

SESSION 2026

**AGRÉGATION
CONCOURS EXTERNE**

**Section : LANGUES VIVANTES ÉTRANGÈRES
ANGLAIS**

COMPOSITION DE LINGUISTIQUE

Durée : 6 heures

L'usage de tout ouvrage de référence, de tout dictionnaire et de tout matériel électronique (y compris la calculatrice) est rigoureusement interdit.

Il appartient au candidat de vérifier qu'il a reçu un sujet complet et correspondant à l'épreuve à laquelle il se présente.

Si vous repérez ce qui vous semble être une erreur d'énoncé, vous devez le signaler très lisiblement sur votre copie, en proposer la correction et poursuivre l'épreuve en conséquence. De même, si cela vous conduit à formuler une ou plusieurs hypothèses, vous devez la (ou les) mentionner explicitement.

NB : Conformément au principe d'anonymat, votre copie ne doit comporter aucun signe distinctif, tel que nom, signature, origine, etc. Si le travail qui vous est demandé consiste notamment en la rédaction d'un projet ou d'une note, vous devrez impérativement vous abstenir de la signer ou de l'identifier. Le fait de rendre une copie blanche est éliminatoire.

Tournez la page S.V.P.

A

The next morning, before I was out of my dressing gown, a note arrived from Charlene – heavy paper, her three initials embossed on the card and on the envelope. In a lovely hand, blue ink, she invited me to lunch at her villa at eleven.

5 The house was behind a tall stucco wall, crowned with barbed wire and shards of glass, as was ubiquitous, even then. No doubt you remember. The caretaker – I thought of him as elderly, but I suspect he was not – came to the gate when I rang. He led me past a short green lawn that could have been out of suburban Westchester. There was even a whiffle ball on the grass. We crossed a portico. My memory of the house itself grows vague and merges with any number of villas I saw in my brief time there, but I recall most vividly the living room – the salon, Charlene
10 always called it – and the sense of cool retreat after my short cab ride through the hot and clamorous streets.

The three women were gathered around a low cocktail table. I was immediately aware of the scent of their perfumes. Charlene stood as I was ushered in. She wore a square-necked, sleeveless sundress, polished cotton, I believe, form-fitting enough to remind me again of her
15 slim tennis-playing figure. Her shoulders were tan, but also gloriously freckled – I’m not sure I’d noticed just how freckled the day before.

I recognized the lady from McLean – her name was Helen Bickford, her husband was with one of the big construction firms. The other woman, about thirty, was named Roberta. As I recall, her husband was with USIS. Roberta was wide-bottomed and full-faced. Her dark hair
20 in a small bouffant. She wore a white shirtwaist with a thin black pinstripe, less elegant than Charlene’s shift or Helen’s signature (I was to learn) deep-pink knit but casual enough to alleviate my dismay that I had underdressed for the occasion: a simple blue seersucker dress with white flats. There was a sheen of perspiration under Roberta’s makeup. I liked her better for it.

25 Charlene introduced me as Tricia. I had been Patty as a child, Patsy in college, Pat to my colleagues at school, and Miss Riordan to my students. Always Patricia to my father. I had no idea how to correct her politely, so Tricia I became.

I had assumed – for no reason – that I’d be lunching alone with Charlene, and I was both disappointed and impatient to learn this would be yet another occasion for steadying my hand
30 as I reached out to greet the other women, for marshaling my best manners, making nervous small talk, for risking another social faux pas – although the evil infant was nowhere to be seen. No sign of little Rainey, either.

The ladies were drinking Manhattans. I’d never had one, but the man who had guided me into the room now carried a single glass on a small tray and held it before me. I suppose I
35 hesitated. In truth, I would have preferred something cool and bubbly – maybe a tall Coke. Although the amber liquid in the small triangular glass looked elegant. The shadowy cherry.

Of course, Charlene saw my hesitation and rushed to ask, “Would you like something else? Lemonade, perhaps?”

40 I plucked the glass from the tray as if it might be swept out of my reach. “No, this is fine”, I said. “This is lovely.”

I would not have her make me childish again, not for anything.

The conversation I had walked in on – later I would wonder how it was that the other two ladies had arrived so much earlier than I, though I had appeared at the villa gate at precisely eleven – was about the Episcopal church, St. Christopher’s, the church they all attended. A

45 luncheon for a visiting bishop, or some such. What you might now call church lady talk: tea sandwiches were mentioned, tablecloths, the length of the service, the possibility that the ambassador and his wife would attend.

They begged my indulgence as they finished up what they called this bit of business, then directed their full attention to me: How long had I been here, how was I managing, had I learned
50 the art of bartering, did I know the dress shop they all loved, was I being careful about everything I ate and drank?

It was clear that Charlene had already filled them in on my husband (which, it occurs to me only now, might have been the very reason they'd arrived earlier – to be filled in). But still they gave me ample opportunity to tell his story under the guise of telling ours; I think it was Roberta
55 who asked, "And how did you two meet?"

There was no burden in this for me. Not yet married a year, I still sought every opportunity to say Peter's name. Because I was crazy about him. Because my timidity disappeared whenever Peter was the subject of my conversation.

Or should I say whenever Peter was the subject of my praise? Some parallel to the self-obliterating effect of prayer, I suppose.
60

I told them Peter was, like me, a kid from Yonkers – although we hadn't known each other growing up. He was eight years my senior. He'd spent two years in the navy straight out of high school and then, GI bill, went out to the Colorado School of Mines for his engineering degree. He'd returned to the neighborhood to live with his parents while attending Fordham Law.

65 "You don't imagine many boys from Yonkers," Helen said, "going out to the School of Mines."

Founded by another Episcopal bishop, the ladies noted, smartly, worldly-wise.

Smarter than them both, Charlene added, "They give out silver diplomas, don't they? Carved in silver. Such a lovely tradition."

Alice McDermott, *Absolution*. London: Bloomsbury, [2023] 2024, pp.29-32.

TOURNEZ LA PAGE S.V.P.

INFORMATION AUX CANDIDATS

Vous trouverez ci-après les codes nécessaires vous permettant de compléter les rubriques figurant en en-tête de votre copie.

Ces codes doivent être reportés sur chacune des copies que vous remettrez.

Concours	Section/option	Epreuve	Matière
EAE	0422A	103	0333

QUESTIONS

PHONOLOGIE

(Les réponses seront rédigées en anglais)

In this section, candidates are asked to provide phonemic transcriptions (also known as “broad phonetic transcriptions”) of isolated word units or larger extracts from the text attached. Regardless of the origin of the text, they are free to base their transcriptions either on Southern British English or on General American, to the exclusion of any other variety of English. The chosen standard should be explicitly stated from the start, and deviations clearly justified with reference to the text.

Except for the set of authorised alternative symbols, transcriptions are expected to conform to the standards set out in either of the following reference works: J. C. Wells, *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* (3rd edition), Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2008; or P. Roach, J. Setter & J. Esling (eds.), *Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary. Daniel Jones* (18th edition), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Please note that, when applicable, stress is to be indicated in all transcriptions. Unless explicitly required, no mention of intonation patterns is expected in the transcriptions.

QUESTIONS

1. Give a phonemic transcription of the following passage:

My memory of the house itself grows vague and merges with any number of villas I saw in my brief time there, but I recall most vividly the living room [...]. (ll. 8-9)

Use weak forms where appropriate.

2. Transcribe the following words phonemically: *lovely* (l. 2), *women* (l. 12), *signature* (l. 21), *drank* (l. 51).
3. Answer the following questions on word stress patterns. Please note that these must be given in numeric form (using /1/ for primary stress, /2/ for secondary stress, /0/ for unstressed syllables and /3/ for tertiary stress, if relevant. Tertiary stress is optional).
 - a) Give the stress patterns for the following words and explain the placement of both primary and secondary stress (where relevant): *suspect* (l. 6), *underdressed* (l. 22), *opportunity* (l. 54), *engineering* (l. 63).
 - b) Give the word stress pattern for each of the following compounds/word units. Do not justify your answer: *a low cocktail table* (l. 12), *deep-pink knit* (l. 21).
4. a) How are the two occurrences of *out* (underlined) pronounced in the following contexts? Justify your answer.

He'd spent two years in the navy straight out of high school and then, GI bill, went out to the Colorado School of Mines for his engineering degree. (ll. 62-63)

 - b) For each of the following words, indicate the pronunciation of <u> (underlined) and justify your answer: *sure* (l. 15), *introduced* (l. 25), *plucked* (l. 39), *church* (l. 44), *business* (l. 48), *full* (l. 49), *careful* (l. 50).
 - c) For each of the following words, indicate the pronunciation of <ou> (underlined) and justify your answer: *shoulders* (l. 15), *ours* (l. 54), *sought* (l. 56).
5. a) Identify two different connected speech processes (one for each segment) which might occur in the following segments. Name the process and demonstrate briefly: *blue ink* (l. 2),

Charlene's shift (l. 21).

- b) What phonetic processes tend to occur within the following words? Identify three different processes (one for each word) and demonstrate briefly how each process works: *clamorous* (l. 11), *pinstripe* (l. 20), *sandwiches* (l. 46).
- c) In the following words, indicate four differences you would expect to find between General American and Southern British English pronunciations (one per word); do not give the same difference twice (i.e. for two different words). Refer to both British and American pronunciations: *grass* (l. 7), *cotton* (l. 14), *talk* (l. 31), *later* (l. 42).
6. a) Indicate tone boundaries, tonics (nuclei) and tones in the following extract (ll. 68-69). Do not justify your answer.

"They give out silver diplomas, don't they? Carved in silver. Such a lovely tradition."

- b) In the following extract (ll. 37-38), where would the tonics (nuclei) be placed? And what tones would accompany them? Justify your answer for both tonic (nucleus) placement and tone type. (The expected tone boundaries have been inserted.)

| *"Would you like something else?"* | *"Lemonade, perhaps?"* |

ANALYSE LINGUISTIQUE

(Les réponses seront rédigées en français)

1. Les candidats analyseront les segments du texte indiqués ci-après par un soulignage :

- 1) He led me past a short green lawn that **could have been** out of suburban Westchester (ll. 6-7)
- 2) My memory of the house itself grows vague and merges with **any number of villas I saw in my brief time there** [...] (ll. 8-9)
- 3) [...] for risking another social faux pas – **although the evil infant was nowhere to be seen.** (l. 31)

2. À partir d'exemples choisis dans l'ensemble du texte, les candidats traiteront la question suivante :

Les adjectifs.

Aussi bien pour l'analyse des segments soulignés que pour le traitement de la question large, les candidats fonderont leur argumentation sur une étude précise des formes tirées du texte. Ils procéderont, à partir de ces formes, à toutes les manipulations et comparaisons jugées utiles, en se référant à leur contexte.

