiques



Annexes

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Ad, advert, advertisement: *publicité*

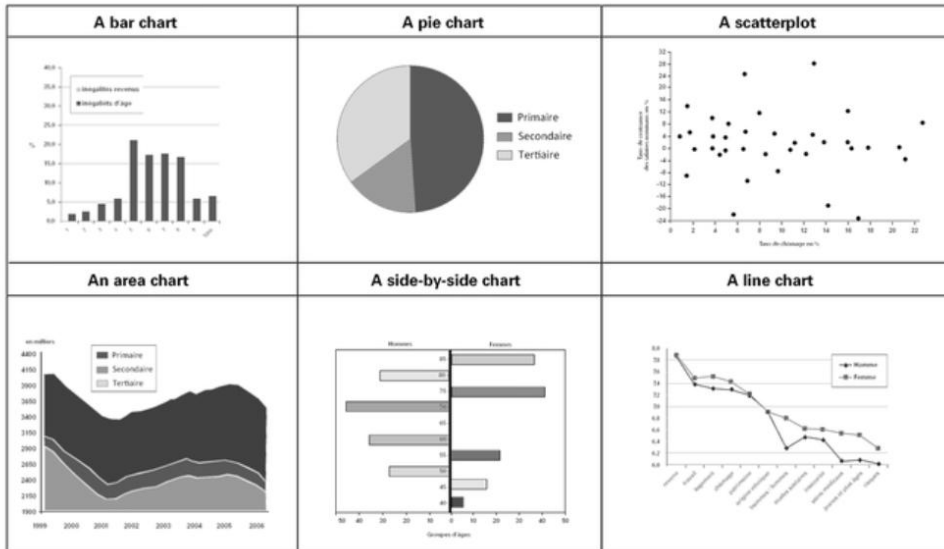
Map: *carte*

(Auto)biography: *(auto)biographie*

Manifesto: *manifeste*



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#2 – Writing with style

- *Arguments*

The issue has given rise to diverging points of view

The controversy is over/about whether or not...

There are a number of pros and cons on the issue

There are two main arguments in favor of/against

- *Supporters and opponents*

Scientists advocate/support that...: *ils soutiennent que...*

Partisans/proponents/advocates of the policy claim...

Opponents/adversaries...

- *Stating opinions*

judges

views

The expert considers the proposal irrelevant since...

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looks upon

regards

• *Points of view and proposals*

From the viewpoint/point of view of X, Y should...

The president's objection lies in...

The proposal would involve/entail/necessitate...

Mr. X urged/encouraged/advised Y to...

• *Consequences*

Such an attitude may give rise to/trigger/lead to/promote/further/favor/foster/create/contribute to/open the door to...

The journalist paints a rather bleak/somber/depressing/discouraging picture of...

X expects the outcome of the talks to be positive/beneficial to...

• *Expressions utiles*

It's **an open question/a debatable question**: there is a lot to discuss and no right answer

For the sake of our children, we should pollute less.

For safety's sake, please drive carefully: *Par égard pour...*

The newspapers only **pay lip service** to the cause of... *Faire semblant de, adhérer du bout des lèvres*

There are many brilliant people in the **political circles, political milieu**.

• *Significance*

The current tendency is to...

People tend to think in terms of...

Today's preoccupation with/attitude towards...

• *Comparison and contrast*

We can **compare** the situation in Germany with that in France, where...

We can **draw an analogy** between the situation in...

The Japanese **approach to** work is quite different from that in France, where...

Nowadays, modern cities are **hardly** different from one country to another.

There is **hardly** any difference between the situation in Britain and that in France: *À peine différent*



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There is quite a contrast/a **stark contrast** between yesterday's notion of the family and today's.

- *Beneficial effects*

Finland's decision to build a nuclear plant may have beneficial effects on the image of nuclear energy

The president's image was **enhanced** by his generous stand on political asylum-seekers

The drug has been proved safe/harmless/reliable, and has no harmful anti-effects.

- *Detrimental effects*

The product can be detrimental/damaging to health

The product can have a damaging effect on...

The new law will accentuate/bring out the existing inequalities of the system

The measure may hinder/get in the way of/undermine/jeopardize/be a disservice to...

The drug proved unsafe/harmful/dangerous/noxious/unreliable...

Does globalization **threaten** national cultures? Are they really **at risk**?

- *Conclure*

As a conclusion, ...

To conclude, ...

In a nutshell, ...

In short, ...

In brief, ...

To sum up, ...

Ultimately, ...

Eventually ,...: *finalement*

#3 – Grammaire : la langue de la synthèse

Les points qui suivent ont pour but d'élucider quelques difficultés généralement rencontrées dans les exercices de rédaction de synthèses. Il faudra bien entendu, dans le cadre d'un travail approfondi sur la langue anglaise, vous référer en parallèle à des grammaires exhaustives recommandées par vos professeurs.

Conventions typographiques



La synthèse

Pensez aux majuscules pour :

Les noms de jours et de mois : *Monday, June...*

Les mots renvoyant à la nationalité : *French cheese, the American dream...*

Troisième personne, singulier ou pluriel

Progress gives people freedom.

People **were** outraged because of the decision. (people + pluriel pour traduire *les gens*. People signifie aussi *peuple*, peoples of Europe, *les peuples d'Europe*.)

Every car**Ø** should be green by 2020. (Every + singulier)

Les articles A/THE/Ø

Remarque 1

The n'est pas *le/la*. Le francophone utilise *the*, la plupart du temps, à mauvais escient s'il se contente de cette approximation.

D'une manière générale, on n'utilise *THE* que lorsque la référence du nom qui suit est clairement identifiée, connue, représentable, voire visible.

The public garden was closed. I found **a** note in my mailbox about it. **Ø** Children will be disappointed. **The** note disappointed me more than I would have expected. **Ø** Disappointment is a synonym of bad mood...

Remarque 2

THE est très proche de *THIS* et *THAT* d'un point de vue morphologique (ces mots ont en commun les lettres *th*), mais aussi du point de vue sémantique, puisque le recours à ces derniers peut presque toujours se résumer à un geste de monstration, un pointage du doigt vers ce que désigne le nom.

Look at **the** mess! *Regarde-moi ce désordre ! (et non le désordre)*

Remarque 3

Lorsque le nom renvoie à une abstraction, *the* doit disparaître : on ne peut se représenter matériellement l'idée désignée par le nom. C'est la raison pour laquelle on dira :

Ø Science is a fascinating subject: la *science*...



La synthèse

Ø Progress improves our lives: le *progrès*...

Ø Work is not always painful: le *travail*...

Remarque 4

L'emploi des articles est donc très motivé par le sens même du nom. Certains noms, en fonction de leur contexte d'emploi peuvent être **dénombrables** ou **indénombrables**. Cela signifie qu'ils peuvent représenter ou non une quantité mesurable.

There are four chairs in the room.

Chair est **dénombrable**, car on peut compter, dénombrer ce à quoi renvoie le nom *chair*.

Courage is a value that is sometimes forgotten.

Courage est **indénombrable**, car ce à quoi renvoie ce nom est abstrait et non quantifiable dans ce contexte. Mais on peut trouver, dans d'autres contextes :

The courage of all the victims shall never be forgotten.

Ici, on parle du courage d'un groupe spécifique d'individus, on délimite la grande abstraction qu'est le courage pour ne la considérer qu'au sein d'un ensemble bien délimité. L'article *the* trouve donc sa justification.

Remarque 5

Certains mots sont cependant intrinsèquement indénombrables, et il faut donc passer par une autre formulation pour dire la même idée dans un mode dénombrable.

Indénombrable	
Dénombrable	
Advice is important when it comes to financial decisions.	
I need a word of advice.	
Evidence shows that he is innocent.	
I have a piece of evidence that will interest you.	
I have no information about that.	

La synthèse

There is a piece of information that will help us.	
Leisure is no longer something I can afford.	
I have a hobby that takes up all my time.	
I heard it on the news.	
This is one exciting piece of news.	
Progress is not always beneficial to all.	
One improvement/advance is not enough.	
A lot of my travel is related to my job.	
This is my first trip to Rome.	
His work drives him crazy.	
He has a very good job.	

Remarque 6

Les noms propres ne prennent jamais d'article, comme :

Les noms de personnes : *Ø Jane, Ø Mark...*

Les noms de lieux : *Ø France, Ø Japan, Ø North America, Ø Mount Everest...*

Les noms de rues et de bâtiments : *Ø Regent Street, Ø Picadilly Circus, Ø Oxford University, Ø Buckingham Palace...*

Les noms de jours et de mois : *I love Ø Fridays, He'll come back in Ø September.*

Les acronymes utilisés comme noms : *Ø Nasa...*

Mais il y a quelques exceptions :

The US/The UK/The Netherlands (+ singulier)

The Atlantic Ocean, The Sahara desert (car la présence d'un nom commun, même sous-entendu, *ocean, desert*, exige l'article défini)

The Ritz, The British Museum... (on met *the* devant les noms d'hôtels, de cinémas, et de musées)



La synthèse

's ≠ of ≠ noms composés

Pour dire l'appartenance ou, plus largement, pour traduire *de*, les francophones ont parfois tendance à abuser tantôt du -'s, tantôt de *of*. Quelques repères :

'S est à utiliser essentiellement quand on a affaire à un **animé humain** explicite ou implicite :

My mother's car has been stolen.

France's decision not to sign the European treaty disappointed many people : on dit ici *France* pour parler de ses habitants et dirigeants.

OF s'emploie quand ce sont d'**inanimés** dont il est question :

The bane of poverty: *le fléau de la pauvreté*.

The rise of temperatures: *la hausse de la température*.

On peut recourir à un **mot composé** quand on souhaite relier deux mots pour exprimer une seule idée :

The information crisis

The global warming

Comparatifs/superlatifs

Pour construire le comparatif :

Adjectifs courts (1 ou 2 syllabes)		
Adjectifs longs (3 + syllabes)		
Supériorité		
Adjectif + -er than		
He's faster than I am.		
More adjectif than		
It's more expensive than a car.		
Égalité		
... as adjectif as...		

La synthèse

The new system is as stable as the previous one.		
Infériorité		
Less adjectif than		
My dog is less smart than hers.		

Pour construire le superlatif :

Adjectifs courts (1 ou 2 syllabes)	
Adjectifs longs (3 + syllabes)	
The adjectif + <i>-est</i> (in/of...)	
She's the smartest engineer of the team.	
The most adjectif (in/of...)	
It's the most expensive car ever.	

Remarques sur l'orthographe :

Si l'adjectif se termine par *-y*, on aura *-ier* au comparatif, *-iest* au superlatif :

Pretty → *Prettier* → *Prettiest*

Si l'adjectif se termine déjà par *-e*, on ne rajoute que *-r* ou *-st* :

Wise → *Wiser* → *Wisest*

Quand l'adjectif est formé d'une seule syllabe et se termine par voyelle-consonne, on redouble la consonne finale :

Big → *Bigger*; *Hot* → *Hotter*; *Sad* → *Sadder*

Souvenez-vous des comparatifs irréguliers :

comparatif		
superlatif		
Good		

La synthèse

better		
best		
Bad		
worse		
worst		
Far		
farther (sens spatial)		
further (sens figuré)		
farthest (sens spatial)		
furthest (sens figuré)		

Pronoms de reprise ONE, ITS et THEY

Utilisez *one* comme pronom personnel quand vous voulez vous placez d'un point de vue très général et impersonnel :

Learning languages is a way of building one's own culture (impersonnel).

Pensez à utiliser le pronom *its* quand l'antécédent est singulier neutre :

Every society has its culture.

Et ne confondez pas la contraction *it's* = *it is* avec le pronom *its*. Il convient par ailleurs de ne pas utiliser les contractions sujet-verbe à l'écrit, et *a fortiori* dans une synthèse.

N'oubliez pas, enfin, que les composés de *every*, *any*, *some* sont repris par *they*, même si l'antécédent est perçu comme étant singulier :

Everybody can do that, can't they?

THAT, WHO, WHICH (ou Ø) ? Pronoms relatifs

Choisir entre WHO et WHICH

WHO si l'antécédent est une personne : *I know a policeman who may help us.*

La synthèse

Dans le cas des animaux domestiques, vus comme des personnes, WHO.

WHICH dans tous les autres cas, à savoir pour tout inanimé, ou nom de chose.

Pour les pays, WHICH si le pays est évoqué comme zone géographique, WHO s'il est évoqué comme puissance politique ou économique (car dans ce cas on se représente des personnes et non un territoire).

Choisir entre THAT et Ø

THAT est le pronom relatif le plus usité car il sert autant pour les choses que pour les gens. C'est un mot qui met en relation deux propositions de manière neutre.

On peut l'omettre (Ø) quand la relation entre principale et subordonnée est absolument évidente et ne nécessite pas plus d'explicitation. C'est notamment le cas des complétives qui suivent les verbes de discours ou de pensée.

I said that/Ø you were an idiot.

I believe that/Ø they can succeed.

This is the movie Ø I talked to you about.

Choisir entre WHICH et THAT

Un choix plus subtil est à faire entre WHICH et THAT. Il faut comprendre que les propositions subordonnées relatives ont deux usages :

Elles peuvent servir à identifier, localiser, déterminer, définir l'antécédent.

On parle parfois de relative déterminative : on utilise alors THAT, voire Ø :

Just wash the plates that are in the sink, will you?

The meal that/Ø you prepared was delicious.

Elles peuvent aussi servir à commenter, apprécier, ajouter une information sur l'antécédent (relative non-déterminative) : on utilise alors WHO/WHICH, le plus souvent précédé d'une virgule :

This is Mr Smith, who writes novels.

Here is a letter from John, whom you met last week.

The player's knee, which was badly injured during the match, will need a major operation.

La synthèse

« Ce que » : *WHAT/WHICH/THAT*

WHAT pour les relatives sans antécédent :

He doesn't understand **what** he reads: *l'antécédent est implicite et non exprim.*

What he reads is boring: *autre cas de relative sans antécédent.*

WHICH quand l'antécédent est une phrase entière, ou le message de la phrase :

He does not understand what he reads, which is annoying: *WHICH* reprend toute la principale.

THAT après *all*, (et plus rarement *any, anything, everything, nothing, whatever*):

He ate all **that** he could.

What does being bilingual mean? Constructions

Veillez tout particulièrement à bien construire vos phrases dans les cas suivants :

• *Interrogatives*

Directes : on inverse les places des sujet et auxiliaires :

Shouldauxiliaire adoptionsujet be so strongly regulated?

Isverbe itsujet realistic to want to criminalize abortion?

Indirectes : on garde le même ordre que dans les affirmatives :

The question whether adoptionsujet shouldauxiliaire be so strongly regulated has to be raised.

I wonder whether itsujet isverbe realistic to want to criminalize abortion.

• *Want*

Quand vous voulez dire que quelqu'un veut que telle autre personne fasse telle chose, la construction est la suivante : *sujet 1 + WANT + Sujet 2 + TO DO...*

We want the war to end.

They said that they wanted their allies to withdraw.

• *V + Ving*

To avoid + *V-ing*

To stop + *V-ing*

Souvenez-vous que certains verbes tels *avoid* et *stop* sont suivis d'une forme en *-ing* :

France avoided commenting upon the conflict.



La synthèse

The soldiers stopped shooting when ordered to.

Have been ou Are (ou have been doing?) – Les méandres du perfect...

Choisir entre présent simple et *present perfect* : les deux conjugaisons sont sources de confusion.

Le passé composé français, morphologiquement identique au *present perfect* anglais, est différent sur le plan du sens :

I **sold** the house : *J'ai vendu la maison.*

He **has been** our doctor for ever : *C'est notre médecin depuis toujours.*

Parfois cependant, un passé composé français pourra se traduire par un *present perfect*, mais ce n'est en aucun cas la règle générale. Quelques précisions s'imposent. Retenez que :

• *Le sens général du présent simple a à voir avec*

L'habitude, la généralité, les caractéristiques :

He reads the paper every Sunday.

Women live longer than men.

The film lasts ninety minutes.

Helen comes from New-York and teaches maths.

La narration d'actions successives, sans commentaire :

Radcliffe passes the ball to Fernandez. He goes forward. He shoots and scores.

It's the story of a man who goes into a pub and orders a glass of water...

• *Le sens général de la structure HAVE + participe passé a à voir avec*

Le lien entre deux moments, qu'il s'agisse du résultat présent d'une action passée ou de continuité temporelle entre un moment passé et un autre moment.

Mum, John **has finished** his homework, can we go now? *Résultat dans le présent.*

I couldn't board the plane because I **had lost** my wallet. *Résultat dans le passé.*

I **have lived** in Paris for ten years. *Continuité temporelle entre passé et présent.*

She **had been** an lawyer for twenty years before becoming a actress. *Continuité temporelle entre passé et moment antérieur.*

Le temps auquel l'auxiliaire have est conjugué est celui du moment repère, tandis que le verbe lexical est au participe passé, signalant que le sens de ce dernier est à replacer dans un moment antérieur au temps de have. Le passé que porte le verbe lexical signale que l'action est antérieure



La synthèse

au moment dans lequel *have* s'inscrit.

The nurse **has administered** the wrong dose to the patient. *Have au présent : le moment repère est le présent. L'action Administered est située, comme l'indique -ed, dans le passé.*

Darwin **had made** a long journey that inspired most of his works. *Have au prétérit : le moment repère est le passé. L'action made est située dans un moment encore antérieur.*

Enfin, il existe encore une forme de type *have been doing* : observez que la seule chose qui est ajoutée est un verbe en *-ing*. L'idée d'un lien passé-présent est donc littéralement accouplée à l'idée de continuité associée à BE + V-*ing*.

World leaders **have been discussing** the matter for months now: *ils n'ont cessé d'en parler depuis des mois.*

The judges **have been listening** to the witnesses over the past three weeks: *ils ont écouté sans interruption depuis trois semaines.*

Avouons pour finir que s'il est souvent plus adéquat d'avoir recours à l'un ou l'autre, la nuance est parfois tenue entre un simple *have been* et un *have been doing*:

I have lived in Paris for ten years.

I have been living in Paris for ten years.

#4 – Grammar checklist

Veillez à relire vos copies plusieurs fois afin de vous assurer qu'aucune des erreurs listées ci-après, stigmatisées par les jurys, ne s'y soit glissée.

Conventions

The US (A) + singulier The US is the land of plenty.

Mots relatifs à la nationalité → MAJUSCULE. An American issue. She used to speak Spanish.

English people → Britons

The doc. was extracted from → an **excerpt**/the document was **taken** from

Gonna/wanna/ain't (registre très familier) → going to, want to, is not/has not

Underline ≠ Highlight.

Orthographe

Historically



La synthèse

Policies: a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations ≠ **Politics:** the activities of the government or people who try to influence it.

Adjectif	
Nom	
strong	
strength	
long	
length	
broad	
breadth	
wide	
width	

Grammaire

Groupe nominal

-S du pluriel ?

sauf pour les ADJECTIFS, TOUJOURS INVARIABLES. *I'm interested in different topics.*

Its = possessif neutre : *the mirror has defects on its surface.*

It's = *it is*

Every + singulier : *everyone is satisfied.*

Much ≠ *Many*.

Much + indénombrables : *They need much more intelligence to achieve their goal.*

Many + dénombrables : *The monster had so many legs!*

Articles *A/THE/Ø* bien employés ?



La synthèse

Powerful, beautiful

Négliger : to neglect

A unit: *une unité* ≠ to unite: *unifier*

Responsible for

To develop. He developed a new way to figure that out.

Information **Ø**: *toujours au singulier !*

Evidence **Ø**: *toujours au singulier ! la ou les preuves*. Evidence revealed his innocence.

To evoke **Ke**: *évoquer*. They evoked the possibility.

Lexique

Actually: *en fait, en réalité*.

≠ **currently**: *en ce moment, actuellement*.

To consider: *it was considered a rational decision*.

Over the past few years: *ces dernières années*.

Responsibility; to be responsible for.

Dependence.

To depend **on** something, someone.

Another: *tout attaché*.

A belief: *une croyance*/To believe: *croire*.

An **inhabitant**: *un habitant*.

To mean: *signifier*.

A means: *un moyen* (avec un – s même au singulier).

To rest: *se reposer* ≠ to remain: *rester, demeurer*.

To criticize, (vb): He's always criticizing whatever I do.

A criticism, (n): *une critique*. He put forward his own criticisms.

A critic, (n): *un critique littéraire, par exemple*.

To institute → to institute, to establish, to impose, to implement.

a political man → a politician.

the economical crisis → the economic crisis.

La synthèse

Temps

Present perfect/prétérit/présent simple ?

Forme BE + Ing employée à bon escient ?

Auxiliaire BE/HAVE/DO/Modal + Base verbale ?

-ING ou -ED ?

Passif : BE + participe passé ?

Autres

WHO versus WHICH : antécédent humain (WHO)/antécédent autre (WHICH) :

The teachers who were older were sometimes very stern.

The house which was down the road was our favourite.

WHO → WHOM quand on sous-entend à *qui* (cas accusatif).

WHO → WHOSE quand on sous-entend *de qui* ou *dont* (cas génitif, idée d'inclusion ou d'appartenance).

Comparatif : MORE + ADJ long ou ADJ court + -ER ?

Superlatif : MOST + ADJ long ou ADJ court + -EST ?

She is more elegant than her sister and funnier too.

He is the most intelligent man I've ever met but he also the smallest.

Syntaxe

Les phrases sont-elles composées d'un sujet, verbe puis complément ?

Les virgules et points sont-ils bien placés ?

Y a-t-il des phrases qui n'ont pas de sens ?

Vérifier l'ordre des mots dans les interrogatives et interrogatives indirectes.

Style

Ne pas utiliser WE pour calquer le « nous de modestie » français : en anglais, il faut dire **I**.

À éviter, car hors de propos dans un discours porté sur l'analyse et la réflexion :

So

La synthèse

It is obvious that

Of course

On THE one hand... On the other hand...

As the text shows it, ... *Comme le montre le texte, ...*

#5 – Évaluer son travail : grille d'autocorrection

Objectifs généraux de l'épreuve de synthèse

S'agit-il d'un exposé objectif des idées présentées par chaque document ?	
La lecture de la synthèse permet-elle au lecteur de se faire sa propre opinion du sujet sans avoir à consulter le dossier original ?	
Y a-t-il des commentaires personnels, même indirects ?	
L'anglais est-il agréable à lire et le propos est-il clair et précis ?	

La méthode est-elle en place ?



La synthèse

Structure de la synthèse	
<i>L'introduction</i>	
La première phrase a-t-elle une portée générale ?	
Permet-elle de se faire une idée claire du thème central du dossier ?	
<i>La problématique</i>	
Y a-t-il une problématique, c'est-à-dire une phrase qui met en avant une contradiction que le dossier s'engage à explorer ?	
La problématique permet-elle de se faire une idée précise des enjeux abordés par le dossier ?	
<i>La présentation des documents</i>	
Donne-t-on pour chaque document son sens général et sa nature ?	
La présentation des documents permet-elle d'avoir un aperçu clair du dossier ?	
Sent-on au travers de la présentation des documents les éléments mis en tension dans la problématique ?	

Éléments du barème

Titre et problématique

Titre	
Y a-t-il un titre ?	
Le titre est-il descriptif et factuel ?	
Le titre donne-t-il un aperçu suffisant des éléments clés du dossier ?	
Problématique	
Y a-t-il une problématique clairement exprimée ?	

La synthèse

La problématique est-elle convaincante ?	
Permet-elle de prendre conscience des enjeux exposés dans le dossier ?	

Restitution des éléments clés

(compléter avec la liste des éléments clés lié au dossier étudié)	
---	--

Mise en cohérence

La synthèse est-elle claire et fluide (++) ? Ou est-elle maladroite voire obscure (-) ?	
Les idées sont-elles amenées de manière claire (+) ? Ou bien sont-elles simplement juxtaposées sans lien entre elles (-) ?	
Y a-t-il des mots de liaisons employés de manière pertinente (+) ? Ou bien sont-ils absents ou hors de propos (-) ?	
Le volume de texte dévolu à chaque idée est-il cohérent avec l'importance de l'idée dans le texte d'origine (+) ? Ou y a-t-il un ou plusieurs points secondaires indûment mis en avant (-) ?	

Langue

Style L'expression est-elle élégante et fluide ? A-t-on plaisir à lire la synthèse ? Ou bien l'expression est-elle maladroite, imprécise voire obscure ?	
Orthographe	
Conventions (ponctuations, abréviations, utilisation des bons acronymes...)	
Lexique (vocabulaire approprié)	
Grammaire (temps bien choisis, articles bien employés, verbes irréguliers connus, conjugaisons correctes, accords des noms au pluriel, mais adjectifs invariables, syntaxe)	