

## **Report on the Units**

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**January 2008**

**3861/7861/MS/R/08J**

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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## CONTENTS

Advanced GCE French (7861)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE French (3861)

### REPORT ON THE UNITS

<b>Unit/Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
2651 French Oral	1
2652 French Listening, Reading and Writing (1)	7
2653 French Reading and Writing	10
2655 French Listening, Reading and Writing (Written Examination)	13
Grade Thresholds	17

## 2651 French Oral

### Introduction

The three role-plays proved to be of equal difficulty. Task A had more frequent use than the others owing to its position in the randomisation sequence. Most candidates were quite well prepared and were able to convey a good amount of information and to express their ideas and opinions.

In the topic discussion there was quite a wide variety of subjects. Many candidates were able to show evidence of research and to use the factual information as a basis for developing their ideas. Others were heavily reliant on notes and some sounded to be reading from a script, not only during the presentation, but also in the discussion itself, resulting in a lack of spontaneity and in some cases of comprehension also.

### Role-play

### Response to Written Text

#### Task A

This task discriminated well between candidates. Many candidates were able to cover all or most of the key points. Items which caused difficulty for some candidates included 'ride', 'abroad' (sometimes rendered as *à l'étrange*), 'displays', and 'snacks'. Many candidates mentioned buses and trains, but not trams, presumably because they did not know the French for tram. Most candidates referred to diesel locomotives, but did not make it clear that there was a railway, which visitors could ride on, rather than a stationary engine in a museum. Some did not explain that there were old vehicles in the period street.

The word 'drinks' still causes problems for some candidates, who use *boits* for *boissons*, thereby making comprehension difficult.

In this task as well as in Tasks B and C, numbers caused difficulty for some candidates, especially those requiring versions of 80 or 90. In task A, 51 was frequently rendered incorrectly with *cinquante-un*.

#### Task B

This task was generally well done by those who attempted it. Some candidates, however, did not explain clearly that the treadmill was cheaper than other treadmills and that it saved money on gym fees. Most candidates were able to say where the treadmill could be used and stored, but few of them seemed to know the French for 'cupboard'. Many candidates are not aware of the way to express dimensions in French.

Overall this task was successfully completed, including a good discussion about keeping fit and obesity.

## Task C

This task was also successfully completed by a large number of the candidates who attempted it. Some candidates did not explain clearly that the staff helped customers to find products, and many of them omitted to say that advice was offered. The point about good value for money in point 4 was frequently omitted. 'Medical care' caused problems in some cases. Some candidates still express the telephone numbers in single figures rather than in the French way in pairs of digits.

## Response to Examiner

Most candidates asked the two preliminary questions clearly, but many did not show imagination by attempting to rephrase the forms on the candidate's sheet. Some candidates began by using a phrase such as *pourriez-vous me dire? je voudrais savoir* or *ça m'intéresserait de savoir*, which is to be commended.

In Task A, the verb *s'intéresser à* caused problems for many candidates and there were errors such as *Quel type d'activité intéressez-vous? Quel type d'activité intéresse vous? and Quel type d'activité est-ce que vous intéresse?*

In Task B, errors included *Quelle est les activités* and *faisez-vous?*

In Task C, some candidates did not relate the questions to the son or daughter of the French mother or father and used *il* or *elle* rather than *vous*. Some candidates included the relative pronoun in the question with versions such as *Quel type de stage que votre fils a fait?*

Most candidates responded quite well to the examiner's requests for information and in most cases there was a good balance between the examiner and the candidate. In a few instances, the candidate was allowed to give a monologue with little intervention from the examiner. Although candidates are to be commended for taking the initiative and giving information without the need for a question on every point, the role-play is intended to be a dialogue and the examiner should ask some questions to maintain a balance, but should, of course, be careful not to ask for information which has already been supplied.

The two extension questions were quite successfully handled by most candidates, but some of them should have been encouraged to develop their arguments a little further.

## Language

The accuracy of candidates' language varied considerably, as in previous examinations. Errors included:

*peuvent voyage*

*peut rencontre*

*qui fournir*

*téléphoner le musée*

*ils doit*

*il offert*

*il est or ils sont for il y a*

*de fait*

*je préférer*

*il rendre*

*buver*

*qui utilise*

*a prend*

*votres amis*

téléphone numéro  
de le, de les  
le vingt siècle  
façons de transports  
l'adultes, l'enfants  
par téléphoner  
beaucoup des  
j'ai trouve  
à le, à les

Incorrect genders of words such as *place, gamme, voiture, visite, époque, période, siècle passé, musée, possibilité, langue, sale, boutique, qualité, santé, monde, variété, chose, famille, réduction, raison, culture, histoire, ville, façon, maison, rue, région, chance, brochure.*

Anglicised vocabulary included: *efficient, per cent, snacks, range, sale de goûter, Bretagne for Grande-Bretagne, régulation, vehicles, amicable, benefits, abilité, furniture, application,*

## Examining

The role-plays were mostly correctly conducted by teacher-examiners. However there were some cases where examiners did not ask sufficient questions to allow the candidates to cover the key points. Some candidates could have been encouraged to clarify points which were difficult to follow. Although most candidates answered the two extension questions adequately, a further question would have helped them to develop their ideas a little more.

In most cases the role-plays were timed correctly. This exercise should not be allowed to continue for more than the five minutes specified. Sufficient time must be given for the candidates to answer the extension questions without exceeding the time limit.

## 2 Topic Discussion

### Presentation

In this examination a number of different topics were presented. These included: *Les émeutes de 2005, la mode, l'énergie nucléaire, le Tour de France, le tabagisme, l'obésité, l'immigration, le football, le système judiciaire, Fauré, la Corse, l'éducation, Louis XIV, le cinéma, l'argot, le foie gras, les Restos du Coeur, Amélie, la synagogue de Besançon, Edith Piaf, l'annexion de Metz, Astérix, Nicolas Sarkozy, Ségolène Royal, Jacques Chirac, Renoir, l'île Maurice, L'Arche de Zoë, Marcel Pagnol, le Petit Prince, Cannes, Paris, Cognac, le Québec, le racisme, le PACS, le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, le Louvre, la laïcité, Chanel, l'avortement, les grèves, Jeanne d'Arc (Jeanne frequently pronounced Jean), les SDF, les enfants de Don Quichotte.*

The best presentations were those which were well planned with an introduction and conclusion. In some cases the examiner had to stop the candidate after three minutes and the presentation then was rather lacking in structure. Candidates scoring the highest marks for factual content were able to include detailed information with an intelligent use of figures to illustrate the major points. Although they obviously had to learn the facts to be able to deliver a coherent and well informed presentation, there was spontaneity without too heavy a reliance on notes. To score the highest marks, candidates are expected to give evidence of detailed research and to present the facts with style and flair. Headings on small cards are much more effective as prompts than lengthy notes.

A substantial number of candidates sounded to be reading their presentation. This is to be discouraged, as such presentations are often unclear and frequently contain information which does not go beyond the obvious. In some cases, reading or reciting a rehearsed script extended

into the discussion. In order to be placed in the good or very good bands, candidates are expected to show evidence of research and to be able to add further factual information during the discussion.

Some candidates' presentations were delivered at such speed that it was difficult to remember and retain all the facts and figures and in addition their intonation was adversely affected. Some candidates were unable to develop and evaluate their information in the discussion.

### **Spontaneity and Fluency**

Many candidates were able to speak quite fluently and there were few cases where candidates were not able to express themselves reasonably coherently. The most successful candidates were able not only to speak spontaneously and fluently, but also to develop their ideas and opinions to an advanced stage. They were able to take charge of the conversation and not rely too heavily on the examiner's questions. This led to some interesting discussions in which candidates displayed some real insights.

A number of candidates were heavily dependent on notes and seemed to be reading or reciting answers to prepared questions. As a result the discussions were not spontaneous and it was at times difficult to follow what the candidate was saying. Some of them were not able to respond adequately when asked a question which did not relate directly to their notes. Some of the discussions did not develop beyond the factual, and candidates were not given the opportunity to express their ideas. Although it is accepted that candidates need to learn the information which they are going to present and discuss, the presentation and discussion should not be so rehearsed that all spontaneity is lost. It is worth reminding examiners that the Spontaneity and Fluency grid refers not only to spontaneity and fluency, but also to the development of ideas and opinions.

### **Pronunciation and Intonation**

The intonation of most candidates was at least adequate and in some cases good. There were some instances, however, where the candidate's intonation was heavily anglicised and a few, where comprehension was seriously impeded. Errors of pronunciation included the *im* and *in* sounds in words such as *province*, *principal*, *introduit*, *mannequin*, *individu*, *innovant*, *importé*, *indépendance*, *industrie*, *intéressant*, *intelligence*, *influence*, *important*, *inégal*, *immigration*.

There was a tendency for some candidates to sound silent endings of words such as *ils*, *dans*, *cas*, *temps*, *trop*, *beaucoup*, *et*, *hasard*, *doivent*, *sport*, *francs*. The *s* of *est* was sounded by a number of candidates. *Femmes* was not infrequently pronounced *fammes*.

Anglicised pronunciation occurred in words such as *dangereux*, *parents*, *création*, *déclare*, *Danemark*, *radioactif* (*a* incorrect), *danger* (*er* incorrect), *thème*, *méthode*, *thermique* (*th* pronounced as in English), *gare* (pronounced as *guerre*), *gouvernement* (pronounced as government in English), *respect*, *aspect* (*c* sounded), *façon* (pronounced *fakon*), *syndical*, *symbole* (*y* incorrect), *beauté* (pronounced as 'beauty' in English). There were incorrect nasal sounds in words such as *an*, *plan*, *augmenter*, *bilan*, *musulman*.

### **Language**

The language of many candidates was reasonably complex and there were examples of the use of the passive, the subjunctive, *après avoir/être*, *en* + present participle and a variety of tenses including the conditional perfect, and occasionally *celui qui* and *lequel*.

The range of structure and vocabulary of some candidates was rather limited and there were examples of anglicised vocabulary, for example, *abilité*, *influential*, *contract*, *progress*, *success*, *graduellement*, *concentrater*, *personalement*, *excess*, *protector*, *idea*, *pratique*, *logical*,

Report on the Units taken in January 2008

exceptional, available, financier, events, professional, traditional, individual, part for partie, restricté, topic, registrar, physical, difficult, place, establishments, discourager.

As in the role-play, the accuracy of candidates' language varied considerably. Typical errors were:

per cent  
à le, à les  
de le, de les  
ils visitent à Londres  
qui toucher  
ont touché, a canonisée for the passive  
beaucoup des  
l'obésité causer  
pour fait  
on manger  
pour exemple  
a commence  
j'ai trouve  
un gen  
les gens ne veut pas  
les jeunes boit  
de boivent  
ils essayer  
très beaucoup  
très mieux  
une personne qui marcher/conduire  
aux les  
qui avoir  
connaître for savoir  
ses for leurs  
dans le vingtième siècle  
en Paris  
il vait  
vous doivez  
elle reçoive  
j'ai li  
je n'ai pas boit  
il a permitté  
j'ai apprendu  
jouer le piano  
la musique est mieux  
dans Angleterre  
il est devené  
les Français fument les Galloises  
une grand chance  
la famille sont

Incorrect genders of words such as *variété, chose, fois, fin, famille, magazine, vie, république, caractère, ville, nationalité, stade, plupart, réalité, vente, loi, thème, système, étape, station, musique, attaque, quantité, majorité, raison, tour, mode, ligue, guerre, campagne, culture, histoire, femme, aide, idée, chiffre, chaîne, semaine, queue, personne, parc, violence, mode de vie.*



## **Examining**

In most cases the candidates were allowed to give their presentation without being interrupted by the examiner. Some candidates had to be stopped after three minutes and would be well advised to plan their presentation more carefully in order to round it off with a short conclusion.

The headings on the Oral Topic Forms were covered in most cases. Examiners generally asked relevant questions to elicit factual information, but some could have asked more searching questions to encourage the candidates to give more detail or to discourage them from reading or reciting.

There were a number of examiners who did not ask sufficient questions to allow the candidates to express their ideas and opinions. Candidates cannot have access to the 'Good' and 'Very good' bands under Spontaneity and Fluency unless they are able to express their ideas and opinions at some length.

Some examiners talked too much, agreeing with candidates' statements instead of challenging them, adding lengthy opinions of their own and feeding ideas to candidates instead of asking open-ended questions.

Although many candidates need to practise their topic discussions beforehand, it is important that the topic discussion is not over-rehearsed and that the candidates are not answering prepared questions. In order to avoid a rehearsed performance which lacks spontaneity, it is suggested that practice be given by someone who is not going to examine the candidates, if this is possible.

## **Conclusion**

Many candidates had used the preparation time effectively and were able to handle the role-plays confidently to convey information and to express their ideas and opinions at length. In the topic discussions there were some excellent performances, which showed clear evidence of genuine research, an ability to develop interesting ideas and a pleasing command of language.

## 2652 French Listening, Reading and Writing (1)

### General Comments

This proved to be an accessible paper which differentiated effectively and produced a good spread of marks (79 to 12 out of 80). There were, of course, some impressive performances, but fewer than usual for a January session where a fair proportion of candidates are in their second year of the course. This disappointing performance showed particularly in Section 2 of the paper and also in the Reading exercise (Task 4) rather than in the Listening tasks, which candidates traditionally find more demanding. There were fewer 'Good' and 'Very Good' performances in the Task 7 writing as well, where the tendency of whole Centres to produce indifferent (or poor) answers was especially noticeable.

A general understanding of the passage should be candidates' first aim. They can then concentrate on specific details within the framework they have established. Another key target area for all should be to become aware of grammatical rules and to apply them consistently.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- Task 1** This opening exercise was well done. Even weaker candidates usually managed to score at least half marks. The most common error was in answer to (h) where candidates frequently selected B, possibly because they mis-heard *cinq ans* and mistook it for *cinquante* – a confusion which should not occur at this level. A number of incorrect responses to (c) suggest that candidates either had not read the question carefully enough or had selected the answer they expected rather than that given in the text. Finally (g) also proved quite testing, possibly because candidates failed to recognise the word *adhérents* in the passage.
- Task 2** This was less successfully answered than the previous task and full marks were relatively rare. It was quite difficult to perceive any clear pattern of mistakes, although (a) and (e) may have been the parts that were best answered. The one and only *Pas mentionné* should have been easily identified since *agents de sécurité* did not feature in the passage.
- Task 3** Although a minority of candidates did not tick enough boxes, this question proved reasonably accessible to most the majority and performance matched expectations. The most frequent correct answers were (a), (b), (e), and either (g) or (k), with (j) the most common erroneous selection, where *les habitants de Valloire sont tous solidaires* was understood to mean that they took the campers into their homes, despite the information given in the previous sentence where we were told that they were housed in schools and hotels.
- Task 4** Better candidates coped reasonably well with this exercise, but not as well as expected. Few managed to score 10 out of 10. The weaker ones struggled and were often clearly relying on guesswork since many, and in some cases the majority, of their choices simply did not fit grammatically. Common confusions among better candidates were the choice of L for (g) and D for (h): in scripts where the total scored was 8/10, it was very often because these two erroneous choices had been given. One would have expected candidates to know that *la télévision* is frequently referred to as *le petit écran*. Examiners reported that a number of candidates had left some of the boxes blank.

**Task 5** Candidates generally find this exercise difficult, and this January paper was no exception. The non-verbal questions are usually more accessible and this was often the case for (a) and (i) but (b) and (c) were less successfully coped with. As for the other types of questions, they revealed a lack of understanding and/or attention but also a fairly widespread inability to manipulate language, with the exception of the best candidates who were aware of the requirements of the task and able to cope with them.

Instead of first concentrating on the gist of the text to try and make sense of it overall, candidates tend to treat this task as if it were a transcription exercise, which of course it is generally not, even if some of the questions can be answered with an accurate transcription of the passage. This was the case for questions (e) and (f) – although inappropriate transcriptions of *se déplacer*, *plusieurs semaines* and *vos locaux* could obviously not be given any credit. Elsewhere, latching on to words and transcribing chunks of text was totally inappropriate.

Candidates' first aim should be to answer the question and this they found difficult in (d), as they often misunderstood – or misread - *Qu'est-ce qui est arrivé à M.Lafon?* Those who mistook the question for *Qui est arrivé ?* answered *les gendarmes* or similar, whereas those who took no notice of *à* gave an equally incorrect answer such as *une ambulance*. Many did not realise that the question simply asked what had happened to Mr. Lafon. Some of those who did understand were unfortunately misled by having incorrectly equated *une chute* in question (b) with a shooting incident, which may explain the otherwise unaccountable mention of *les gendarmes*. Of those who understood, many managed to supply the information that he was taken to hospital, though a significant number either suggested that Mr. Lafon drove himself or failed to make clear who drove whom – e.g. *conduire à l'hôpital*. As for the second part of (d), many candidates could not clarify the sequence of events or were guilty of transcribing (or attempting to transcribe) parts of the recording that did not target the question asked.

Lack of appropriate vocabulary also accounts for some of the problems that were encountered: *chute* (b), *jambe* and *plâtre* (d), *plusieurs* (e), *locaux* (f) *apporter* and *échantillons* (h) and *hébergement* (i) were the main stumbling blocks. As quality of language is also assessed in this task, candidates have to show that they are able to manipulate language. In (g) a future tense was expected, in (h) the question gave a clear indication that a subjunctive was needed but few rose to the challenge. Similarly, for (j) *combien* on its own was ambiguous and therefore not acceptable.

**Task 6** A large number of candidates found this task difficult and really good responses were few and far between. Far more candidates than usual were happy to submit versions that made little if any sense or gave a very fanciful rendering based on understanding – or misunderstanding – one word, leading to misinterpretation of the complete sentence. Consequently, marks were lower than for similar exercises in previous sessions.

### Paragraph 1

Here many started off badly by misunderstanding the sense of *savoir* and thus produced some unidiomatic renderings. *épicier* was surprisingly little-known ('spice-merchant' or variants were quite common), *saveurs authentiques* (authentic customers or savers), *une clientèle aisée* (easy customers) and *exigeante* (exciting) frequently gave difficulty, and *s'est lancé à la recherche* produced some curious translations. A number of candidates simply left out phrases they did not understand (*dont il serait fier; alimentaires*).

### Paragraph 2

In the second paragraph, many were able to make sense of *à la portée de chacun*, even if only approximately, but an equal number simply wrote gibberish. In the second sentence, the repeated *en* were not always well tackled, with *fournisseurs*, *savoir-faire* and even *originalité* causing further problems; *liens* was also surprisingly little-known, being frequently rendered as 'lines'. The latter part of the paragraph was far more successfully translated but in the last sentence, the sense of *il suffit de* was often missed (or missed out); and *personnel* was quite commonly read as the adjective 'personal'.

As far as the standard of English was concerned, the best scripts were flawless or practically so while, at the other end of the spectrum, as already mentioned, too many candidates seemed quite happy to submit lengthy sections of gibberish; a significant number of them seemed little concerned with the overall coherence of the passage. Poor use of English included an inability to spell 'principles', 'clientele', 'luxury', 'research', 'suppliers' 'business', 'occasion' and (inevitably) 'professional'.

### Task 7

Only a small proportion of candidates coped well with the writing task. The best were able to make judicious use of formal phrases to give their letters an authentic ring. They also showed themselves able to use the subjunctive correctly with such constructions as *il est possible que* and *je ne crois pas que*. At the other end of the spectrum, there were a lot of candidates who brought to the task precious little knowledge of grammar and syntax. Verb forms and verb structures were particularly weak, with some candidates unable to make the most basic subject/verb concordances, eg, *nous avez*, *nous ne peuvent*, *vous souhaitons*. Adjectival agreement was also frequently more than a little haphazard, as was the knowledge of genders of even common nouns and nouns conforming to well-known gender patterns (e.g. *une voyage*, *le quantité*).

Most were unable to express the first point even remotely adequately: *mieux* and *meilleur* were often confused, and *être* was used instead of *aller* with reference to Mr. Lafon's state of health. Hardly any could use *rendre* with an adjective - they used *faire*, as in English. As for vocabulary, 'workload', 'methods', 'to produce', 'to supply', 'to require' and even 'months' proved problematic.

In some cases, lack of time to check the accuracy of this last task may be to blame, but the nature of the mistakes seem to point to a lack of awareness of the way French works.

## 2653 French Reading and Writing

### Report for publication to centres

#### General comments

As usual, the paper elicited a wide range of marks, from the high fifties to the low teens. There was, however, an unusual aspect to many of the scripts, in that the performance varied considerably over the four questions. Particularly worthy of note was the difference in standard between questions 3 and 4; this has happened before, but on this occasion it was more often question 3 that was done competently while question 4 was poor. This is a complete turn-around from previous series. There is no obvious explanation, as many of the grammar points that were not known have been tested previously and correctly answered.

The standard of handwriting was often extremely poor, leading to a lower mark for quality of language where word-endings were indecipherable. A large number of candidates ignored the instructions on the front of the script and many filled in their details incorrectly.

#### Question 1

The multiple-choice question was well done; most candidates achieved at least half marks, and many scored 6 or 7 (out of 8). Only a very few, however, were able to identify the answer to (f), perhaps because they did not know the meaning of *ceux-là* in the text. An unusual answer was E for (e); candidates should be reminded to check that they have followed the rubric before moving on to the next question.

#### Question 2

This column-ticking exercise proved to be more difficult than question 1, particularly the first half. Sections which were often wrongly answered were (b) and (d), where the negative statements may have misled candidates into ticking the wrong column, and (f) where *gagnerait un peu moins de cinq centimètres* may have been read too quickly and thought to mean 'less space'.

#### Question 3

##### 3A Quality of Language

Candidates' written French is, on the whole, deteriorating in standard. It is worrying to note the increasing trend to ignore adjective agreement, even among candidates whose overall competence in writing the language is good. This was not just a matter of gender; singular adjectives were usually to be found with plural verbs (*les filles sont plus émotionnel, les loisirs sont différent, les garçons sont moins imaginative*). It may be significant that the majority of such errors were found when the noun was separated from the adjective, as in the above examples. Verb forms were also poor, particularly *être*, *faire* and modal verbs such as *devoir*, *pouvoir* and *vouloir*, (*ils seraient, ils font, ils peuvent, je peux, elles veulent, vous devez*). *Faire* was used to mean 'do' in the present tense of any verb (*ils ne font pas réalisé*). There were many instances of *de le*, *à les* and *de les*. All these errors are basic ones which candidates at this level should not be making, and they reduce the band into which the work is placed for Quality of Language ('Good' band in grid 3A refers to 'tenses and agreements sound', and 'Very Good' to 'mainly minor errors').

## Report on the Units taken in January 2008

Apart from these avoidable mistakes, there were a number of other prevalent errors; various nouns were used as the subject of *s'agit* (*l'article s'agit de, l'auteur s'agit*). Many candidates fail to make the distinction between 'would' and 'should', and use the conditional tense of any verb instead of *devoir*.

Anglicisms abounded, particularly in vocabulary; examples included *il y a des jeux qui sont suitable pour les deux, c'est reasonable, il y a acune boundaries, ils introduceraient des jeux qui involvent les loisirs des autres, les filles sont content racontant des histoires*.

On a more positive note, there were fewer errors in copying from the text (except for *les activities*). Linking words and phrases were well used, particularly *néanmoins, cependant, par contre*. It was pleasing to see that fewer candidates were tempted to use pre-learned phrases out of context; when they are used correctly they can enhance the overall level of performance.

### 3B Comprehension of text

Most candidates were able to identify a good number of points. For (a), the boys' activities, the most popular points were movement, violence, the desire to be accepted by their friends, and the choice of science fiction and/or cartoons as reading material. In (b), candidates usually noted that girls have more imagination, buy perfume and jewellery, read more than boys and prefer fiction. There was some misunderstanding; some thought that girls like to read romantic fiction so that they can cry a lot, and that they prefer to have stories read to them. In a number of cases candidates' incorrect use of French meant that the meaning was not clearly conveyed (*les filles aiment lire plus des garçons, les filles aiment lire plus aux garçons*).

Incorrect use of vocabulary sometimes led to a lack of comprehension: candidates confused *imaginatif* and *imaginaire* (*les jeux des filles sont imaginaires*), *réfléchir* and *réfléter* (*ça réfléchit la tendance de lire des romans*) and *averse* and *inverse* (*pour les filles, c'est l'averse*) – though the latter could be construed as a further comment on the emotional impact of fiction on the girls!

Comments such as *les garçons préfèrent bleu, les filles préfèrent rose* did not refer to the text and should have been kept for 3C.

A few candidates lifted the whole of their answer to (a) and (b) from the text, with the exception of a few linking words or a slight change in word order. In this case Grid 3B 'Poor' band was applied ('Merely transcribes sections from the original passage'), because examiners could not be sure that the text had been understood. The maximum mark in this case was 4.

### 3C Personal Response

There were fewer instances of overlong answers, which meant that candidates did not make so many language errors and so could achieve higher marks for 3A. There were also fewer examples of answers re-hashed from previous papers with a consequent lack of relevance, though some did try to twist their response towards equality of opportunity in the workplace and what the government should do to encourage it.

Those who felt that the situation should be changed produced a variety of reasons and solutions. Some of the more imaginative included the production of more magazines to interest boys in fashion, the issuing of video games with elements of violence and romance, and the reduction in family expenditure on toys if both sexes played the same games.

Many candidates felt that no change was needed or possible; this was a perfectly valid viewpoint, but it was still necessary to give a number of reasons why this should be so or to make some suggestions of how the situation could be changed, whether or not it was deemed to be desirable. Vague or confusing comments such as *le gouvernement devrait agir* or *Les différences entre les filles et les garçons n'est pas le même* could not score highly.

#### Question 4

As mentioned above, the Cloze test was less well done than has been the case in the past. There were very few instances of full marks, and even candidates who scored well in the language element of question 3 often struggled to make double figures here. (a) was often wrong; although there was no pointer to the gender of *activités* in the text, it was hoped that candidates would have learnt the appropriate rule for abstract nouns ending in *-té*; or failing that, that they might be able to relate it to known words such as *amitié*, *qualité* and *quantité* (and, dare one say, to *liberté*, *égalité*, *fraternité*). Much more disappointing were the choices of *son* in (b), *deviens* in (e) – from notes written on some script this was apparently thought to be an adjective, not a verb), and *du* or *le* in (j) – candidates surely know *je joue au football*. Many thought that *si* should be followed by a conditional tense, that *il faut changé* was correct, and that having learnt *après avoir* they needed to look no further even if the verb took *être* in the perfect tense. Most did not recognise the need for the subjunctive after *bien que* here, though they often used it correctly in question 3. (c), (d), (g), (n) and (o) were, however, often correct.

## 2655 French Listening, Reading and Writing (Written Examination)

### General Comments

The level was appropriate and the paper discriminated well among candidates of different abilities as it elicited a wide range of marks from very good to poor. Only a few seemed to have been entered too early.

Many candidates showed a good understanding of the texts they heard and read. There were less transcription errors in the answers than last year as candidates seemed to be quite familiar with the vocabulary used in the texts. Most candidates tackled all sections of the paper and there were very few unanswered questions. Question 7(f) was generally well answered and it was pleasing to see how much candidates cared about their environment and animals. Most answers were the appropriate length.

There was a lot of evidence of good and appropriate preparation, with many candidates performing relatively evenly over the different skills demanded in this paper. Candidates generally displayed a good knowledge of topical vocabulary but not all candidates were able to display a variety of complex structures. Accuracy of language was a problem for quite a few. Verb errors were the most frequent in this paper and the passive form often caused some difficulties.

Candidates found task 4 the most difficult as they were often unable to explain clearly the meaning of the words. Candidates did equally well in task 1 and 2.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### SECTION A

Candidates too often write down what they hear without adapting it to fit the question. Sometimes answers were too long as they contained information which was not required.

- Task 1**
- (a) Well answered by most but *choquantes* was often spelt incorrectly (e.g. *shockantes*) Many candidates felt they needed to add *ils peuvent rencontrer des gens désagréables*, which was not necessary. Very few failed to pick up that the verb *confronter* is followed by the preposition *à*. Many used *par* or omitted the preposition altogether or just wrote *ils peuvent voir des images choquantes*. The agreement of the adjective was often incorrect.
  - (b) Candidates often understood the question but failed to express themselves in correct French and very often it was the children which were being sold rather than the products (*vendre les enfants*). *Sans l'accord des parents* also caused problems to some candidates (e.g. *sans d'accord des parents* / *sans les cours des parents* / *sans la cour des parents* / *sans les cœurs des parents*).
  - (c) Was seldom a problem. There were sometimes some transcriptions errors with *un espace ouvert* (e.g. *un space hoover*) and *rue* (e.g. *roue* / *route*).
  - (d) Many did not see the negative form in the question and often wrote *ils doivent apprendre l'environnement et apprendre à le maîtriser*.



Report on the Units taken in January 2008

- (e) Many candidates failed to convey the idea of parents being the facilitators and that their role was to help their children learn and understand (e.g. *les parents doivent apprendre et comprendre*) - both elements were needed for one mark. Some candidates gave here the answer to question f.
- (f) Candidates understood the question and usually gave the correct answer but very few used in their answer *en + present* participle; many candidates used *par + present* participle.
- (g) *l'esprit critique* was often transcribed incorrectly (eg *l'espoir critique / l'espricatique / l'expert critique*).

**Task 2**

- (a) Usually correctly answered, though *rapport* sometimes became *report*. Very few started their answer with *la publication*.
- (b) Candidates understood the question but many lost the mark for failing to mention *en France*. *Le numéro* was often used to translate *the number*. Some candidates had difficulty translating 'affected' (e.g. *affectuées / infecté*)
- (c) Many candidates were not sure what to put in their answer and transcribed the whole paragraph from the text often missing one of the key elements *le plus tôt possible* which was often written *le plutôt possible*.
- (d) Many candidates found this question difficult and *en cours* was often transcribed incorrectly (e.g. *encore*) and *patients* often became *passions / pations*.
- (e) Those who understood the paragraph had no problem answering correctly.
- (f) The first part was usually answered correctly, but many had problems with *guérir* which often became *gérer or guerré*.

**SECTION B**

**Task 3**

- (a) Some candidates failed to see that a noun was required and used a verb.
- (b) Usually well answered.
- (c) Most candidates saw they had to use a noun, which was often spelt incorrectly. (e.g. *assassination*).
- (d) To get a mark candidates had to use a verb, which most did but not often in the right tense.
- (e) Many gave the correct answer but *religieux* was often spelt without the *x*. Those who answered *église* failed to understand the purpose of the exercise.
- (f) Verbs in the future and conditional tense were not accepted. This question posed some problems to some candidates who did not understand it and who wrote things like *occupe /s'occupe / remplacé*.

**Task 4**

This is the task which candidates found the most difficult as they failed to give coherent definitions. Some failed to see that a verb should be explained by another verb and not a noun (e.g. 4a *la bienvenue*). This is also where a lot of language errors were made.

**Task 5** Candidates generally did not have any problem understanding the question but some had difficulties ending the sentences using the appropriate structures and others just lifted chunks of text without making any changes.

- (a) Usually well answered, but some candidates failed to pick up the key word *la réconciliation* and wrote answers like *de construire un petit village*. Some who did not quite understand the text wrote *insérer dans la détresse du moment*.
- (b) *qu'en fuyant la zone occupée* proved to be difficult for some candidates and others did not understand the question (e.g. *d'occupé des gens qui échappent / à créer une petite communauté à Taizé*). Some failed to use *de + infinitive* (e.g. *cacher les gens / l'offre de sa maison pour les gens*) The use of *quand* was acceptable (e.g. *quand il a donné refuge aux réfugiés ...*).
- (c) Many failed to mention that the brothers' commitment was for life. Quite a few did not know the meaning of *dans le célibat*. Those who understood were able to express it in their own words (e.g. *de ne jamais se marier / de ne pas avoir de femme*). Candidates often added that they were giving away to the poor all the gifts they were receiving, for which they were not given any credit in this question.
- (d) The question was usually well answered but not always accurately as many failed to take the opportunity to use the passive form (e.g. *ont donné aux pauvres / ils donnent toujours aux pauvres*). Some knew a passive form was needed but they were unsure of the conjugation (e.g. *sont été donnés aux pauvres*). The agreement of *donnés* was often incorrect.
- (e) Usually well answered but some failed to mention *chaque année*

**Task 6** On the whole candidates did quite well in this task and seldom scored under 12.

- (a) *Ouverture au monde* was sometimes misunderstood (e.g. 'openness of the world / open days for everyone').
- (b) Most candidates scored 2 out of 3 as they often missed one detail. Either 'the way of praying or together'.
- (c) *tu en as envie* was not always understood (e.g. 'you have envy of / that you envy / you are envious / you'll be jealous'). *Obligé* was sometimes translated by 'obligated'. Some candidates did not understand *on est assis par terre* (e.g. 'you are assisted by the earth').
- (d) Some candidates found *où tout est fait pour mettre à l'aise* difficult and others failed to notice that the question referred to the atmosphere and not the people or town.
- (e) Very few did not answer this question correctly. Some lost a mark because they did not mention God, or did not translate *Dieu*. Some wrote ('except' instead of 'accept').
- (f) *pour le lieu* was sometimes misunderstood e.g. 'the location / the area / the region'. Some just translated the last sentence: 'The name Taizé creates peace, reconciliation, communion and waiting for the spring of the church'.

## SECTION C

**Task 7** Candidates generally understood the text and gave very interesting responses.

- (a) Most candidates understood the question but had difficulty in expressing themselves clearly (e.g. *parce que les autorités ont été force à arrêter le programme de remplacer les montagnes entre la France et l'Espagne avec les ours*). *Les autorités* was often spelt with an *h*. *Succéder* was often used instead of *réussir*.
- (b) Candidates had problems translating 'protests', 'traps', 'laced with broken glass'.
- (c) Usually well answered; *chasseurs* sometimes became *chaussures*.
- (d) Usually well answered but some candidates had problems translating 'stillbirths', 'financial losses'.
- (e) Difficulty with 'to start breeding again'.
- (f) The problem words were 'weighs', 'male', 'female', 'a chip'. Many thought that the singular of 'bea'r is *our*.
- (g) All candidates made a good attempt at answering this question and the majority managed to convey between 5 and 10 points, but to qualify for the full range of marks in the Range, variety and appropriateness criteria, candidates had to convey at least 10 points and one opinion. Many showed a good knowledge of topical vocabulary but few used a variety of complex structures.

A very small number of candidates failed to express an opinion and thus lost one mark.

On the whole candidates responded well to the task and most of them had interesting and varied views on the topic. They all showed concern for the environment and the animals living in it and disapproved of the cruelty of the farmers.

## Grade Thresholds

### Advanced Subsidiary GCE French 3861 and Advanced GCE French 7861 January 2008 Examination Series

#### Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
2651/01	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2651/02	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2652	Raw	80	57	50	43	37	31	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2653	Raw	60	45	40	35	31	27	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2655	Raw	80	63	55	48	41	34	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

#### Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
<b>3861</b>	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
<b>7861</b>	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
<b>3861</b>	18.1	44.3	66.7	83.1	98.3	100.0	238
<b>7861</b>	23.1	53.8	69.2	92.3	92.3	100.0	13

#### 151 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

[http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums\\_results.html](http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html)

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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