



General Certificate of Education

French 2651 *Specification*

FRE4T/V Speaking

Report on the Examination *2010 examination - June series*

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Administration

Centres using CD or USB storage for the tests generally produced recordings that were of a high quality although there are still some problems with the positioning of the microphone and the audibility of candidates' responses. STMS forms were in most cases completed correctly with good detail provided for the two Cultural Topics studied and discussed in Part 2. It would be appreciated if teacher-examiners could print their name clearly on the STMS so that this can be copied on to the Tester Performance Report that is returned to centres: illegible signatures are not helpful.

Part 1: Discussion of stimulus card

The majority of candidates were extremely well prepared for this new element in the A2 speaking test and they presented a very detailed outline of their point of view in the one minute available. Most succeeded in providing four or five points with brief development by way of explanation or justification and so gained 4 or 5 of the 5 marks available. This outline is an opportunity, in a sense, for the candidate to steer the ensuing discussion in that examiners should pick up on points made and discuss or debate them further. Those candidates who had used part of their preparation time to consider what they were going to say and to anticipate what the examiner's reaction or response to this might be were able to justify their arguments in the face of challenges.

Less able performances in this part of the test were characterised by one or more of the following: a failure to keep to the one minute allowed and a tendency to repeat points made in the speech bubble on the card; a lack of clarity about which opinion was being defended or developed and a lack of focus on the specific opinion; a tendency in the ensuing discussion to "switch sides" and agree with arguments put by the examiner without any attempt to develop a counter-argument. Many candidates had the linguistic resources to react to what the examiner said (*Non, je ne suis pas d'accord; non je pense que vous avez tort etc*) but then had difficulty following this up with a well-developed point. Some candidates tested by Visiting Examiners showed a slightly worrying lack of awareness of the appropriate *vous* form of address.

There was, from examiners, a good range of challenges in this part of the test. Some quite rigorous putting the candidates through their paces is expected but this does not have to be sustained for the entire four minutes for the top band marks to be accessed. It is stressful for the candidate to be faced with a barrage of *oui, mais* responses from the examiner and it would be difficult for the examiner to have to counter absolutely every point of view. It is often an appropriate challenge to ask the candidate to explain or define a concept or term that is constantly being trotted out e.g. *intégration; ségrégation; multiculturalisme; énergies renouvelables* and so on.

Card A: Was a popular choice and the vast majority of candidates dealt with the issues very well indeed. There was a sound awareness of the various energy options available and their relative merits. Where there was support for Opinion 2 it was well-argued and the inadequacies of renewables were demonstrated. Few candidates used the opportunity – often prompted by Visiting Examiners – to talk about energy conservation as an aspect of an overall energy-management strategy.

Card B: Most candidates supported Opinion 1. Cultural enrichment examples rarely extended beyond *couscous* and rap music and there was little exemplification of development offered to support the claim of less tension and conflict and fewer problems.

Card C: Perhaps because of the sequencing of cards and the number of candidates per centre Card C was not often chosen. When it was tackled, the results were very varied. Those

candidates who recommend this punishment for each and every offence had either not understood the meaning of *la peine de mort* or do indeed have very extreme views.

Card D: This card prompted some very strongly argued defences of individual rights and scathing criticisms of public transport facilities. Many candidates fell into the fairly predictable trap of arguing for Opinion 2, only to be challenged about their own habits and life-styles and thus having to confess to using their car for some very short journeys. Such discrepancies between the preached and the practised obviously have no bearing on marks awarded!

Card E: The European dimension to the issue was often overlooked and the discussion became an exchange of the arguments commonly rehearsed on immigration generally. Some candidates made reference to the playing-down of the issue in the election campaign and others had detailed knowledge of (and expressed support for) immigration measures in France.

Card F: This was the least popular of the cards available but most of those candidates who chose it dealt with the issues raised in a very mature and articulate way. Scientific and technological issues should really be kept separate from other topics: some candidates tended to stray into energy and pollution related issues and aspects when discussing significant scientific developments.

Part 2: Discussion of Cultural Topics

Teacher-examiners must remain vigilant about the allocation of time to these two topics: there should be an even allocation of five minutes per topic. In a number of cases, after an over-run in Part 1 and too lengthy a discussion of the first Cultural Topic, there was only a three minute discussion of the second topic and so the deduction of 2 interaction marks had to be applied (see Instructions for the Conduct of the Examinations: June 2010).

The other issue that teacher-examiners need to be aware of in testing candidates and that teachers need to be aware of in preparing candidates is that topic knowledge *per se* is not rewarded in the mark scheme for this part of the test. Questions eliciting factual information must be avoided in favour of those which require candidates to express views and opinions. This relates particularly to the topic of the region where many candidates came into the examination equipped with an abundance of facts and figures which they proceeded to give in response to questions eliciting facts and figures. This sort of content will not attract high marks for Interaction.

That said the majority of discussions of Cultural Topics showed that candidates had studied and enjoyed studying a wealth of different topics and subjects and it was particularly interesting to see how many of these were related to literary texts. Candidates gave honest and well-reasoned views and opinions about these and many discussions were a pleasure to hear.

AO3 Knowledge of Grammar

It was pleasing to listen to a good number of candidates using complex structures and quite sophisticated vocabulary. However there were still many who made the most basic errors conjugating common verbs. Passive verb forms and all *si* sentences caused huge problems.

Other errors included:

- Incorrect or inappropriate use of subjunctives
- Adjectives confused with adverbs and vice versa
- Pronouns misused
- Confusion over *qui*, *que* and *dont*
- *Penser à* and *penser de confusion*

- Excessive number of inventions influenced by Anglicism: collaborater; invader; expérencier; uspecter; expecter; remover; provider; déservier; recogniser; efficient; significant

Annual Teacher Support Meetings

Centres are reminded that language-specific Teacher Support Meetings for the Conduct of the Speaking Tests will be held in Autumn 2010 covering both Unit 2 and Unit 4. These meetings will be full day meetings and free of charge. Further details can be obtained from the Events page of the AQA website (www.aqa.org.uk) in due course.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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