



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2011**

French

FREN1

(Specification 2650)

Unit 1: Listening, Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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General

The examination discriminated well between different levels of ability. The mean mark was 76.75 out of 110, which was very similar to last June's paper. As usual, Question 9 (the gap fill grammar test) and Questions 10, 11 and 12 (the essay) discriminated very effectively, but, in addition, Question 3 in the Listening section and Question 6 in the Reading section also differentiated well. The vast majority of students finished the paper well within the time limit and there were fewer examples of students answering in the wrong language. Since on-screen marking is now used for this unit, students should be reminded that they must answer the questions in the spaces provided, as instructed on the front cover of the question paper.

It is also very important that the instruction to students to write in black ink or ballpoint pen is adhered to, as answers written in blue ink or pen are very difficult to mark on screen. It is equally essential that students write their answers clearly and legibly. Unfortunately, this was not always the case and some answers were very hard to decipher. Centres are reminded that students should be encouraged to plan their answer for the essay question, but this should always be done on the Essay Planning Sheet provided and this sheet or indeed any other plan should not be sent for marking with the question and answer booklet.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

A very high percentage of students scored high marks on this question. The vocabulary was accessible for all parts of the question. However, a major stumbling block in part 1(a) was the number of hours spent online. The correct answer was twelve but a substantial number wrote two. The other problem was the location of the computer in part (c), where many did not grasp the importance of having the computer in a place which is used by everyone.

Question 2

This question was generally found to be straightforward, with almost all students scoring highly.

Question 3

A full range of marks was observed on this question. In part 3(a) a great deal of difficulty occurred in the spelling of *accompagner* and some responses did not specify the gender of the friend. In part 3(b)(i) the spelling of *se moquer* proved a challenge. Several responses were seen with answers such as *ils ce mock des filles*. Part 3(b)(ii) was more successfully answered on the whole, except for some incorrect prepositions (*n'est pas intéressant pour regarder etc*), but that did not hinder comprehension and was credited with a mark. In part 3(c), the most common errors were the responses that identified the parents as being passionate rather than the games of football. Finally in part 3(d), there was some confusion over *nombre* and *nombreux*. The expression *en train de* was not well conveyed.

Question 4

This was very well answered; the only real difficulty proved to be part (e), where some were confused between *avec* or *sans lunettes spéciales*.

Question 5

A very high success rate here, the only part incorrectly answered on any kind of regular basis being part (b), where many students did not understand the significance of the phrase *les mentalités seront lentes à changer*.

Question 6

This question discriminated well, with many less able students not scoring marks principally on parts (d), (e) and (f). The vocabulary in (d) (*l'abonné* and *atteint*) was perhaps not surprisingly difficult, but *la sonnerie* in part (f) was a more surprising word to cause misunderstanding.

Question 7

This gap filling task was better done than in previous years with only parts (d), (e) and (f) causing significant problems. Parts (a) and (b) were especially well done. In part (d), *amour* was a common error despite this word not being possible after *de*. The low rate of success in part (e) indicated that the word *légère* was not well known.

Question 8

Some students are still trying to manipulate the language of the source text unnecessarily, and this can lead to marks not being scored through the incorrect use of verb forms which can become an impediment to comprehension. Parts (a) and (b) were very well done, but some in part (c) became confused between seeing the island in a short space of time or integrating with the local population. Many examiners were disappointed by inaccurate spellings of key words such as *voyageur* in part (e) despite the word being in the original text.

Question 9

A very wide range of marks was observed as usual in this question. All parts caused difficulties for some students but parts (a), (b), (e) and (i) were best answered, though some students did not score through missing accents on *préparer* and *délicieuse*. In part (c) *se rendrent* was often seen, and the verb *offrir* caused many problems in part (d). The past participle of *voir* was well known, though some lost the mark by adding an –e. Part (g) proved very challenging except for the most able students, and this was also the case with *servir* in part (h). Pleasingly, many students did score in part (j), recognizing the need for the conditional tense.

Section B

There was a huge range of standards in the essay question. Many wrote essays full of a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and structures, with relevant, logical and coherent arguments. Most students wrote at least the recommended number of words and examiners felt that this year a wider range of structures was used. At the other extreme, were many essays which were very difficult to understand or which started confidently but very quickly resorted to a great deal of repetition or irrelevant information. All three titles proved equally popular this year.

The essay on reality TV allowed students to suggest a number of advantages and disadvantages but some essays were about television generally and some ignored reality TV altogether with references to game shows and soap operas. The content of this essay tended to be the most extensive.

In the essay on cannabis, many were determined to talk about the harmful effects of smoking or alcohol or wrote at length on the harmful effects of the drug. Some failed to put forward any suggested solutions and students still need to be reminded to answer **all** parts of the question set.

The question on designer clothes led to some very thoughtful and mature essays by able students which made use of a range of subject-specific vocabulary, with reference to self

image and self confidence, for example. On the other hand, some of the weakest essays were on this subject, containing very little content and much repetition.

Examiners were pleased that most students this year appeared to be making an effort to include a range of topic-specific vocabulary and a range of grammatical structures in their work. Unfortunately, the less able students still resort to invented words such as *provider*, *accesser*, *les contestants*, *promoter l'amusement*, *c'est bon entertainment*, *leur appearance*.

In quality of language, the lowest mark was invariably for Accuracy and many errors were such that the work became incomprehensible. The most common mistakes were as follows:

- Too many students are still not able to conjugate verbs correctly and the infinitive was used frequently (*les jeunes regarder beaucoup de télé*).
- Students still struggle with reflexive verbs (*c'est bon pour moi de se détendre*, *nous aimons se relaxer devant le petit écran*).
- Some students resort to anglicisms (*il n'y a personne de parler avec*; *les copains ont quelque chose à parler de*).
- Students cannot distinguish between *sembler*, *ressembler*, *paraître*, *apparaître*.
- A large number are using the verb *être* with the present participle to form the present tense (*ils sont allant*, *je suis regardant*).

On a more positive note, examiners commented on the fact that the majority of students are structuring their essays more effectively and that they are genuinely attempting to develop their ideas.

Guidance for Writing Section

Question Paper and Answer Booklet

Students must write using single line spacing when writing their answer for this section. Double line spacing (i.e. writing on alternate lines) must not be used. Those students who cannot complete their answer in the answer booklet must use additional answer sheets; they must not use the Essay Planning Sheet for this purpose as it is not sent for marking.

Essay Planning Sheet

The Essay Planning Sheet must be used for the plan only and will not be assessed. Essay Planning Sheets, together with any inserts, must not be enclosed with the question paper and answer booklets when they are despatched for marking.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO THE WRITING QUESTION

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

Students 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 give ticks for personal opinions as we consider 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 suggested content points for the guidance of examiners but these are by no means prescriptive and students 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, students 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 students are to be assessed in the essay question?

Yes, there are 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.

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.