

A-level

FRENCH

Unit 1 Listening, Reading and Writing
Report on the Examination

FREN1
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General

The paper appeared to discriminate well between the varying levels of ability and was accessible to the vast majority of students.

Students should be reminded that they must not write their answers in the essay question on alternate lines. Teachers should tell them not to do this. Once again, it cannot be emphasized strongly enough how important it is to use black ink when writing answers, especially the essays. Teachers are reminded not to submit the essay planning sheets, and that these should not be used by students for answering any questions. There are each year cases where students have answered in the wrong language and then used essay planning sheets or even the insert to rewrite their answers in the correct language. This is a risky undertaking and may result in answers not being seen.

Many examiners complained of illegible writing and it is, of course, essential for students to make clear what letter they have chosen in multiple choice and matching tasks. Capital letters should be used and the final answer placed in the appropriate box. If a student wishes to change an answer, the original letter should be crossed out and the new answer should be clearly written.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

1a: Many students failed to score all three available marks on this question mainly because *échec scolaire* was rendered too vaguely.

1b: Many students scored well on this question but the number *douze* was occasionally incorrectly translated, and the phrase *elle n'avait que douze ans* led many to write incorrect answers, such as she was not yet twelve.

1c: This question was successfully answered, with the main stumbling block caused by the word *bagarres*, with references to violent illnesses rather than to behaviour.

Question 2

Parts of this question were very well done, notably parts (a), (d) and (e). The only parts which caused difficulty were (b) where *facture* was not always known and (c) where the phrase *prévenir les secours* was not recognized.

Question 3

This question, with answers in French, was generally well done with most of the marks lost due to poor spelling rather than to a lack of comprehension.

3a: This was well done, though some students clearly did not know what *sida* meant.

3b: This question proved accessible with the majority gaining a mark.

3c: Very few students scored all three marks on this question with about a third only scoring one mark. The main cause of the loss of marks was either incorrect spellings of *feuilleton*, *panne* and even *électricité*. The idea of smashing the TV set was well answered.

3d: Over half of students scored on this question, though a substantial minority failed to score marks because of odd spellings of *nuisibles*.

3e: There was some confusion here as to why the boy wrote to the President. Many students thought he was asking for sweets, and some failed to score marks by not using a recognizable form of the verb *interdire*.

3f: This was the most successfully answered question in this section, with a large number of maximum scores. Some students failed to score marks for English spellings of *moderne*.

Question 4

Part (b) was very well answered by nearly all students and parts (d) and (e) were also well done. Parts (a) and (c) caused problems for many, since the reference to marriage lured many astray in (a).

Question 5

This was generally well answered, with many students gaining marks consistently throughout the question. The least successful part was (e), where many thought, wrongly, that there was a mixture of positive and negative statements.

Question 6

Many students coped very well with this matching task. There were some very high scores here.

Question 7

Most students coped very well with this gap fill question with many scoring very well in the first half of the task and in part (g) where virtually all students scored. However, parts (e) and (h) proved more demanding.

Question 8

This question was also well answered by most students. Errors tended to occur in part (a) where some did not understand *ils sortent à peine*. Otherwise, students enjoyed a high degree of success throughout the rest of the task.

Question 9

This question was done very well by able students and, as ever, proved a very good discriminator.

Q9 (a): Many noted the *-al* ending and used the masculine plural rather than the feminine.

Q9 (b): Only about half got this past participle correct.

Q9(c): This was done quite well, though *s'agit* was quite common.

Q9 (d): Most spotted the need for a subjunctive here but used either the singular form or in some cases the wrong verb entirely.

Q9 (e): Those who failed to score here tended to use the feminine form.

Q9 (f) : This was the best answered part of the question.

Q9 (g): Unfortunately, *comprendu* was prevalent here.

Q9 (h): This was answered very badly, with few using the correct stem, and *grandant* commonly was wrongly given as the answer.

Q9 (i): A very high rate of success was noted here.

Q9 (j): The imperfect rather than the conditional was often seen in this part.

Questions 10, 11 and 12

All three questions were tackled though there was a pronounced preference for Question 10 on holidays, which had a very clear structure.

As usual, there was a very large variation in the standard of the answers, with some impressive efforts which showed a high level of fluency and confidence in the use of the language. However, there were also some very poor, almost incomprehensible essays which tended to be too short and lacked any kind of focus. Other essays contained some reasonable arguments but they often read like bullet points and were not sufficiently developed. Once again, examiners commented that some students had pre-learned essays and wrote sections which were not at all relevant to the titles. For instance, long passages about the advantages of TV appeared in Question 11. In Question 12 there was a lot written about cinema in general which failed to address the factors which make a good film.

In **Q10**, the essay on holidays, many students scored highly for content. Many made very good points about the benefits for health, cultural awareness, the economic advantages as well as the dangers to the environment, the cost and the stress associated with going away. Occasionally, there was a lack of balance when some students wrote GCSE style essays about what they did last year but on the whole there were many pleasing answers.

The **Q11** essay on television produced some very good topic specific vocabulary and the vast majority tackled both parts of the question, though the future of television was often answered very briefly. There were some very imaginative essays here with many points well made and expanded. However, some students found it difficult to provide reasons for the decline in popularity, with some even writing irrelevant material about what makes the small screen popular.

The **Q12** essay on cinema produced some excellent and thoughtful pieces about the qualities needed for a good film and what the aim of a film should be. These essays were interesting and used a very good variety of topic specific vocabulary. At the other extreme, there were some very weak essays which said little more than a good film has famous actors and an interesting story, and failed to address the second point in any meaningful way.

In Quality of Language the lowest marks tended, as always, to be for Accuracy. The most common errors were as follows:

- Problems with pronouns.
- The incorrect use of *mieux* and *meilleur*
- *Ce qui*, *ce que* rarely used correctly
- Frequent use of anglicisms such as *en addition* and invented verbs such as *provider*.
- *De plus en plus* and *de moins en moins* still cause problems.
- Possessive adjectives, where plural subjects have singular adjectives.
- Reflexive verbs with the correct pronouns frequently omitted.
- The use of the verb *être* followed by the present participle to convey the present tense
- Incorrect use of *vouloir*, *pouvoir* (*ils veulent*, *ils peuvent*).

There was generally good use of topic specific vocabulary in all three essays, even by the less able students. Appropriate linking phrases were much in evidence, though many still over-use pre-

learnt phrases eg *un bon film est un sujet brûlant de l'actualité*. As for variety of structure, subjunctives are widely used but not always appropriately, for example after *je crois que*. Attempts at *si* clauses are not always successful. Many examiners reported that verb forms are not always correctly formed, leading to ambiguity and lack of clarity.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

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