GCE

French

Advanced GCE **A2 H475**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H075**

Report on the Units

January 2010

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F701 French Speaking

Introduction

Virtually all candidates were appropriately entered for the examination. Recommendations to Centres in this report for the June 2009 series seem to have taken on board: it is pleasing to note that there were no three minute presentations given at the start of the topic discussions and that most candidates had chosen appropriate topics.

Role-plays

Grid A: Use of Stimulus

It is vital that teacher-examiners are well-prepared for the role-plays, making use of the three working days allowed for preparation. With half of the marks for the role-plays awarded for this grid, candidates need to give full answers to the questions they are asked and should try to cover as much of the text as possible. In many cases, candidates would give just part of the answer required, and would then be allowed to move on to the next bullet point, without being prompted to give the rest of the information. In a minority of cases, candidates were interrupted whilst giving information by the teacher-examiner, and moved onto another area.

Role-play A

Most candidates were able to convey dates without significant difficulty. Some chose to express 1500 as 'sixteenth century', but pronounced it as 'sixième' or chose the wrong century. Although most candidates were able to find an appropriate word for 'items', such as 'choses', others rather disappointingly left the word in English. There were some difficulties conveying opening times, and 'guidebooks' and, surprisingly, 'stations' provided a challenge. However, candidates found some pleasing ways of expressing 'cycle routes' and most were able to give the telephone number without difficulty, although some candidates gave it in single digits rather than in pairs. Tinker the cat was mentioned by almost all candidates, although the pronunciation of 'chat' was surprisingly inaccurate, given that it is such a common word.

Role-play B

Candidates generally performed well on this role-play, although many just mentioned a small number of shops before moving on, and were not prompted to go back and give more detail. 'Jewellery' proved difficult for some candidates. There were some imaginative responses relating to the cafés and restaurants available. Candidates conveyed the discounts largely without difficulty, but few knew the word for a motorway junction. 'Gratuit' was generally known, with only a few candidates resorting to 'libre'.

Role-play C

This role-play offered plenty of scope for an enthusiastic response from candidates eager to sell their products. Most conveyed the types of customer well, but speaking about customer service and recent changes proved more challenging. Teacher-examiners could have helped their candidates by prompting for missing information. Candidates generally conveyed information about delivery, although the word 'lendemain' was not known by many. Information about the products was well communicated, and many candidates used their imagination to embellish the strengths of the products. The telephone number provided few problems, although candidates need practice in giving email addresses.

Response to Examiner

Many teacher-examiners introduced the situations well, using the suggested wording, allowing candidates to complete the whole role-play. Many candidates provided a good link between the questions and the main transactional part although a small number failed to mention the name of the place or business.

A very small number of candidates delivered a monologue, attempting to give all the information in one go, with no questions from the teacher-examiner. However, the vast majority responded well to the teacher-examiner's questions, with the best giving fuller answers, often combining several points to make an extended answer. Some candidates introduced information that was not in the stimulus text or gave opinions and preferences that led to a much more natural sounding conversation.

For the extension questions, a higher proportion of candidates than in the summer merely repeated information they had already given about the place or house, rather than widening the scope of their answer. However, many candidates had a good grasp of the issues surrounding 'les transports verts' for role-play A. There were some unusual and amusing reasons given for why people enjoy shopping abroad in role-play B, and role-play C prompted some mature responses to the questions relating to why people enjoy staying in hotels.

Quality of Language

It is important to note that candidates are judged at AS standard, and perfection is not required to achieve full marks.

Although the tasks do not always demand highly complex language, it was disappointing that many candidates did not attempt to inject some complexity. However, there were few performances at the lower end of the range. Common errors included missed agreements, subject-verb agreements, and word order difficulties. This series, candidates seemed to find vocabulary challenging, with words such as 'gare' not known, along with quite common types of shop. There were some perhaps avoidable errors, given their high frequency in role-play tasks. Many candidates did not know how to suggest calling a telephone number and email addresses need practice.

The opening questions were a little better done than in the past although pronouns and possessive adjectives still provided challenge. 'Quel' and 'Qu'est-ce que' confused some and 'il/ils' was used to phrase the second questions in role-plays A and B.

Examining

Most Centres conducted the role-plays in a satisfactory manner, and it was interesting that some of the best examining came from Centres that had prepared all three role-plays. The best prepared teacher-examiners had read through the tasks thoroughly and carefully prompted their candidates for missed information. Some teacher-examiners could have helped their candidates by supplying a link between the questions and the main body (e.g. have you got a suggestion for me?) rather than leaving a long silence. Some teacher-examiners asked two questions at once. This generally led to the candidates focusing on the second question and completely missing the first question asked. Once again, a small number of teacher-examiners asked questions that the candidate had already answered, leading to confusion and hesitation where the candidate was searching for non-existent material to supplement the answer already given. There were fewer instances of teacher-examiners giving vocabulary that is needed by the candidate to convey information.

Most Centres observed the time limit of 5-6 minutes. It is important that teacher-examiners realise that, if the time limit has not been reached, there is the opportunity after the extension

questions to go back to the text and try to extract details which may have been missed earlier. Some teacher-examiners successfully encouraged their candidates to expand on the extension questions, particularly where a short answer had been given initially. However, a less successful tactic was for teacher-examiners to try to prompt candidates to be imaginative by asking them to think of, for example, items that might be for sale in the gift shop or café. It is not in the candidate's interest for the role-play to extend beyond 6 minutes, as assessment stops at 6 minutes, whether or not the role-play and the extension questions have been completed.

Topic discussion

Choice of Topics

It is a mandatory requirement of the examination that candidates choose their topics from the list of AS sub-topics given in the specification. Although this happened less frequently than in the first series, there was still a significant minority who offered topics from the A2 list, or topics that were not related to France or a French-speaking country. Centres are reminded that the subject chosen must <u>directly</u> relate to the list of topics. For example, a footballer's work developing youngsters may be pertinent to a discussion of sport in France; however, his general life story is not, and candidates are advised not to dwell on biographical details. Topics such as Coco Chanel, the environment unrelated to tourism, and immigration should not be presented as they do not feature on the list. All topics must also relate to France or a French-speaking country. Some candidates enjoy talking about a film or a literary text. This is acceptable as long as the theme of the book or film relates to one of the AS sub-topics, for example the family – different structures and relationships. Centres may seek advice if unsure as to whether a topic is suitable or not.

There were many enjoyable discussions on the theme of communication technology, tourism in Paris and other towns, elitism in the French education system, and contemporary and older French films.

Ideas, Opinions and Relevance

Most candidates had prepared their topics well, and some had found a substantial amount of information to support their ideas and opinions. Some candidates did not seem to realise that factual information was not sufficient on its own, or opinions barely extended beyond basic likes and dislikes. Many candidates delivered a chunk of factual information and then expressed a range of opinions, which led to a good result. However, the most successful candidates expressed a wide range of relevant opinions, and used the information they had found to back up their ideas. It is important that candidates are allowed to choose their own topics, as they are more likely to have individual opinions. Candidates should not all choose the same topic because this makes it difficult for them to express individual viewpoints.

Fluency, Spontaneity, Responsiveness

As teacher-examiners are familiar with their candidates' topics, it is particularly important that they find unexpected questions which give the candidates an opportunity to show spontaneity. In a small minority of cases, topic discussions sounded over rehearsed to the point of being almost scripted, and in some cases there was no spontaneity at all, even when expressing opinions. Candidates cannot get high marks in this grid when this is the case. In many Centres, candidates used prepared material flexibly, responding to the unexpected well, and explaining and expanding as required.

Most candidates were able to talk with reasonable fluency about their chosen topic, and they understood the teacher-examiner well. Candidates need to avoid excessive slow delivery as this

affects the amount of ideas that can be expressed within 10 minutes, and has an impact on the mark that can be awarded.

Language

Some candidates were able to demonstrate that they had studied a wide range of structures, but it was more common than in the June 2009 series to hear language that featured an overuse of simple structures. Where language was good, subjunctives, passives, a range of tenses, and direct and indirect pronouns were used naturally in conversation. Given the prepared nature of the topic, in contrast to the role-play, there is an opportunity for candidates to seek to demonstrate their grammatical knowledge during this section.

Areas where some candidates need to improve are: the gender of common words on vocabulary that is important for the chosen topic, adjectival agreements and sometimes verb endings.

Pronunciation

French intonation can be hard to imitate, but many candidates made an attempt to sound French. Nasals, as ever, provided difficulty, especially in words such as 'principal' and 'important'. Few could distinguish well between –on and –an, and those who had pre-learned long passages often had particularly inaccurate pronunciation: pronouncing silent endings, particularly verb endings. However, other candidates had mastered the many difficult sounds in the French language, and impressed the markers with their achievements.

Examining

Most teacher-examiners questioned their candidates sympathetically, supporting the nervous, and extending the more confident. Almost all teacher-examiners asked a good range of questions and ensured that their candidates were encouraged to express and develop their opinions.

Most Centres seemed familiar with the requirements of the exam. However, there were still a number of timing issues, particularly with the topic discussion. Centres should note that discussions should last between 9 and 10 minutes, and assessment stops at 10 minutes.

It is important that teacher-examiners discourage their candidates from reciting chunks of pre-learned material, and interrupt with further questions if they feel that this is happening.

The majority of teacher-examiners were able to successfully think of appropriate questions, keep an eye on the time and encourage their candidates.

Administrative matters

Most Centres managed the administration requirements extremely well. Candidate materials were usually sent in good time, despite the snow, and most envelopes contained all the paperwork required, including candidate topic sheets and working mark sheets.
Most Centres who had entered for F701/01 sent their recordings on CD, as required, rather than on cassette. Recording quality was usually good. It is important to label CDs and CD sleeves accurately; sometimes the candidate order on the sleeve did not match the recording order.

F701/02 is the component code for Centres who wish to upload their digital recordings of the test to the OCR Repository, and the working mark sheets and candidate topic sheets still need to be sent to the appropriate OCR examiner.

F702 French: Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General Comments

Candidates generally coped well with this paper. Lack of time was not an issue and if a very small number wrote very little in answer to the last task, it was because they found it too daunting rather than because they did not have time to complete the paper. The most disappointing section was 7(a) where many, including good candidates, failed to answer the question that was set and did not supply enough relevant information. Many tried to use a range of linguistic structures but did not really allow enough time to check accuracy: many errors (agreements of adjectives, incorrect verb endings) could have been avoided.

Comments on Individual Questions

Task 1

 The first exercise produced a good range of marks and was a good discriminator.

a)   Linking "*depuis hier"* and the correct tense proved accessible to many.

b)   Associating *"traditionnelle*" and "*bien établie*" was slightly more demanding.

c)   Identifying C as the first element in the series of events was also accessible.

d)   As it required inference, this was a more demanding question. The majority of candidates selected option A because of "*tarif unique*" later on in the sentence, yet this clearly referred to the "*séance*" and not the "*passeport*". It is pleasing that candidates listen to full sentences, yet they must learn not to be systematically drawn to a word which appears in both text and question, especially if it does not appear in the relevant section of the sentence.

e)   Requiring understanding of the full sentence, this was one of the more demanding questions.

f)   Another question accessible to most; this time the word "*valable*" in the text led to the correct answer.

g)   This was intended to be accessible to all, so it was disappointing that some could not correctly identify the number in the text (option C).

h)   This question produced mixed results, with many candidates guessing, or going by the sound of words, rather than knowing which was the correct answer.

i)   This was quite successfully answered, as many were able to make the leap from the noun in the text ("*la suite*") to the verb ("*suivra"*), showing good preparation work for language manipulation tasks.

j)   The last question was quite demanding and required knowledge of a specific phrase "*en plein air*" and an ability to relate it to option A "*dehors*".

Task 2

Very few candidates placed more than ten ticks on the grid but a surprising number wasted marks by putting less than ten – in spite of the rubric and the mark allocation. With this type of matching exercise, questions cannot follow the order of the text because the exercise would no longer be a test of understanding; great concentration is therefore required. Furthermore, identifying moods and attitudes can be demanding, so it was not a straightforward task. Candidates were generally able to distinguish past from present. It was disappointing to see that some very good candidates did not manage to match all the statements with their speakers. There was no clear pattern but the most difficult seemed to be (b), (a), (c) and (e) and the easiest (d), (f) and (g).

Task 3

Overall the text was quite well understood but some details were either not, or incorrectly given. The use of the wrong language makes the response invalid: questions in English must be answered in English.

a)   This question was well answered but a few misunderstood "*mai*" for "*mois*".

b)   (i) The first point (the number of participants) was conveyed by most, yet some invalidated their answer by adding 'roughly' or 'approximately' – the opposite of what the French text said ("*une idée assez précise*"). The second mark (their age), however, was often missing – not so much because it was difficult but because candidates did not look at the mark allocation: two distinct points were needed to get two marks.

   (ii) Similarly two separate elements were required here (finding families, so that everyone had somewhere to stay) and all conveyed at least one of them.

c)   In answer to this question, 'a lot of people' was not allowed; the mark scheme required candidates to be more precise (as was the text) and to give "*le plus grand nombre possible*" adequately. On the other hand, the mark scheme was quite generous for the second mark and allowed a wide range of words for "*sympathique*".

d)   (i) was a disappointment, especially as *"Éducation*" is an AS topic. Few knew that "*la sixième*" was the French equivalent of Year Seven. Most thought Sixth form students had suggested the idea of making a meal.

   (ii) was generally well answered, although those who wrote that the study was on-going could not get the mark because they had not understood "*qui viennent de compléter*".

e)   This question was intended to be accessible and all candidates got at least two marks. The most frequent errors were due to an incorrect verb (e.g. to get / choose ingredients instead of to buy ingredients; to cut instead of to cook meat) or to a misunderstanding of "*mettre le couvert*" often conveyed as "to cover the table".

f)   This showed that the idea of being able to cook (rather than prepared or willing to help) was not always understood.

g)   Many did not make it clear that a British speciality would/could actually be produced. There was also some confusion over British and Brittany and "*d'essayer de*" was mistaken for "*décider de*".

Task 4

Grid H1 - Communication

As in the previous June series, this task proved to be accessible to candidates, at least as far as communication was concerned. It was very pleasing to note that most were able to convey at least half the message.

Part 1   This was very straightforward; all coped well with it.

Part 2   In the first half, effective strategies were used to convey the idea of "working together" ("*en équipe, tous ensemble, les uns avec les autres*) but many produced a word-for-word translation of "have a good time" and this did not work very well in French. Some used "*s'amuser*" or referred to the quality of the experience ("*ce sera une expérience géniale / très amusante*"), which was fine.

Part 3   Transferring "excited" presented difficulties. Examiners were only looking for a way of expressing eagerness or enthusiasm but those who did not know the difference between "*passionnés*" and "*passionnants*", "*excités*" and "*excitants*" etc. could not be given any credit. Some tried lateral thinking, attempting to convey 'excited' by 'they cannot wait'. Unfortunately "*ils ne peuvent pas attendre"* does not convey the same idea*,* whereas *"attendent avec impatience"* or *"ont hâte de"* did very effectively.

Part 4   Although some of the words appeared in the text of Task 3, lexical skills were stretched in this section. Verbs such as "*regarder / voir pour*" or "*rechercher*" were not acceptable alternatives for "*chercher*" and 'recipes' was often used as if it had been a French word, or slightly altered to give it a French flavour ("*récipes*"); also unexpectedly popular was '*des receips*'. Those who used "*des plats*" could be given credit. The verb 'to enjoy' proved testing too and here "*s'amuser*" was not acceptable – nor was the very popular "*enjoyer*", which has not yet made its way into the French language. There was also confusion between the conditional and the imperfect.

Part 5   For linguistic reasons, because the two verbs had different subjects, many failed to convey the message; they wrote exactly the opposite of what was expected: "*voulez-vous nous envoyer*" as opposed to "*voulez-vous que nous vous envoyions*".

Occasionally, candidates went beyond what was required by the task, suggesting possible British specialities such as 'fish and chips' or 'shepherds' pie' or showing much enthusiasm for the project. Such commitment could not gain extra marks, but it was good to see candidates enter into the spirit of the task.

Grid C2 – Quality of language (accuracy)

Generally, candidates remained very close to the English stimulus. Most sentences were written in isolation and only a small minority attempted more elaborate language. It should be noted that the only complexity that is expected is that required by the task. Nevertheless, many candidates avoided producing syntax whenever they could and essentially wrote a series of fairly accurate but straightforward sentences. For example, in Part 1, instead of showing they could use "*que*" after "*je pense*", they wrote two separate sentences, avoiding the clause altogether (e.g. *Merci pour votre message. À mon avis, c'est une idée excellente).* The maximum mark for such simple language is the 5/6 band.

In Part 2, the future tense was attempted by most – even if the outcome was not entirely successful. Agreement of verb and subject (especially with a collective phrase such as "*tout le monde*") was often inaccurate.

In Part 3, too many seemed unaware that the plural of "*notre*" is "*nos*", although in more accurate scripts, candidates did remember to make the adjective agree. In the second half of Part 3, word order and perfect tense proved to be a stumbling block for some, and "*avant*" was occasionally given as "*devant*".

In Part 4, many could not cope with the continuous present, stumbled over vocabulary, as mentioned earlier, and the conditional in the latter part of the stimulus became a future or a passive. The French was left in the singular (occasionally in its feminine form). Finally, if very few realised that a subjunctive was required in Part 5 – or realised but did not know how to form it – most were able to convey the last section correctly.

Task 5

The first of the reading texts dealt with the topic of transport, with which candidates were familiar.

Part A

In this section very few candidates scored less than three marks. Statement (b) was generally identified as correct by nearly all candidates; they could match "*un désir d'innover*" in the text with "*un nouveau concept*" in the statement. At the other end of the scale, a trend was not so clear-cut; the fact that "*dormir*" in (i) might not automatically be linked to the idiomatic expression "*fermer l'oeil*" is understandable but why so many failed to identify "*journaux*" in paragraph 3 and associate it with " *il y a de quoi lire*" in (g) is less obvious. Statement (h) was frequently erroneously selected, possibly because candidates took no notice of "*gratuitement"* in the statement or because they did not know or misunderstood "*location*" in the text. Another popular incorrect answer was (a) because candidates read the statement too quickly without noticing the tense of the verb.

Part B

This exercise required candidates to select from the stimulus text the exact equivalent of the five words in the question. The main problem was that some selected a phrase rather than the word, and even if it included the correct word, no credit could be given as it was not the "**exact**" equivalent. This was a problem for (k) and (l) in particular, whereas for (n) and (o) the majority of candidates correctly identified "*nocturnes*" and "*préférentiels*".

Task 6

The second reading text, dealing with an unusual aspect of education, proved very good at differentiating both for comprehension and linguistic ability. It would seem that fewer candidates automatically copied sections of the text where one of the words in the question appeared and many made a genuine effort to manipulate the text.

a)   This was a good discriminator: candidates needed to mention "*école*" in their answer to get the mark. Only if they had understood the text could they do this, even though some good candidates thought that not having to do any thinking at all was a worthy wish.

b)   Many were able to link "*craignent*" in the text and "*ont peur*" in the question.

c)   A straightforward question and although many thought the abbreviation of "*Monsieur*" was an initial – male or female – the majority of candidates realised M. Magnard had invented the "*cahiers de vacances*".

d)   In this question candidates had to show the dual nature of the help provided by the "*cahiers de vacances*" – as a revision tool and also advance preparation for work to come. The fact that they could do so in an entertaining way was allowed as an alternative for either. Some responses guessed that "*préparer le passage*" was possibly an advantage, but on its own or with the addition of "*d'une année*" only, it did not communicate. The alternative answer was quite frequently given.

e)   An intentionally accessible question. Unfortunately, many used "*bibliothèque*" for "*librairie*". Mentioning "*magasins*" without qualifier was also insufficient. It was disappointing that some candidates gave "*magazines*" for "*magasins*".

f)   This was generally well answered, even though in the text the answer to (i) preceded the mention of "*le contenu des cahiers*".

g)   This question was intentionally demanding: it required understanding of the second half of the third paragraph and rephrasing.

h)   The answer to this question could not be lifted from the text, but it was intended to be accessible. Unfortunately some otherwise acceptable answers did not gain credit because candidates failed to refer specifically to "*cahiers <u>pour adultes</u>*".

i)   This produced a range of marks. Answers where language interfered, such as "*le temps faisait mal*", could not gain credit. Quite a number did not realise that the positioning of the "*cahiers*" in the shops was an explanation of the good marketing ploy mentioned in the text. These two answers could only be given credit once. For the third point, conveying parents' intention was essential.

Grid C2 – Quality of language (accuracy)

There were fewer instances of 'lifting' than in the previous examination series. This is important because chunks of language copied from the text cannot be given credit.

This task provided plenty of opportunities to show an ability to manipulate language and to use more complex structures. When candidates use isolated words as for example "*librairie*" and "*grandes sufaces*" in Q(e), they can get marks for comprehension but they are not making the most of opportunities to show their linguistic abilities. Those who wrote "*on peut les acheter dans une librairie ou dans une grande surface"* showed they could use direct object pronouns. Writing full sentences is not required, but it can enhance performance, so candidates should be encouraged to write longer sentences. Candidates made avoidable errors (*les parent* – omitting

the s; *deux moins* – instead of *deux mois).* Verb-related errors were common (*ils faisent;* verbs left in the infinitive when they should have been conjugated, or not agreeing with the subject – *les programmes a évolué; les enfants va oublier* etc.). Other errors showed a lack of understanding of basic grammar (past participles without auxiliary – *ils voulu* –, present tense formed with an auxiliary – *les programmes ont changent* – confusion over active and passive forms for verbs etc.). At the other end of the scale, some candidates made genuine attempts to use a wide range of structures (pronouns – direct, demonstrative, emphatic – en + present participle, *à cause de* + noun, infinitive constructions etc.).

Task 7

The subject matter – the Tour de France and the problem of drugs in sports – fitted well within the AS topics and all candidates had plenty to say in response to the text. It was pleasing to see so many putting ideas down and trying to organise their thoughts in mini-plans before writing their answers. This probably helped them stay (more or less) within the recommended limit of 200 to 300 words overall – although some still wrote in excess of 600 words. Generally, those who wrote too much repeated points and drifted away from the subject – which could not earn them any credit.

Some were unable to differentiate between Q7(a) and Q7(b); in the former, answers had to be based on the text and its ideas; in the latter, candidates were expected to move beyond the text to express their own views.

a)   The question was twofold: what is the aim of the AFLD and what does it do to achieve it within the context of the Tour de France. Nearly all candidates managed to express the aim of the AFLD in their own words but few succeeded in answering the second part of the question effectively. Either they did not understand the question or they moved away from it to express personal opinions about drug taking rather than base their answer on the twelve relevant points contained in the text. They found some relevant points (mostly related to points 2 to 8 of the mark scheme) but the last four points were most elusive, possibly because they had not really understood the passage and how the "*tests imprévus*" worked. Common sense could possibly have told them that it would not be very practical to impose tests every 5km.

To improve performance in this section of the paper, candidates must learn to identify the relevant points from the text and to express them in their own words.

b)   All candidates had some relevant views about the topic, with some feeling extremely strongly about drug-taking in sport, particularly those who took an active part in sports. At times some digressed into wider drug-related issues but there was plenty to say about what could drive sportsmen/women to take drugs, the impact of money on sport and sportsmanship, fair-play and values, sport as entertainment and the influence famous sportspeople have on children. Many candidates were able to offer a good range of ideas with good developments, whilst others because of either lack of understanding or/and lack of linguistic ability only offered a few repeated points which often were disjointed and occasionally contradictory. This question provided very good differentiation.

Grid C2 – Quality of language (accuracy)

Quite frequently, there was a marked difference between the quality of language across 7(a) and 7(b) with no identifiable pattern: some made good use of the support provided by the text, others performed better when they could express their own ideas and choose their own language to do so. Many errors could possibly have been avoided. Candidates are advised to allow time for checking and to check their writing selectively, concentrating on one set of rules at a time (i.e. just verb endings or just agreements).

Most frequent errors related to verb forms and agreement ("*Les gens que utiliser le dopage est stupide*"), genders, articles, confusion over the passive and active forms ("*Dopage dans sport ne devrait pas égaliser*"), pronouns, the negative (incorrect word order, applying the negative to adverbs or adjectives rather than verb ("*C'est ne pas juste* ; *ne seulement pas"*).

Grid F2 – Quality of language (range)

Most candidates tried to extend the range of vocabulary and structures they used, particularly the more able ones. They used with ease a range of tenses, as the nature of the task allowed them to make suppositions, suggestions, to refer to past, future and present.

Sometimes they tried a little too hard to include language they had prepared for this exercise: "*Poursuivons en disant qu' on ne pourrait pas oublier le fait que…*" sounds impressive but does not really say anything more than "*de plus*" or "*en outre*". On occasions, such phrases were incorrect– "*Si l'on veuille ou non"* – or mis-used altogether: "*Aussi paradoxal que cela puisse paraître"* when nothing remotely "*paradoxal*" was expressed. Nevertheless, it was pleasing to note all the attempts to go beyond the linguistically obvious and to put together a structured and well-argued piece.

In some scripts candidates quite frequently resorted to making up words (*espécialement, les sporteurs, les dopeurs, dopager, les abilités, les events, les capabilités, un suggère, une pénalté, un problème signifique* …) and also had difficulties producing French syntax. They thought in English and then translated each word into French ("*La chance qui est moins pour eux qui ne pas utilise dopage"*). When complexity interferes with communication, it cannot be given credit. All the same, most candidates were correctly entered, most had clearly progressed beyond GCSE and some were already well on the way towards A2.

F704 Listening, Reading and Writing 2:

General comments

Taken for the first time this series, this unit produced a good range of attainment. Most candidates had been appropriately entered and seemed well prepared for the various question types. Very few candidates failed to finish the paper. Rubric infringements such as writing answers in the wrong language were very rare. However, a few candidates lost marks by giving two possible – and incompatible – answers to certain sub-questions; in such cases the mark can only be awarded if both answers are correct. Poor handwriting was another avoidable failing of a small number of scripts.

SECTION A

Task 1

This question produced a wide range of marks. A few candidates provided all the required information, but some candidates who performed strongly on the paper as a whole had difficulty identifying all relevant points of detail.

a) Most candidates seemed to have understood the gist of Serge Tisseron's first reply, but some struggled to convey in clear English the key idea that people we meet online are not always who they say they are.

b) Many candidates got 2 out of the available 3 marks here. The phrase *les gens ont l'impression de bien se connaître* was generally conveyed successfully, as was the reference to *goûts* and *centres d'intérêt*. Most candidates mistranslated *déception* as 'deception' rather than 'disappointment'.

c) The phrase *75 % des usagers sont des hommes* was understood by almost all candidates. The other marking point proved more difficult, with some candidates writing 'wanting to meet women' instead of 'presenting themselves as women'.

d) Well answered in all but a few scripts.

e) The verb *gérer* was an effective discriminator for the first marking point. Some candidates wrote answers which wrongly implied that adults should control children's use of networking sites. In the second part of the answer, the phrase *lui sera utile demain* proved to be a hurdle for many.

Task 2

Many candidates did better in this question than in Task 1, with a good number achieving full marks. The best responses tended to be those where candidates avoided transcribing long phrases from the recording and expressed the key ideas in clear, simple French.

a) Well answered by most, but occasionally the word *d'essence* was wrongly transcribed as *de sens*, which was meaningless in this context.

b) Candidates gave good responses here, often getting their two marks from the first and second of the three possible options. Some went too far in writing *éliminer* or *arrêter* instead of *limiter* for the second marking point. Those who referred to the fight against climate change only got credit if the context was correct, i.e. if they explained that this was a consequence of limiting emissions.

c) i)   Well answered.

c) ii) Relatively few problems, although *huile* was by no means universally known.

d)   Most candidates grasped the sense of *la proportion de produits issus de matières végétales*, but many had problems conveying *atteindre*: either they transcribed it wrongly as *attendre*, for which no credit could be given, or they wrote an answer in their own words implying an increase of 15% instead of an increase to 15%.

e)   Fairly well answered, although it was disappointing to see *montre* instead of *monte* on some otherwise good scripts.

f) i)   The word *maïs* caused difficulty for some. A few candidates evidently misunderstood the question as well as the recording, as they wrote answers such as *Ils doivent toucher une prime de 45 euros*.

f) ii) Well answered, but a few misspellings of *nourrir* were too close to *nuire* which conveys a very different meaning.

g)   Many candidates understood the reference to using 300,000 hectares, but the phrase *qui actuellement ne sont pas cultivés* caused some difficulty.

h)   Most candidates got the first point, even if they did not manage to put the subjunctive *nuise* into the correct indicative form in their answer. Some candidates wisely avoided that verb altogether, writing for example *C'est mauvais pour l'environnement*. In the second marking point, most candidates were successful but no credit could be given for *C'est cher à la société* as this conveyed the wrong sense of *cher*.

i)   A good discriminator, especially the second marking point which was omitted or wrongly conveyed by many. The verb *consacrer* was unfamiliar to some.

j)   The verb *endommager* caused some difficulty: it was sometimes wrongly transcribed as two words *en dommager*, or replaced by the invented verb *damager*. In this marking point it was important to refer to *moteur* rather than *voiture*.

Language, Section A

The standard of candidates' written French varied widely. Some paid impressively close attention to detail, but others made errors with adjectival agreements, verb endings and the spelling of words with English cognates.

SECTION B

Task 3

A good number of candidates got all four marks; those who did not usually failed to identify items (e) and/or (h) as correct.

Task 4

Attainment ranged widely in this question. Some candidates understood the text thoroughly and gave accurate answers, while others either struggled to identify the correct sections of the text or relied on excessive copying with little evidence of genuine comprehension.

a) Many candidates conveyed the meaning correctly and showed good comprehension by replacing *effacer de sa mémoire* and *capitulation* with *oublier* and *défaite* respectively. In some scripts, candidates misconstrued this section of the text by thinking that Abraracourcix was a present-day character connected in some way with the *MuséoParc*.

b) For the first marking point, the 'lifting' of *réactiver le souvenir* was acceptable for the communication mark, but the use of a different verb such as *commémorer* was better and helped to get credit for language. For the second marking point, direct 'lifting' was not sufficient because it was not clear who *le plus grand nombre* referred to; successful answers in candidates' own words included *Ils veulent attirer plus de gens* and *Pour rendre le musée populaire*.

c) One of the most discriminating items on the paper, with only a small number of candidates giving the correct answer. Some candidates referred wrongly to *Jésus-Christ* here.

d) A good answer here included a reference to all four elements – *activités interactives*, *parcours découvertes pour VTT*, *jeux pour enfants* and *histoire de France* – introduced by suitable verbs such as *participer* and *apprendre*. Some candidates mistook *découvertes* for a verb, which they then tried to manipulate.

e) Common errors here were the use of an invented verb *défaiter*, for which no credit could be given, and confusion arising from a misunderstanding of *face à*. Some candidates referred wrongly to Jules Ferry rather than to the French defeat.

Task 5

This exercise required candidates to 'cut and paste' one or more words from the stimulus text as an exact alternative to those in the question. Almost all candidates got (c) and (d) right, whereas (a) and (b) were more problematic. Some candidates lost the mark in part (b) by writing *il était piégé* or just *piégé* instead of the required *était piégé*.

Task 6

This question was fairly well done, at least in terms of communication. The accuracy of candidates' French, however, ranged widely.

a) If candidates used *se battre*, then the reflexive pronoun was required. Other possible answers were *ont fait la guerre* and *ont lutté*. Many candidates used an imperfect tense which, while acceptable for communication, did not attract credit for language because of the specified time period *pendant sept ans*.

b) Often well answered, although misspellings of *est né* as *est naît* were surprisingly common.

c) Few problems.

d) Well answered. Most candidates used the verb *finir*, but perfect tense forms of *se terminer* and *s'arrêter* were also acceptable.

e) *gagner* was sometimes used wrongly here.

f)   A reference to length of time was required here, rather than the idea of 'tiring' or 'exhausting' which would have been more appropriate for *le travail* than for *les heures de travail*.

g)   Many candidates correctly wrote *aime* or *adore*, or even *ne se plaint pas (du)*, but some appeared not to have understood *exerce* in the question and gave a wrong answer such as *fait*.

Task 7

This transfer of meaning task required candidates to show comprehension of a French text using clear, precise English. Most candidates found the right balance between an over-literal word-for-word translation and good English. However, some tended to paraphrase and, in doing so, ran the risk of omitting key ideas.

The items which caused the greatest difficulty were:
- *étrange* – sometimes confused with *étrangers*
- *nombreux* – sometimes wrongly linked with *familles*, e.g. 'many families'
- *étrangers* – sometimes confused with *étrange*
- *remarqués* – surely a familiar word, but sometimes mistranslated as 'well known' or 'talked about'
- *craints* – often guessed, e.g. 'kept' or 'welcomed'
- *interrogations* – sometimes mistranslated as 'interrogations'
- *les sédentaires* – often guessed, e.g. 'people different from us'

Examples of very good transfer of meaning included:
- 'that comes and goes' for *qui arrive et repart*
- 'conspicuous' for *remarqués*
- 'for people who stay put like us' for *pour les sédentaires que nous sommes*

Task 8

The marks in this question were on average slightly higher than those in Task 4. Many candidates showed good comprehension of the text as a whole, even though there was considerable variation in the quality of their French.

a)   Many candidates conveyed the three required ideas – theft, lying and dirtiness – successfully. It was not enough to quote the three nouns *vol, mensonge, saleté* in isolation; candidates had as a bare minimum to link them appropriately to the question, e.g. *On les soupçonne de vol … .* Better candidates were often able to show linguistic dexterity by supplying suitable verbs, e.g. *On a tendance à penser qu'ils commettent des vols, qu'ils mentent et qu'ils sont sales.*

b)   The first marking point was fairly accessible, but the second less so. The phrase *à les en accuser faussement* could not be 'lifted' verbatim from the text, but neither was it necessary to use complex French: an 'own words' explanation such as …*et les accuser de leurs délits* was perfectly adequate.

c) i)   A simple answer, but a good discriminator. Some responses seemed to confuse the two eras that were being compared; a few candidates wrote *les Tziganes* here.

c ii)   The best answers were those that did not rely on copying chunks of French from the text but expressed the key ideas in simple words, such as *Eux aussi, ils ont été exclus*. The direct quotation of the phrase *de l'exclusion à l'extermination* showed no comprehension

and therefore got no marks. Mention of discrimination was not credited because it understated the severity of the treatment described in the text.

d) i) The phrase *tiennent beaucoup à* was generally well understood and re-expressed in different terms, e.g. *Ils attachent beaucoup d'importance à la famille* or, better still, *Ils y attachent beaucoup d'importance*.

d) ii) Merely stating *L'école est limitée* was missing the point and did not get credit. Good answers included *L'éducation menace leur culture* and *Ils ne pensent pas que l'école soit vraiment nécessaire*.

Task 9

This question produced a very wide spread of marks.

a) The key idea here was 'lacking importance'. This could be expressed in a variety of ways, but the simple phrase … *ne sont pas importantes* was adequate. Some candidates became entangled with adverbs such as *autant* and *tellement*.

b) This item tested comprehension of the sentence *La plupart … secteur de travail*, which many candidates found difficult. The key idea was 'movement', but it was necessary to replace the noun *mouvement* with a suitable verb such as *se déplacent* or *quittent (l'endroit)* in order to show full comprehension.

c) Candidates could complete this sentence in one of two ways, either focusing on the fact that it is a typical job done by travellers, e.g. … *les gens du voyage font*, or on the fact that the job is dying out, e.g. … *nous ne voyons presque plus*. In the latter answer the inclusion of *presque* was crucial.

d) The most natural answer here involved finding a verbal expression for *l'aménagement (des terrains de stationnement)*; *aménager* was fine, as was *fournir*. Some answers stated wrongly that the *communes* were going to occupy the caravan parks, such as … *d'habiter les terrains de stationnement*.

Task 10

The attainment in this question was, on average, lower than in any other question on the paper. Nevertheless, a small number of candidates did manage to get 6 out of 6.

a) Wrong answers such as *enseigne* and *cultive* suggested a misunderstanding of the sentence *car les parents … culture propre* as a whole.

b) Some answers here were pure guesses, such as *en principe*.

c) Surprisingly few candidates were familiar with *coin* in the sense of 'local area'. Wrong answers such as *les citoyens normaux* were quite common.

d) Some candidates referred appropriately to *les autorités* or *la mairie*, but others seemed to take the phrase *pouvoirs publics* out of context and gave a wrong answer such as *la puissance des gens* or *les choses qu'on doit faire*.

e) A lot of good answers here, e.g. *Ils ne font pas ce qu'ils devraient faire* and *Ils ne font pas ce dont ils sont responsables*.

f) Only a few candidates understood *l'emporter sur*; some tried to make a connection with *porter* in the sense of 'carrying'.

Section B: Quality of Language

High marks for quality of language were gained where candidates used their own words sensibly and accurately used complex grammatical structures. However, many performances were patchy, with a tendency to make basic errors of verb endings or adjectival agreements alongside the successful use of more advanced structures.

SECTION C

Most candidates allowed themselves adequate time to do the extended writing task. Indeed there was a tendency to write at unnecessary length, sometimes to the detriment of quality. It was good to see evidence of clear planning; while assessors do not mark essay plans as such, the quality of the response was usually higher where a plan had been written. The discursive titles were rather more popular than the creative titles, but on average similar levels of attainment were reached in the two types of task.

Relevance and points of view

Some candidates got low marks for relevance and points of view because no meaningful references were made to target-language society. Many otherwise good essays or creative pieces consisted of material that applied as much to the UK or other European countries as to France and other French-speaking communities. It was not enough merely to insert *en France* from time to time or to state *J'ai lu dans un journal français que …* ; what was required was some specific evidence, possibly including simple statistical data, to provide a basis for the candidate's ideas and opinions.

Structure and analysis

Most candidates structured their writing task adequately, with good use of paragraphs and suitable opening and closing remarks. The quality of analysis varied widely. In some creative responses, it was good to see analytical thinking supported by obvious enthusiasm for the cause in question, maybe including the appropriate use of command forms such as *réfléchissons!*. However many candidates were unable to maintain a logical sequence of points, and some promising arguments lost their impact because they were left in mid-air as the writer switched the focus to a different aspect of the topic.

Quality of language (accuracy and range)

The quality of candidates' language was often inconsistent with the quality of their content. Some candidates relied excessively on set phrases such as *à bien des égards*, *il me paraît que* and *il serait oiseux de nier que* even when these phrases did not fit the context. A few candidates missed out key words with the result that a sentence no longer made sense, such as *la coopération de tous les du monde est essentielle* (*pays* omitted). On the other hand, a refreshingly high number of candidates wrote whole paragraphs of French with hardly any errors and with a broad range of structures and vocabulary, making their work easy to understand and a pleasure to read.

Common errors of grammar and syntax included:
- *des* after a negative, e.g. *ils n'ont pas des qualifications*
- failure to use *du* and *des*, e.g. *la situation de les jeunes*
- confusion of definite and indefinite article, e.g. *Il y a les avantages importants*.
- confusion of *à* and *de* with adjectives and verbal constructions, e.g. *Il est difficile à comprendre les gens qui ne veulent pas travailler* ; *Il faut aider les gens de trouver un logement.*
- singular verb after a plural subject, e.g. *La pollution et l'environnement est …*

- wrong construction after *avant* and *sans*, e.g. *sans faisant des sacrifices*
- English phrasing such as *C'est pour les autorités de résoudre le problème.*

Common errors of lexis and orthography included:
- spellings with Spanish influence such as *facil*
- wrong genders, e.g. *la risque*, *la manque*, *la crime*, *le plupart*
- invented words, e.g. *préventer*, *sécure*
- inappropriate use of 'extreme' words such as *incroyable* and *primordial*

Question 11

This was the most popular of the non-discursive questions. Many candidates related an appropriately sad tale of misfortune, portraying themselves as victims of an uncaring society and unable to cater for their families' needs. Unfortunately, adequate references to target-language society were very scarce in this question, although a small number of candidates did refer to the *Restos du Cœur* and others showed general knowledge of the French benefits system. Weaker scripts tended to include far-fetched demands of the French government, e.g. that it should immediately provide every unemployed person with a good job or that it should eradicate the problem of unemployment overnight.

Question 12

The standard was, on average, higher here than in the other Section C questions. Many candidates seemed to be well trained in structuring their writing in an organised way: first setting out the nature of the problem, then presenting various possible solutions and finally offering a well justified opinion as to the best way forward. However, even in this question very few candidates made substantive reference to target-language society. Those who did referred to a range of evidence such as the 2005 riots, the *bracelet électronique* and the over-population of French prisons. As in Question 11, some of the recommendations made in this question were rather far-fetched, including, in one script, a suggestion that the death penalty be given to graffiti artists 'in order to free up space in prisons'.

Question 13

The average attainment here was similar to that of Question 12, although there were more unbalanced performances in which candidates wrote accurate, ambitious French but fell short in terms of content. A lot of responses were skewed towards explaining the reasons for pollution and/or listing the various types of pollution rather than evaluating the success of measures to control it. Better answers to the question included successful initiatives to reduce atmospheric pollution such as *le covoiturage* and the *Vélib'* scheme in Paris. It was also good to see some candidates consider noise and water as well as atmospheric pollution; however those who based their entire answer on the potential dangers of nuclear waste were really missing the point. Also wide of the mark was the small number of candidates who wrote mainly about global warming and made only a passing reference to pollution. In answering this question it was permissible to draw on evidence from the second listening task in Section A, provided that appropriate evaluation was included.

Question 14

There was a wide range of achievement amongst candidates who responded to this question. At the top end, it was pleasing to see an awareness of specific threats to the natural environment in France, such as the intensification of agriculture and urban sprawl, which gave candidates a plausible basis on which to make their appeal. Some candidates had little to say about the topic and placed too great an emphasis on peripheral detail such as when the group would meet and details of its social activities.

Question 15

Only one or two candidates attempted this question.

Question 16

This question was not very popular, but it attracted some of the highest marks awarded for Section C. Favourite topics were stem cell research, including specific references to French scientists, and the development of genetically modified foods. The best essays were well balanced and focused on just one or two developments rather than trying to give a complete account of the advances of the last 50 years. A few candidates chose to write in this question about nuclear energy; that was fine in principle but they usually adopted an environmental rather than scientific focus which meant that they got little credit for content.

Question 17

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 18

Very few candidates attempted this question.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced Subsidiary GCE French (H075 H475)
January 2010 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
F701	Raw	60	46	41	37	33	29	0
	UMS	60	48	42	36	30	24	0
F702	Raw	140	105	94	83	72	61	0
	UMS	140	112	98	84	70	56	0
F704	Raw	140	104	91	78	65	53	0
	UMS	140	112	98	84	70	56	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H075	200	160	140	120	100	80	0

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

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H075	18.4	46.6	69.9	84	95.7	100	163

163 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums/index.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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