



General Certificate of Education

French 1651 *Specification*

FREN1 Listening, Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination *2009 examination - January series*

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FREN1

General

Generally, the standard of scripts was very high, with many candidates scoring impressive scores. However, some less able candidates clearly struggled with both the comprehension questions and the essay and it would seem that they had been entered at too early a stage in their AS studies. Candidates appeared to have sufficient time to complete the paper and the vast majority made use of the essay planning sheet provided. On the whole, candidates scored well on the listening section, slightly less well on reading with Questions 9 and Question 10 discriminating very effectively.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Only a very small number of candidates failed to read the rubric and answered this question in French, although a few did answer using the odd French word such as *musique* in part (b). Most candidates seemed to be able to answer most, if not all, of the questions set. The less able candidates struggled with some of the verbs in part (a), notably *se détendre*, *rire* and *avoir peur*, and guessed by writing vague answers about having a good time. The main difficulty encountered in part (b) was the word *paysages*, which was frequently rendered as 'countries'. In Part (c) many omitted the reference to 'endangered animals'.

Question 2

Parts (a) and (g) caused problems, otherwise the question was very well answered. Many candidates put "S" for part (a) and some also put "S" for part (g).

Question 3

This question was quite well done, with the least successful section being part (a), where some candidates had misunderstood the information about Florence's mother.

Question 4

This question was quite well done and very few candidates used too many ticks. One of the main difficulties encountered here was the failure to notice the difference in tense in parts (d) and (e).

Question 5

This question discriminated well, with the more able candidates scoring well. The questions causing the most problems were parts (b), (c), (d) and (e).

Question 6

Most candidates scored a maximum of 6 marks on this question.

Question 7

Most candidates coped well with this question, with Philippe's section being particularly well understood. The main problems were caused by candidates confusing Julia and Lali.

Question 8

As candidates only had to copy the answers from the text to score marks, most did well except for part (b) where even very good candidates were quoting from the wrong paragraph. Parts (a), (c) and (d) were very well answered.

Question 9

This question was done very well by the good candidates and proved a good discriminator. Some were confused by *majeur* in part (a) and tried to make it feminine. Parts (b) and (c) were well done but a surprising number omitted accents in part (d). Parts (f), (i) and (j) were badly done by less able candidates, whereas parts (e), (g) and (h) were often successfully answered.

Question 10

There were some very impressive essays indeed, with examiners commenting on the maturity of thought of the more able candidates. Such essays were very well structured, clearly expressed and with points being illustrated and justified. Most candidates wrote well over the minimum 200 words. Question 10(a) was a popular choice, though some of the less able candidates wrote answers which were not entirely relevant and spoke mainly about reality TV and would have scored more highly if they had been written as answers to Question 10(b). The best essays spoke of the economic benefits of advertising and its creative aspects, while at the same time pointing out the dangers such as the threat to children's health. Less successful essays were repetitive and copied out points from the rubric. Question 10(b) was the least popular option and led to the very best essays and the very worst. There were some excellent pieces of work which made some interesting and thoughtful points about celebrity culture. On the other hand, other essays contained very little in the way of relevant content, and were highly superficial. Many candidates chose Question 10(c) and many answered the question very successfully, with a wealth of points not only about sport but also about diet, drugs, smoking and alcohol. A few candidates failed to score marks because they did not tackle the second part of the question. As for the quality of language, examiners reported that they had used the full range of marks available. The best essays clearly demonstrated through the variety of vocabulary used that the candidates had read widely on the topic and had been given the opportunity to discuss major points in class. Less able candidates on occasion lacked even the basic words to write meaningfully on the subject, and such candidates often resorted to English when the French word was unknown. As far as variety of structure is concerned, the able candidates used a range of tenses and complex sentences confidently. As for accuracy, the less impressive essays revealed that many candidates are unable to form the present tense of some very common verbs.

Examiners would like to ask teachers to pass on advice to their students on tackling the essay question. Firstly, the correct choice of essay is vital, but the question must be read carefully to ensure that all parts are fully answered. Planning is essential and should lead to a logical essay which is easier for examiners to read and avoid the repetition that occasionally mars the overall effect. The number of points candidates make is less important than the way such points are developed and explored. A small number of relevant points which are then expanded and illustrated are preferable to a list of brief bullet points. Comment such as *la publicité est dangereuse pour les enfants* needs some explanation and examples of the kind of advertisements that are inappropriate for children. At the same time, it is helpful if the essay has a clear conclusion since quite often candidates end abruptly as if they have run out of ideas. Examiners do bear in mind that AS candidates have only recently been writing on GCSE subjects but at the same time they hope to see a reasonable number of relevant arguments with examples given, written in a clearly expressed manner. A more able candidate would develop the point above like this: *la publicité est dangereuse pour les enfants parce que certaines*

publicités les encouragent à manger des choses qui sont mauvaises pour la santé. A Noël, par exemple, les enfants demandent des jouets parce qu'ils ont vu des publicités à la télé.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Listening Section

For each question in the Listening section, both the duration of the heard material and the track numbers on the CD which correspond to that material will be printed in the Question and Answer booklet and on the transcript, eg

Length of passage: 55 seconds
Tracks: 10-18

Please draw this to the attention of all candidates.

It should be pointed out that there is no longer a requirement for candidates to manipulate language in the Listening/Reading sections of this paper as the marks are awarded for comprehension only.

Annotation of Scripts from Summer 2009 onwards

The following conventions will be used by examiners on scripts when assessing Content.

✓	Point made
Irr	Irrelevant material
Rep	Repeated point
?	Lack of clarity

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO THE WRITING QUESTION

Are candidates expected to include an introduction and conclusion in their essay? If so, how many words approximately?

Candidates are not expected to include an introduction or conclusion, but it enhances the structure if there is a brief introduction and a concluding short paragraph, possibly including a personal response. One of the criteria is for a logical structure and this would enhance the overall structure of the essay.

Is a personal opinion valid as a point in the argument?

Yes, we gave ticks for personal opinions in the January session as we considered them valid as developments.

Should each point/opinion be backed up with an example?

Generally, yes. There must be plenty of justification of points/opinions in order to gain marks in the higher bands.

Are the examiners looking for a certain number of points/opinions plus examples, eg 3 arguments for one point of view with evidence and 3 against with evidence?

This would be sensible but we have no hard and fast rule on this since a limited number of points very well illustrated and developed would also be considered for the higher mark bands.

How does the marking scheme work in practice? Is there a list of relevant points, some of which the examiners are expecting to be included? If so, how many represents poor versus sufficient/very good?

There is a list of relevant points for the guidance of examiners but these are by no means prescriptive and candidates will get credit for well-argued points not in the list. Examiners tick every relevant, clearly expressed point and give further ticks for development/ examples/ opinions etc. Thus a list of bullet point type arguments with no development cannot access the highest mark band. In order to access the highest mark band, candidates must also ensure that they meet all the other criteria, eg their ideas are clearly expressed, there is a logical structure to the essay and they have answered fully the question set.

Is it just an instinctive overall rating of logical sequence and therefore individual points are not counted up?

There is no mathematical guide to Content marks - examiners have to make a decision based on the descriptors in the assessment criteria.

Are there any other questions which teachers should be asking to get a better understanding of how candidates are to be assessed in the essay question?

Yes, there are two sets of exemplar materials for the Writing section of Unit 1 as part of the Teacher Resource Bank. The Teacher Resource Bank materials are available on the AQA website.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.