GCE

OCR Report to Centres

June 2013

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

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

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

F701 French Speaking

General comments

As in previous series, there was a range of impressive performances with few candidates inappropriately entered for the examination. Centres offered interesting and well-researched topic discussions with many candidates choosing topics for which they had genuine enthusiasm. There were good role play performances showing initiative and imagination as well as careful attention to the stimulus material.

Role plays

Use of Stimulus

Half of the points are awarded for use of the stimulus material and the most successful candidates realised this and made sure that they conveyed all the information. Many candidates had been trained to say everything, and this was a technique that served them well. Some candidates took the initiative and added in material that had been missed out when the teacher/examiner moved on before they had had the chance to say it.

Task A

The opening question caused problems for some candidates who did not realise that the possessive adjective *son* needed to be changed appropriately. The subject matter seemed familiar to candidates who had no problems understanding the role of an extra. Candidates who did not know expressions in French for full-time or part-time were often able to find ways round it, such as working everyday or working a few days a week. It is not usually necessary to use precise wording for any key point; the important thing is to express the idea. Candidates found key point 14 difficult, with inappropriate use of *préparé* and *arrangements*.

Task B

Most candidates seemed to have heard of the Brontë sisters, even if they had not read any of their books. Candidates found it difficult to select an appropriate word for 'for' in the first key point. 'Century' gave problems in key point 6, despite how frequently this word occurs in role plays. There were some problems in this task with teacher/examiners giving away vocabulary, such as in key point 9, when some asked if there were guided tours available, leaving the candidates to merely reply 'no'. Centres are reminded that the questions in the booklet are worded to avoid this happening, so teacher/examiners are strongly advised to use the questions as they are given.

Task C

Most candidates were able to express the opening key points without too many difficulties. Some missed out key points 6 and 7, and *langage* was sometimes given for 'language'. Some candidates appeared to have missed the glossed word *radar*, and used inappropriate substitutes such as *appareil-photo*. Many candidates tried to use the adjective *célèbre* as a noun to mean 'celebrity'.

Task D

This role play had ideas which should have been accessible to all, and this proved to be the case. Key point 4 gave difficulties, as some candidates did not seem to know *formation*. The idea of solving problems in key point 5 split candidates, with some tentatively using 'solver' while others sought a different way of expressing the word they did not know and used phrases such as *trouver des solutions*. Key point 9 was sometimes missed out and, rather surprisingly, the number 135 proved challenging, as did 14 in the first key point.

Task E

Most candidates seemed familiar with games consoles and most had a good knowledge of the technical vocabulary appropriate to modern technology, as the specification demands. 'Record' gave a few problems in key point 4, but words like 'download' and 'screen' presented few difficulties. Key point 10 was sometimes missed out; it is important that candidates are trained to give all the information.

Task F

Many candidates did well on this role play although key points 7 and 8 seemed to provide particular challenge. The idea of applications and applying occurs frequently in role plays, so it was disappointing to hear the inappropriate use of cognates. There were some good versions of key point 9 when the word 'équipe' was not known, and examiners are always pleased to credit alternative but worthy renditions of the ideas.

Response to Examiner

Most candidates were able to complete the task within the six minutes allowed. Centres are reminded that examiners stop listening and assessing at six minutes. A minority of candidates were allowed to continue for up to nine minutes; there is no benefit to the candidate in this. Most candidates made an appropriate link between the opening questions and the main transactional part of the role play, either in response to a prompt or by immediately launching into an introduction to the product or situation.

Although candidates can score well by showing initiative and imagination only in the extension questions, the candidates who reached the top band demonstrated it throughout the role play. The most familiar form of this is candidates indicating that a member of their family has the product or has visited the attraction, but there were many more sophisticated responses, such as references to which roles the daughter might prefer in role play F, or expansions on the 'do and do not' list in role play A, giving more reasons why this behaviour should be adhered to.

Candidates' approach to the extension questions varied greatly, with many viewing them as an opportunity to show the range of language they had learnt throughout the course. Teacher/examiners' follow-up questions were often useful in drawing out more detail and extending good candidates. In other cases, particularly with less successful candidates, it would have been better if the candidate had been encouraged to give more detail from the stimulus text.

Quality of Language

There was a full range of performances, although very few candidates were awarded a mark at the bottom of the grid.

Centres have succeeded in raising candidates' performance in the opening questions over the course of the specification. Those questions where it is necessary to manipulate a pronoun or possessive adjective tend to cause the most difficulties (usually *son, sa* and *ses*) and centres are advised to work further on this aspect.

In terms of vocabulary, *faux amis* continue to be the biggest problem along with inappropriate use of invented cognates, such as 'solver', 'recorder' and 'expensive'. Missed agreements are common in the role plays, and verb endings are sometimes a bit vague. The same range of structures as in the topic discussion is not expected, but ambition is always rewarded.

Examining

The standard of examining by teacher/examiners is better than at the start of the specification. The best teacher/examiners have prepared the role plays thoroughly and have noted how the paragraphs tie up with the bullet points. Such teacher/examiners are frequently able to prompt candidates for further information, and simple questions like 'Is there anything else?' can gain candidates vital marks. There are still instances of questions being asked even when a candidate has already given the information and this can cause confusion and distress.

The other significant problem in examining technique is where teacher/examiners do not use the questions that are in the booklet. They are phrased in such a way to make it impossible for key vocabulary to be given away inadvertently. For example, in role play D the fifth bullet point question asked where candidates came from. Some teacher/examiners instead asked 'Do the candidates only come from the United Kingdom or do they come from lots of other countries as well?' Key vocabulary had been given away and the candidates could not be credited.

Some teacher/examiners mix the extension questions in with the main transactional part. At this point it is difficult to judge how much time is available and so extension answers tend to be shorter at centres that choose to do this, which is not to candidates' advantage.

Topic discussion

Choice of topics

Candidates offered a wide range of topics. Family is increasing in popularity, perhaps due to its prominence in the news this year; it is good to hear candidates choose topical subjects. Obesity, cinema, transport and tourism remain popular, and it is enjoyable to hear the individual angle that many candidates find. In the fifth year of the specification we are still finding instances of candidates choosing topics from the A2 list – nuclear energy or immigration are the two most commonly chosen – or topics which are not adequately related to France or a French-speaking country. It is acceptable for a candidate to talk about racism in sport as sport is an AS topic, but some choose to talk just about immigration, and this limits the mark that can be awarded. It is the content of the discussion, rather than merely the title, that examiners consider when deciding whether a topic is appropriate. Films or books can be offered, as long as the themes relate to one or more AS topics. Centres are welcome to seek advice if they are unsure whether a topic is suitable or not.

Ideas, Opinions and Relevance

It is important that candidates realise the importance of giving developed opinions and exploring ideas in depth. Ideally, candidates will do this throughout, justifying their ideas using the research they have done. Many candidates find it easier to spend time answering questions in a factual way and then expressing their opinion on what they have said. This can lead to a good outcome as long as enough time is spent on opinions. Some teacher/examiners do not give candidates the opportunity to give opinions; it is important that questions are asked to encourage this. Candidates who do not relate their topic sufficiently to France or a French-speaking country will be penalised under this grid. Candidates speaking on the subject of eating disorders and new technology seem to be particularly prone to insufficient reference to France; teachers of such candidates should be aware of the need to make all examples relevant.

At the other end of the spectrum, centres should be aware of the need for candidates to show evidence of research. A very small number of centres, often with only one candidate, had a 'chat' with the candidate instead of a topic discussion, during which they talked, for example, about the candidate's family at the level of GCSE, rather than talking about family life in France.

Fluency, Spontaneity, Responsiveness

Most candidates had prepared appropriately for the topic discussion and had sufficient material to be able to answer questions for nine to ten minutes.

Candidates are expected to prepare for the topic discussion and are not penalised when prepared material is used flexibly to respond to the teacher/examiner's questions. Unfortunately, there were instances where the discussion seemed scripted and both candidate and teacher seemed to be working from a prepared list of questions. As the candidate has already done the role play, it is easy to notice a big difference in the delivery of the second section, often accompanied by much better language. In the most extreme examples, the teacher/examiner referred to 'ta présentation', or the opening, instead of a question, was simply 'vas-y'. Centres are reminded that it should not be a presentation or a series of mini-presentations, but rather a genuine discussion.

Language

The expectation is for a more impressive range of language in this section because of the opportunity to prepare in advance, and many candidates demonstrate that they have learnt the full range of structures in the specification. There are many impressive linguistic performances that are a pleasure to listen to. Although there are some candidates who are first language speakers or have experience of French beyond that which could be expected, candidates are judged at a standard of one year beyond GCSE.

Topic-specific vocabulary is always appreciated where appropriate, and examiners like to hear a range of tenses and structures. Agreements tend to be inconsistent at AS, and it is particularly disappointing when the missed agreement relates to a topic-specific word where the gender really should be known.

Pronunciation

Examiners appreciate how difficult it is for candidates to produce a convincing French accent at their level of experience. The same words still tend to give difficulties – *alcool*, *tabagisme*, *femmes* and *principal*. Teachers are advised to pay particular attention to the mispronunciation of topic-specific vocabulary.

Intonation tends to suffer when material is recited and silent letters are often pronounced by such candidates. However, many candidates gave a determined attempt at a French accent and were credited for doing so.

Examining

There were many examples of good examining, with teachers asking a good range of questions or being sensitive to the needs of nervous candidates. Most teachers quickly dropped a line of questioning that was not proving fruitful, and there were fewer instances of candidates being aggressively questioned.

Teacher/examiners are usually familiar with the topics of their candidates and most take this responsibility seriously, ensuring that they hold back some questions during practice sessions, so that candidates face some unexpected questions on the day. With visiting examiners this is never an issue, and teacher/examiners should not be afraid to use some of the same techniques to tease additional information or justification from candidates.

Centres are reminded that the discussion should last nine to ten minutes. The two elements of the test are timed independently and any time not used in the role play cannot be carried over to the discussion. There are far more over-long discussions than short ones. Ten minutes is sufficient time to assess the capabilities of candidates. There is no advantage to be gained in going beyond this time, as any material beyond ten minutes is not marked. Tests that are excessively short do not give candidates the opportunity to fully develop their ideas.

Administrative matters

It is much appreciated that the vast majority of centres upload or post their recordings promptly, and that working mark sheets are completed and sent with the topic forms. Please be aware that CDs can break in the post; it is important to use appropriate packaging to minimise the risk.

Most centres use the correct code for the entry they require: 01 for the Repository, 02 for CDs and 03 for visiting examiner. The majority of centres now use the Repository. When using the Repository, teachers are reminded that the paperwork (mark sheets and topic forms) needs either to be sent to the examiner through the post or scanned and uploaded onto the Repository at the same time as the recordings.

Centres can use any reasonable file type, MP3 and WMA being the most common. File sizes vary tremendously between centres, ranging from 3MB to 24MB. Smaller file sizes are much quicker for centres to upload and for examiners to download, and are preferred if possible. Centres are reminded not to zip files prior to uploading them.

F702 French Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General comments

This paper discriminated very well. The topics covered in it were familiar to candidates and gave them opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge fully. Very few candidates were incorrectly entered. Time management was good, although candidates are advised to allow extra time to check the accuracy of their language in order to avoid basic agreement errors.

Candidates are also advised to make any amendment clear and unambiguous; their initial answer should be crossed out so that their final choice is clear to the examiner. Of course, their handwriting should be as legible as possible because examiners cannot award marks for answers they cannot read.

The last page of the question paper is blank for candidates to use should they run out of space where their answer would normally be expected. Use of separate additional sheets should be avoided or kept to a minimum.

Comments on individual questions

Task 1

This task produced a good range of marks. The best-answered questions were (a), (d), (g) and (j) and the most challenging ones were (e) and (c). A few candidates left the odd question unanswered, possibly because they had intended to go back but forgot.

(a)	Most candidates successfully linked *à l'heure* and the cognate *ponctuel*.

(b)	Although this question required candidates to infer, it was often correctly answered.

(c)	This question also required candidates to infer meaning from the key words *voilà pourquoi*. Candidates incorrectly chose option C (*essentielle)*.

(d)	One of the most successfully answered questions; most candidates could link *on en est très content* and *bienvenue* and reject the other two options.

(e)	Many chose option B because of the analogy in the text (*tout comme les autobus)*. Some chose option C, possibly because they latched onto *horaires de passage*. A few correctly understood that option A was an alternative to *un itinéraire déterminé*.

(f)	This question was accessible. Candidates had to link *retraités* in the text and *seniors* in the question. A number of them incorrectly chose option A (*parents*) because they took no notice of *de temps en temps* in the question.

(g)	A successful question; most candidates were able to match the synonyms *favoriser* in the text and *encourager* in option C.

(h)	The repetition of *moins* in the text naturally led to option A (*réduire*). Some however chose *contrôler*, which the text did not imply.

(i)	A more challenging question; some candidates honed in on the word *connaissance* and chose option C (*s'informer*) instead of listening to the whole phrase (*faire connaissance*) which would have led them to the correct option (*se rencontrer*).

(j)	This was correctly answered by most candidates; they could associate *préserver* in the text with *garder* in option C.

Task 2

Grid completion is a demanding test type, because candidates need to hold a lot of information before they can allocate each statement to the correct speaker. This task produced some good results. In spite of the clear indication that only ten marks were available, a few candidates put more than ten ticks in the grid and consequently incurred a penalty. Questions in the latter part of the task were more challenging.

(a) This question was generally correctly answered; many candidates could link *je ne peux absolument pas vivre sans viande* and *...est une nécessité absolue*; the qualifier was a gentle hint most identified.

(b) Many successfully identified Nadia as the speaker – she was the only one to mention money *(…pour des raisons financières)*. A few latched onto the word *à tout prix* in Thomas' utterance and thought it referred to the price of meat.

(c) Here candidates needed to understand a full statement rather than isolated words (*la cause animale).* Two of the speakers mentioned animal welfare, but only Nadia expressed concern for it. Most candidates correctly discarded Thomas.

(d) A well-answered question. Most candidates understood that Thomas favoured some types of meat over others.

(e) This question was usually answered correctly but was sometimes attributed to Nadia; she mentioned risks in connection to diabetes and some candidates picked up on this as a key word.

(f) As all interviewees mentioned health, careful listening was required to identify Thomas as the correct answer.

(g) This was one of the more problematic questions in this task. The statement was often attributed to Bruno who, like Nadia, uses the phrase *vivre sans viande* but in his case emphatically not so, rather than with some difficulty, as in Nadia's case.

(h) Another demanding question: candidates had to listen to the very end of Thomas' utterance to identify him as the correct speaker. Some assumed the answer was Bruno, possibly because of the mention of *beaucoup d'autres aliments.*

(i) This was one of the more demanding questions. The statement was frequently attributed incorrectly to Nadia who in fact stated the opposite. Candidates should listen to the full recording before reaching a decision.

(j) Both Nadia and Thomas refer to *viande rouge,* albeit to reject it; yet some candidates focused on these words and incorrectly selected one of them instead of Bruno.

Task 3

This task differentiated well. Candidates should note that when answers in English are required, their language needs be precise, clear and unambiguous.

(a) An accessible question but vocabulary was occasionally an issue. Some candidates wrote about helping or assisting at, instead of attending, a concert; others described the venue as "a big room" and a few omitted to say that the performers were internationally known. Nevertheless, most candidates scored at least one mark.

(b) Most candidates successfully answered this question. A few gave a wrong number (14/40) and some mentioned four days rather than four hours.

(c)   The outcome of this question was good; most candidates scored at least two of the three available marks. Part (iii) was almost universally given correctly. In part (i) a few interpreted *au moins* as "less than" and wrote that participants had to be under sixteen. In part (ii), some answers were not sufficiently precise: candidates simply said one had to visit or go on the website, as opposed to enrolling on it.

(d)   This proved a challenging question for the majority. *Repeindre* and *vestiaires* were not familiar items of vocabulary, so there was a great deal of guesswork involving items of clothing and football clubs.

(e)   This question was not very successful: omitting the subject of active verbs leads to ambiguity when all verbs have different subjects. The best answers mentioned "participants" in part (i) and used the passive voice in parts (ii) and (iii) to render *sont organisés* and *on leur explique le but* thus avoiding ambiguity or confusion. A number of candidates omitted part (i), possibly because it came at the beginning of the sentence (*après avoir rempli…*). Instead they gave, as their third point, "work started". Had they read the question carefully, they would have realised that this piece of information was included in the question and could not carry a mark.

(f)   This question was answered well by most because there were three possible ways of getting the mark. Many combined them and retained the meaning of the text; a few did not get the mark because they went beyond the text, either guessing or extrapolating (e.g. "she had always wanted to try this sort of work", "she had lots to do") or simply because they did not understand *j'avais jamais essayé*.

(g)   Many candidates scored the two marks available here. The most common errors occurred in part (i). They were due to misunderstanding either *y a pas grand-chose à faire* (interpreted as "lots of things to do") or *ça en valait la peine* which led to answers mentioning "pain" and "hardship". In part (ii) *sympa* could be interpreted in many ways, so the mark was very accessible.

(h)   This proved to be a challenge. Candidates misheard *recommencer* or thought it meant "recommend" and gave this as an answer. Others did not include the idea of contemplating repeating the experience, which led to answers such as "they did it again".

Task 4

This task produced good results, showing that most candidates were able to communicate, even if their French was not always accurate. The latter part of the message differentiated well.

Communication

1)   Generally candidates were able to convey the message; only a few were unable to produce "to improve". Sometimes the linking word between parts (1) and (2) was left out but most candidates found some satisfactory way of linking the two parts of the message.

2)   This was mostly done well with a variety of phrases to convey the idea of planning.

3)   The idea was communicated well but candidates tended to use *avec* rather than the more idiomatic *chez*.

4)   This was another successful part of the task, with a wide range of suitable ways of expressing similarity.

5)   This point was communicated well, although some candidates did not use a strong enough qualifier.

6) Another very well-answered section with only a few candidates giving a word-for-word translation of the English "to give it a try", such as *donner un essai,* which did not convey the right idea in French.

7) This sentence was challenging for many because of vocabulary (rules, to prevent, foreigners) although some managed to find a way around it *(les gens qui ne sont pas Français/qui viennent d'un autre pays*). Those who managed to communicate fully without the expected vocabulary are to be congratulated. Having to put this as a question was an added difficulty, solved variously from elegant inversion to a simple question mark at the end of the statement.

8) The second part of the statement was usually done well; a few left out "project".

9) Most candidates did well in this part, with a few occasionally omitting to convey the idea of possibility. The more alert candidates could spot the link between this part and the first question of Task 3.

10) A good outcome but some candidates used the wrong preposition (*de* instead of *à*), thus changing the whole meaning.

Quality of language

Candidates less at ease with the language performed better than in previous years. They were able to produce language that was French, even if not always accurate French. There were also fewer examples of ambitious and complex language from the better candidates, who tended to play safe. This is an acceptable approach as the only complexity expected to fulfil this exercise is that required by the task.

Some examples of good practice:
• Good use of tenses, as required by the task
• *Si* clauses with correct sequence of tenses (*si je ne pouvais pas… est-ce que je pourrais…*)
• Use of direct object pronoun (*je voudrais l'essayer*)
• Use of *de* after *quelque chose/quelqu'un* (*quelque chose de semblable/quelqu'un d'autre*)
• Inversion and use of infinitive after modal verb (*Puis-je donner…)*

Areas needing attention:
• Vocabulary (to improve, to plan/to intend, rules, to prevent, foreigners, to take part, to attend)
• Verb endings (*je peut/je veut … des règles qui empêche*)
• Rendering of the English continuous present
• Agreement of adjectives (*un amis française*)
• Use of *qu'est-ce que* instead of *est-ce que*

Task 5

Candidates did well on this task – better than on similar exercises in previous series.

Part A

(a) This was often answered correctly; *rêve* – another type of dream – was the most frequent incorrect answer.

(b) The outcome of this question was satisfactory. Most selected the correct option (B), but some went for A (a logical choice).

(c) A very well answered question; candidates could link the cognates *angoisse* and *anxiété.*

(d) This was the most demanding question of this section.

(e) Another very well answered question; *tendance* in the text was generally linked to the correct option C *à la mode*; it may be that the word *accessoire* next to *tendance* in the text gave candidates a valuable clue*.*

Part B

Some candidates found this section demanding, especially as all the options were verbs, with most beginning with a vowel, so that grammatical markers played a small part in determining the outcome. Candidates needed to read and understand the text to get the right answers.

(f) This was often correct but a few favoured the opposite idea *approcher* or, fairly frequently, *effacer*, for no obvious reason other than that they may have not known this verb. The better candidates had no difficulty choosing the correct answer.

(g) The answer to Q(f) was quite often given here. There was no obvious pattern.

(h) Those candidates who had understood the text were able to select the right option as it was a cognate. Those who did not understand the text chose a word from the list at random.

(i) For those who knew *ciseaux* and understood the text, this was an accessible question. Others just guessed and often chose *vendre*.

(j) This was almost always answered correctly.

Task 6 – Comprehension

Traditionally, this is the task candidates find most demanding and this year was no exception. This task was also a very good discriminator.

(a) Many candidates did not answer this question directly and simply used the nouns *isolement* and/or *anonymat* in the hope they would do; answers such *ils se sentent/ils sont anonymat* made no sense. The better candidates realised that adjectives were required to describe people's feelings.

(b) This was a difficult idea to express and several managed to produce answers showing real understanding of the text. Others did not understand either the text or the question and picked out words from the first paragraph, often reaching the contradictory and incorrect answer *combattre la solidarité.*

(c) Explaining the success of the *Fête des Voisins* was not easy. Many candidates remained close to the text and successfully said that the concept had spread beyond France. The other point proved more elusive. Many tried to use words from the text without manipulating the language, which frequently resulted in meaningless answers. Better candidates devised strategies to show that they had understood, with answers such as *des millions de personnes ont participé à la fête l'an passé.*

(d) This was an accessible question, which was mostly answered correctly. A number of candidates read the question incorrectly and said where the festival took place instead of saying when it happened.

(e) This question was generally done well, partly because candidates only needed four from six possible answers. Most scored at least two marks, many all four. Although verbs were often left in the infinitive (as in the text) rather than conjugated in answer to *Qu'est-ce que les participants font…,* candidates were given credit. However the mark was not awarded when a reflexive verb was used transitively (*ils rencontrent dans les rues*) because of the ambiguity created by the lack of an object.

(f) Most candidates managed to explain the general idea of helping each other or exchanging services. Few successfully explained how the system really worked. The *système d'annonces* was seldom mentioned, and its other purpose (*donner des nouvelles)* was misunderstood and seen as an extension of the exchange of services, namely providing new services.

(g) Candidates did not get the mark here if they answered the question from Annick's point of view, rather than from the neighbour's, as the question asked.

(h) Although this was an accessible question many did not get the mark because they added some invalidating information (*assistance aux personnes âgées*). Those who had read the question carefully noticed the singular (*quel service*) and only mentioned *la garde des enfants.*

(i) There were several ways of getting the two marks allocated to this question. The most frequent correct answer was *le respect mutuel* given by a good number of candidates*.* Many also referred to the impact on the quality of life but only the best managed to express it satisfactorily.

Task 6 – Quality of language

Candidates should be aware that they can get up to ten marks for the language they use when they answer Task 6. They should therefore allocate time to checking that they have correctly applied basic grammatical rules such as verb endings and agreements. Given the length of responses, there were more careless errors in this section than in Tasks 4 and 7.

Some examples of good practice:
- Use of object pronouns: *il lui prête son sêche-linge; on la célèbre dans beaucoup de pays*
- Passive: *la fête a été créée*
- *En* + present participle: *en aidant*

Areas where there is scope for improvement:
- Conjugating verbs rather than leaving them in the infinitive
- Third person plural of irregular verbs such as *boire* or *faire*
- Use and formation of reflexive verbs – as in Q(a), Q(c) and Q(e)
- Use of possessive adjectives: *ils partagent ses spécialités culinaires*
- Picking clues from the questions: Q(e) *Qu'est-ce que les participants font* – the answer should start with *ils* and the verb should have 3rd person plural ending; Q(g) *Qu'est-ce que le voisin…* the answer should start with il (not *elle* or *ils*, as often seen)

Task 7a

This task was generally done well with most candidates getting five or more marks. However, a number still seemed unaware of the nature of this task – namely, to provide a summary of the relevant section of a text. Although there are always between twelve and fifteen relevant points that they could mention, these candidates wrote very little about the text and expressed opinions which could not gain any credit in this section of Task 7. Other candidates relied too much on the text instead of putting it in their own words.

In this task, twelve possible points could be mentioned. The first two points relating to the changes in teacher training and their consequences were often omitted or inappropriately rendered, but points 3 to 8 featured very frequently; point 7 was often unchanged, with *refus* used as a verb (*ils refus de travail)*. Point 9 (lack of parental support) was rarely seen. The last three possible points were linked. Some candidates did not make it clear that the teachers were the victims of cyberbullying; in several cases candidates wrote about pupils bullying each other. Most managed to give at least one example of online bullying.

Task 7b

Candidates were generally interested in the topic and found plenty to say. In a few cases candidates did not read the question carefully and incorrectly wrote about their school experience or their teacher. Others wrote discursively on the pros and cons of being a teacher without saying whether the profession attracted them and why or why not. These candidates did not fulfil the requirements of the task and their marks were confined to the lower bands of Grid J.

A number of candidates felt strongly that they would not want to teach but many wrote with enthusiasm about wanting to enter the profession, often as primary school teachers as they were afraid of teenagers and possible violence in the light of the article in 7a. Often those who had a parent who was a teacher said they did not want to follow in their footsteps because it is a difficult and badly paid job, involving a lot of work even during the holidays. Others were attracted by all the holidays and free time, ideal for working mothers. Many were conscious of the economic situation and thought that any job and salary was better than unemployment. Some wanted to explore ways of getting the best out of difficult children or to inspire and change the lives of their pupils. Most were able to develop their ideas – some at great length – and supplied a lot of mixed views which made interesting reading.

Some well-thought out responses were a pleasure to read but many would have benefited from better planning, to avoid unnecessary repetition, irrelevant diversions into the job they really wanted to do or lengthy anecdotal evidence. Paragraphing would have made the responses easier to read, especially those that went well beyond the recommended word limit. Excessive length often had a detrimental effect on the quality of language.

Task 7 – Quality of Language

The standard varied greatly. A number of very accurate and ambitious pieces were a delight to read but some candidates had not checked or reviewed their work. There were basic errors, missing words or English words. Occasionally there were significant discrepancies between the quality of language in 7a and 7b. Candidates should be wary of over-using set phrases as they can be distracting and take focus away from the argument. It was not unusual to find six or seven lines of such language in lieu of an introduction. Such pre-learnt material tends to unbalance the essay.

Examples of good practice:
- Linking words (*cependant/de plus/c'est-à-dire/en outre/d'autre part/par contre*…)
- Subjunctive (*afin que je puisse/bien que je sache/je ne pense pas qu'il soit juste de penser que*…)
- Complex sentences (*Il ne me semble pas que je sois qualifié pour le poste de professeur même si je le voulais; c'est grâce à eux que l'on peur faire ce dont on a toujours rêvé*…)
- Use of *ce qui/ce que/ce dont*
- Use of comparative and superlative (*certains disent que l'on se sent plus jeune quand*…)
- All the areas requiring attention (below) when correctly used

Areas requiring some attention:

- verb endings (*ils voudrais/ils faissent*)
- verbs with a subject left in the infinitive (*les élèves donner la violence verbale…*)
- sequence of tenses (especially with *si* clauses – imperfect, conditional and future often used at random)
- misuse of the passive (*on n'est pas donné l'expérience pratique*)
- agreement of adjectives (*le grandes problème est…*)
- vocabulary (confusion *études/étudiants; enseignement/renseignement; matière/métier…*) and non-French words (*bénéficial; facer un problème; involver; correcter…*)

F703 French Speaking

General comments

The overall standard of work was much as last year, including some excellent performances which demonstrated extensive research of personal topics along with nerveless ease of communication. A large proportion of the candidature made good contributions.

In a significant number of cases there was a discrepancy between the two parts of the test: put on the spot in the Discussion of Article, candidates struggled both to pinpoint the necessary information and to express themselves coherently. However, when they moved on to the Topic Conversation, they were able to produce near flawless French, using a wide range of sophisticated vocabulary and complex structures. It was clear that these candidates had pre-learned texts which they were permitted to deliver in a series of 'mini-presentations'. In cases of this sort, there was little spontaneity or fluency as the candidates knew what questions were coming – indeed, in a number of cases, they began to answer a question before it was even asked. It was often simply a question of recalling accurately what they had committed to memory, which is not the purpose of the examination.

Discussion of Article

This year, overall outcomes were similar to previous years except that there were more very good candidates – even outstanding ones – possibly because they were better able to cope with the demands of the articles and could go beyond the text.

Many teacher/examiners chose to ask, as their first question, "De quoi s'agit-il dans cet article?". This is fine, but there were times when the candidate's answer covered all or most of the information targeted by the first of the suggested questions, yet the question was asked nonetheless. Teacher/examiners are advised to study the texts thoroughly in advance in order to ensure that this does not happen, both because it wastes precious time and because it is disconcerting to the candidate who thinks that he/she has omitted or mangled some crucial piece of information and is being given a second chance to get it right.

It has become clear that some candidates use their preparation time to write out summaries of the paragraphs of the article they have been given; they then proceed to read out these summaries to the teacher/examiner in response to the various questions asked. This means that candidates sometimes fail to target the precise question they are asked. Of course, candidates may make notes on their card, but the practice of writing out whole sentences is one that centres should vigorously discourage.

Text A

The majority of candidates did this text well. A few were induced into error by the word *cibles* in the second paragraph and therefore believed that Taiwan, the US, India and South Korea were the perpetrators rather than the victims. Similarly, when asked why competitors resort to cyber-attacks, some failed to target the question, simply paraphrasing the material contained in the fourth paragraph which looks at the matter from the point of view of the countries targeted. However, it was the fifth paragraph which proved most challenging: candidates either overlooked the financial aspect mentioned in the first sentence or they did not demonstrate comprehension of the reason why the high cost involved is such an issue. Some could not find alternative vocabulary for *infiltration, réseaux, firme, attaques, acteur étatique* (despite the fact that an explanation of the latter was provided in the text). Few understood or could explain the link between suspecting China and the Olympic Games. The general questions were frequently better answered than the questions on the text. Themes covered here included the reasons why it is important for nation states to protect their national secrets, the dangers to which individuals expose themselves when they use the internet, the measures needed to ensure greater security for internet users and the positive and negative aspects of social networking sites.

Text B

Most of the candidates who were given this article seemed at home with the issues involved and were often quite knowledgeable about various forms of discrimination. As far as comprehension was concerned, the first two paragraphs presented no problems. The Icelandic system outlined in the third paragraph was not always understood, but most tried to explain somehow. If there was a section that proved problematic, it was the fourth paragraph, where quite a lot of candidates were unable to explain the point being made, notably that men breaking free from the shackles of the stereotypes attached to them is an important step on the road to female emancipation. In the general discussion, as well as the issue of discrimination in the workplace, several other forms of social inequality were discussed ranging from that based on ethnicity to that based on sexual preference. Many of these related themes gave rise to fascinating insights, admirably reflecting work done in the classroom over the two years of the A level course. It is often when an article succeeds in its function as 'stimulus for discussion' that the highest marks are gained; the candidate can most easily demonstrate initiative and take the lead.

Text C

This article worked well with the vast majority of candidates who were given it, many of whom were able to combine objective assessment with personal experience. Occasionally, the last of the four suggested questions caused them to stumble because they linked the expression *l'effet mode* with way of life rather than with fashion. Many admitted that they probably were *drogués de consumérisme* and thought that, even if they were not always fully conscious of the fact, advertising was a major contributory factor in their addiction. Subjects for general discussion included the psychological and physical effects of 'gadget boulimia', the positive and negative aspects of the advertising industry, consumer waste and the alternative lifestyles adopted by an increasing number of ecologically aware individuals.

Text D

Candidates usually demonstrated a good understanding of this article even if, when asked about the means suggested in the third paragraph for reducing CO_2 emissions or about the advice given in the fourth paragraph, they omitted important details. They were sometimes too happy to read rather than use their own words. Least satisfactory was the response to the second of the suggested questions in the teacher/examiner booklet, which asked them to explain the impact of emails on the environment, as described in the second paragraph. Rather than giving the information in the second sentence about how emails are copied some ten times by various servers on the way from the sender to the recipient, they focused on the example provided in the final sentence. The general discussion often covered other forms of pollution and ways of combatting it and, again, candidates showed themselves to be quite knowledgeable, indicating mastery of the appropriate technical vocabulary. Sometimes candidates who were given this article had listed pollution or environmental issues as one of their two chosen topics: centres are reminded to ensure that this sort of overlap does not occur.

Text E

The response to this article was generally very positive, even if small details of the text were occasionally distorted; for example, a number of candidates stated that 50% of the population suffer from hay fever (*50% des personnes atteintes de rhume des foins déclarent que...*). The most recurrent misunderstanding, however, occurred in the final paragraph where the link between the aniseed flavoured pastilles and Tamiflu evaded many. In the general conversation that followed, topics discussed included the reasons for the increase in the number of people suffering from allergies, the problems besetting the health service, the fight against cancer and young people's attitudes towards health issues.

Text F

Most candidates coped well with this text on *Les produits bio.* The findings of the various scientific studies quoted were generally well understood. If there were any problems with comprehension, it was in relation to the examples cited in the second paragraph: even though candidates were given the meaning of the item *germes de soja*, some of them still confused *germes* and *bactéries.* In the general conversation, many expanded on their reasons for buying or not buying organic foodstuffs, on the benefits and dangers of organically modified food, on the need for better labelling of food products and for other safeguards desirable to protect the public.

Topic Conversation

The best candidates were able to use the wealth of information they had gathered together in their research to support their ideas, others invariably allowed the discussion to be facts-driven. Some centres clearly encourage candidates to explore and research topics that resonate with their own particular tastes and interests, and this came across in the infectious enthusiasm of many such candidates for their chosen subjects, for example, topics such as: *Le déclin de la religion en France, Est-ce que la France est un pays homophobe*?*, Pourquoi je suis pour la construction du Projet Triangle* and *Est-ce que la République démocratique du Congo est en train de gagner la lutte pour protéger sa faune et sa flore*? Other candidates tended to stay with the traditional staple topics of the sort: *L'énergie nucléaire, L'immigration en France, Les problèmes environnementaux* and *La laïcité*.

Candidates are allowed to bring one A4 sheet of notes into the examination room. It is emphasised that notes means precisely that (headings, bullet points, a date or a statistic, for example, to jog their memory) and that candidates should not type or write out whole sentences in small print from which they read out during the conversation.

Language

A good number of candidates made a genuine attempt to extend their range of language: there was plenty of good use of the subjunctive, the conditional, *si* clauses, relative pronouns etc and more unusual vocabulary – all of which was very pleasing. There are areas, however, that need a closer focus of attention:

Confusion of *mieux/meilleur* and *mal/mauvais*
Use of *ses* for *leur(s)*
Assez beaucoup
Change for *changement*
Gender of nouns ending in *-ème*
Active for passive and associated with this, use of imperfect for perfect
Les personnes for *les gens*
Confusion between *il est* and *il y a*

Pronunciation

Some candidates had clearly been encouraged to work on their pronunciation, with the whole range of candidates at some centres performing noticeably well.

Generally speaking, pronunciation was acceptable or better, but it is a pity that errors with the following still appear: *ils, filles, femmes, gouvernement, environnement, pays, dix*, the English sound 'sh' for the French *–tion* ending.

Topics presented this year:

Society sub-topics

1. Integration and exclusion
- Est-ce que la France est un pays raciste?
- La France: est-ce que c'est une terre d'accueil?
- Comment est-ce que la France devrait résoudre le problème des Roms?
- L'interdiction de la burqa en France
- Clichy-sous-Bois: huit ans après les émeutes, est-ce que quelque chose a changé? Pourquoi / pourquoi pas?
- Les personnes handicapées sont-elles bien intégrées en France et la République fait-elle assez pour les intégrer sur le marché du travail et dans la société?
- Dans quelle mesure les personnes âgées sont-elles intégrées dans la société française?
- Le traitement des femmes dans la République démocratique du Congo

2. Law and order
- La criminalité et la délinquance sont-elles en recrudescence chez les adolescents français?
- Le crime organisé et la drogue en France
- Quels sont les problèmes de criminalité à Marseille et pourquoi existent-ils et pourra-t-on jamais les résoudre?
- Est-ce la France mérite sa réputation pour les prisons dites les pires d'Europe? Que pourrait-on faire pour améliorer la situation?
- En raison de l'augmentation de la criminalité en France, devrait-on considérer la réintroduction de la peine de mort?

3. Unemployment
- Qui sont les groupes les plus touchés par le chômage et quelles sont les solutions possibles?
- Est-ce que le gouvernement français fait assez pour résoudre le problème du chômage des jeunes?
- Comparaison des défis posés par le chômage en France et au Sénégal et les solutions potentielles.

Environment sub-topics
- Les causes principales de la pollution de l'eau en France – qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire pour la réduire?
- Quels sont les arguments pour et contre les sources d'énergies renouvelables et le nucléaire et quel est leur avenir en France?
- Le nucléaire, reste-t-il toujours l'énergie de l'avenir pour la France?
- La France a-t-elle vraiment raison d'adopter le projet de construction de l'aéroport de Notre-Dame-des-Landes?
- Bilan environnemental de la ville de Paris: les Parisiens en font-ils assez?

Science and Technology sub-topics
- Le clonage en France. Prudence ou retard?
- L'influence de Marie et Pierre Curie sur les avancements médicaux
- La puissance de l'hydrogène en France
- Les OGM
- Le rôle de la France dans l'ESA (Agence Spatiale Européenne)
- Les jeunes français et les smartphones dans leur vie quotidienne

Culture sub-topics

1. Literature and the Arts
- L'impact de la littérature de Molière sur la culture française
- Jusqu'à quel point est-ce que l'impressionnisme a influencé la peinture aux 20e et 21e siècles?
- Qu'est-ce que vous comprenez par le mot 'étranger' après avoir lu le roman '*L'Etranger*' d'Albert Camus?
- Dans quelle mesure sont les thèmes de *Les Misérables* de Victor Hugo toujours actuels aujourd'hui?
- La sécurité dans les galeries d'art en France

2. Political Issues
- La Belgique devrait-elle changer de constitution?
- L'Union Européenne a-t-elle tort d'abolir la loi PEAD ?
- La taxe à 75%
- François Hollande: sa campagne présidentielle, les premières impressions de son mandat, ses politiques intérieures et internationales et sa popularité à la fin de sa 1ère année comme président.

3. Heritage and History
- Les ONG dans les zones de guerre de pays francophones
- Les questions politiques trouvées dans le contrat social de Rousseau et leur pertinence dans la société moderne
- La France peut-elle être réellement multiculturelle étant donné son passé colonial?
- L'internet: une atteinte à la culture française?
- Comment est-ce que le français québécois a été influencé par la Grande-Bretagne et la France?

F704 French Listening, Reading and Writing 2

General comments

Overall, the range of candidates' attainment was similar to that of previous series. Once again it was a real pleasure to read the work of high-achieving candidates who not only showed a confident command of AS and A2 structures and vocabulary but also seemed well-versed in appropriate aspects of French-speaking society. There appeared to be a smaller number of candidates attaining low marks; even those who struggled to write accurate French seemed familiar with the requirements of the various questions and made a genuine attempt to write appropriate answers. Large-scale omissions were rare: a small number of candidates did not attempt Task 10, perhaps realising that they would struggle to find correct responses and feeling that they would be better off concentrating on Section C. A small but significant number of candidates produced scripts that were difficult to read, usually because of unclear handwriting. Assessors will always do their best to decipher such work, but they cannot credit a correct verb ending unless they can be sure that the correct letters of the alphabet are present. Rubric infringements were rare: a few candidates answered one or more questions in the wrong language, while a similarly small number hedged their bets by giving two incompatible answers to a given question. For future reference, if a candidate writes two answers, it is best to assume that a mark can only be awarded if both answers are correct.

SECTION A

Task 1

Most candidates coped reasonably well, and many very well, with this listening task on the film *Truffaut, une autobiographie.*

(a)   A good number of candidates gave the correct answer, although some did not realise that *lui* in the phrase *que ce soit lui qui parle* referred to Truffaut.

(b)   Most candidates got at least two out of four, and many three. The most common difficulties were *critiques*, sometimes mistranslated as 'critics', and *scénario*, sometimes mistranslated as 'scene(s)'.

(c)   This item was well done, with most candidates recognising the cognate *budget*.

(d)   For many candidates this item produced the first real challenge of the paper. The word *ému(e)* was unfamiliar to many and the sense of *un retour dans le temps* was often elusive.

(e)   The word *rêver* caused some difficulty. Not all candidates realised that *il* in the phrase *ce qu'il n'a pas fait* referred to Truffaut.

(f)   This item was generally well answered, although a few homed in wrongly on the final phrase of the recording *un des géants du cinéma français*.

Task 2

This task, based on a recorded interview on the topic of integrating young people into society, produced a fairly wide range of attainment. Some candidates managed to identify key points and express them succinctly in correct French. The less good responses tended to rely on lengthy transcription from the recording, resulting in answers that did not make sense or that did not match the wording of the question. Instances of candidates going too far in the opposite direction by needlessly paraphrasing every key word were, thankfully, rare.

(a) This opening item was generally done well. Errors could occur where candidates included, but mis-transcribed, unnecessary material from the recording such as *Ces adultes reprochent aux jeunes*.

(b) This item, in which candidates were required to change the nouns from the recording into verbs in order to give appropriate answers, discriminated well at all levels. Some candidates were also able to use object pronouns successfully, e.g. *Ils la refusent*.

(c) This item was fairly well answered, although not all candidates appreciated the difference between *bouger les choses* and *faire bouger les choses*. Those who transcribed without understanding the text often wrote invented words such as *boujet* (sic), for which no credit could be given.

(d) As in a number of questions, faulty attempts to transcribe from the recording often resulted in a confused or incomprehensible answer. Here, it was the verb *parviendraient*, which was sometimes written wrongly as *(ne…) pas viendrait*. In part (ii), a few candidates wrote *jeunes* instead of *gens* – had they really understood *retraite?* In part (iii), there was some confusion between *crise* and *reprise*.

(e) Many candidates got at least one out of the two available marks. A few did not seem to know the term *seniors* and wrote *seigneurs* instead. There were some good 'own words' renderings of the phrase *Leur parole a proportionnellement moins de place*, such as *Ils n'ont pas de voix*.

(f) Most candidates got the first point, although they did not always appreciate that the two elements of that marking point were linked – indeed the emphasis was really on the linking rather than on the separate points – and therefore they did not go on to provide the second piece of information on improving the chances of getting a job. Those who included the second piece of information struggled with the verb *garantit*.

(g) This question was well answered.

(h) Part (i) caused difficulty, partly because the sense of *porter à…* was not grasped and partly because of confusion between *deux* and *douze*. Part (ii) was correctly answered by most candidates.

(i) This was a challenging question that could be answered by using key words from the recording, provided that they were put into an appropriate context. Given the wording of the question, answers beginning with *changer de regard* were fine, but those beginning with *tout irait mieux* were not.

(j) Most candidates coped well with this last question of the listening section. A few distorted the sense by writing *le comportement des jeunes* instead of *notre comportement vis-à-vis des jeunes* or similar.

Quality of Language, Section A

Many candidates showed a reasonable grasp of French grammar and syntax in their answers. Although not all answers required whole sentences, those who took opportunities to use them tended to score higher marks for quality of language simply because they were able to demonstrate knowledge of a wider range of structures. A few candidates paid scant attention to basic accuracy, including the spelling of common words, and therefore scored a low mark for quality of language.

SECTION B

Task 3

This non-verbal task produced a fairly wide range of attainment. A good number of candidates scored full marks, but a few scored only one or two out of seven. The most elusive answer was *renonce* in part (f); a number of candidates opted instead for *hésite,* which made sense grammatically but did not match the meaning of the stimulus text.

Task 4

On the whole, candidates showed good comprehension of the stimulus text through their answers to these questions.

(a) Part (i) proved to be the most challenging question in Task 4, mainly because many candidates did not make it clear that the oil worth 7 billion dollars was not the total amount of oil available in the country, but rather the amount of oil available in the *Parc Yasuni*, i.e. only 20% of the national total. Part (ii) gave a higher success rate, with some candidates even taking the opportunity to express *patrimoine naturel* – not an easy concept – in their own words.

(b) This question was generally answered well, although not all candidates identified poverty as the key factor in part (ii).

(c) Attainment varied widely in this question. Many candidates successfully extracted key points from the text and expressed them clearly, while others struggled to show understanding of the detail. In part (iii) the idea that the oil would be left unexploited was not always successfully conveyed. In part (iv) misuse of *prévenir* was a common error.

Task 5

This task, which required candidates to explain in French the meaning of words and phrases from the text, proved to be quite challenging.

(a) This was the most accessible question in Task 5. Many candidates were able to express the idea of 'both sides winning', either by using the verb *gagner*, e.g. *tout le monde gagne*, or by using a negative with *perdre*, e.g. *personne ne perd*.

(b) This was a difficult question. Many candidates thought it meant *en revanche* or similar.

(c) This proved to be challenging for candidates. Some stated that *soit* was the present subjunctive of *être,* which, although strictly true, did not explain its use in this context.

(d) The word *vierge* was unfamiliar to most candidates. Many assumed that it meant *verte* or similar.

Task 6

In this open-ended gap-fill task, many candidates showed that they had understood both the stimulus text and the gapped sentences. It was good to see many correct responses to part (b) using words such as *soutenir* and *responsabilité*. Some candidates changed the word before the gap in order to allow them to write in a particular word, e.g. in part (a) they changed *de* to *d'* to allow them to write *argent*. This was tolerated as long as the candidate's alteration to the printed word did not change the meaning or syntax of the sentence.

Task 7

On the whole this transfer of meaning task was done well. Most candidates showed gist comprehension of the designated portion of text and errors were often limited to faulty renderings of individual words or phrases. Many candidates coped well with the phrase *dispositif d'alerte* and with the verb *repèrent*. Common difficulties included:

- *volets* ('curtains')
- *se met en marche* ('plays')
- *démarre* ('switch off' perhaps because of the *dé-* prefix)
- *chutes* ('burglaries')

There were relatively few issues with poor English.

Task 8

Most candidates coped well with this task, showing comprehension of key points and manipulating the French sufficiently to suit the syntax of the question.

(a) Part (i) was generally well answered, although a few candidates used the pronoun *l'* from the text without making it clear who the *l'* referred to. Part (ii) was more difficult: not all candidates made the necessary link between the last two sentences of the first paragraph.

(b) Most candidates gave a correct answer.

(c) This proved to be one of the most accessible questions on the paper.

(d) This question was fairly well answered, although some candidates merely listed the types of job mentioned, rather than stating what the people did in this context.

(e) Most candidates showed good understanding of the text. A few candidates did not gain credit because they began their answer with infinitive *éviter* which, in response to the question *Qu'est-ce que la plupart des gens ne veulent pas faire?*, conveyed the opposite meaning to the one intended.

(f) Many candidates scored all three marks, albeit with some linguistic awkwardness as they tried to incorporate *sécurité* and *intimité* into their answer. A few candidates tried to find synonyms but ended up using invented words such as *privacé* (sic) for which no credit could be given. A common linguistic error, which did not impede communication, was the use of *soi* instead of *eux* in the phrase *Ils peuvent rester chez eux*. Part (ii) produced some good 'own words' explanations of the benefits of Médétic for the town council.

Task 9

Attainment in this task covered a wide range.

(a) Most candidates knew *quotidien* and came up with a good synonym.

(b) The wrong answers *éviter*, *empêcher* and *arrêter* were common here.

(c) Not many candidates understood *commode à manier*; many thought it had something to do with automation.

(d) This question was fairly well answered. Given the context, it was acceptable to include or omit the negative, i.e. *(n')a (pas) besoin de*, but some kind of verb was necessary and the noun *besoin* used alone did not warrant a mark.

Task 10

This open-ended gap fill task required gist and detail comprehension of the text and proved to be challenging for candidates.

(a) There was a good number of correct answers here, with or without the extra detail *à temps complet.*

(b) Many candidates chose an appropriate verb, but some used a past tense, which was not acceptable in this context.

(c) Again, an appropriate choice of verb tense was a discriminator here.

(d) This question was a good discriminator. Most candidates saw that the missing word had to do with the cost of renting the accommodation, but some wrote *à taille humaine* or similar which conveyed the opposite sense to the one intended.

(e) The meaning of *location* appeared to be obscure to candidates, who gave inappropriate answers such as *acheter*, *payer* or *localiser*. Some candidates lifted the verb *comprendre*, perhaps not realising that in this context it meant 'to include'.

(f) This item had a low success rate, perhaps because candidates did not understand the phrase *ne devra pas excéder* in the text.

Quality of Language, Section B

As in previous series, candidates' responses varied widely in terms of accuracy and complexity. Among the most useful indicators were:
- the correct use of the future tense, object pronouns and the passive voice in Task 4;
- verb tenses generally in Tasks 5, 9 and 10;
- correct agreements in Task 8.

For future reference, when awarding the quality of language mark assessors do not credit material that is directly lifted from the text, so candidates are advised to use their own words wherever they can reasonably do so without distorting the meaning.

SECTION C

Essays ranged widely both in quality and in length. The quality of a candidate's essay was sometimes noticeably better than the quality of her/his responses in Sections A and B, which suggested good investment in preparing ideas and evidence beforehand. In some cases the candidate appeared to be relying too much on pre-learnt material even where it was not appropriate to the question set. However, many candidates managed to remain focused on the question and used their evidence appropriately. Excessive length was sometimes a problem: it sometimes appeared to be at the expense of quality and in a few cases led to the inclusion of a lot of irrelevant material. Poor presentation was, as noted above, an issue for some candidates.

On the whole candidates structured their essays well, with well-defined paragraphs and some good use of adverbs such as *pourtant*, *d'ailleurs*, *donc* and *en revanche* to help the reader follow the candidate's train of thought. Although they are not assessed, it was good to see evidence of plans having been made. A number of candidates produced a good introduction which captured the reader's interest but a less good conclusion: it is worth spending time planning conclusions to make sure that they summarise the essay effectively and do not leave the reader in limbo. The quality of candidates' analysis was sometimes good, but sometimes simplistic and noticeably less good than the quality of their structure.

In terms of language, for many candidates the fact that they were writing in French seemed not to limit their ability to express suitable ideas and opinions. Almost all candidates used at least some complex structures, including:
- a good range of verb tenses
- appropriate use of the subjunctive
- *si* clauses
- infinitive constructions
- correct use of present participle
- pronouns, sometimes with the correct preceding direct object agreement
- *dont*
- *lequel* etc
- *ceux qui* etc

Sometimes the use of the subjunctive was forced and unnecessary, such as *Il faut que nous puissions résoudre ce problème*, or simply wrong, such as *J'espère que ce soit possible* (sic).

Some candidates over-used set phrases. A particularly frequent example in this series was *autant que je sache*, which was rarely used convincingly. The same goes for *il serait naïf de croire que…* and *on ne peut nier que…* .

Lexical and grammatical anglicisms were also used, such as:
- *Le gouvernement doit addresser le problème* (sic)
- *C'est une issue brûlante* (sic)
- *On devrait préventer ce problème* (sic)
- *L'État doit provider la protection sociale* (sic)
- *au lieu d'imposant des taxes* (sic)
- *Les chômeurs sont responsables pour…* (sic)

In terms of accuracy, perfection is not expected even for a top mark. But it was disappointing to see basic errors in the work of some candidates who produced excellent work in other respects, including:
- confusion between *-é* and *-er*
- confusion between *avoir* and *être* e.g. *les gens ont responsable* (sic)
- missing adjectival agreements

Question 11

This question on unemployment was the second most popular choice in Section C. The title lent itself well to a 'for and against' approach and many candidates were able to present valid arguments on both sides before reaching a well-considered conclusion. Among the cited failings of the unemployed were general laziness, a poor work ethic and their failure to take advantage of educational opportunities. The State was blamed for making benefits more attractive than low paid work, for providing a poor standard of education, for failing to integrate vulnerable groups such as immigrants so that they could find work, and for failing to stem the economic crisis, which has resulted in so many job losses. Some candidates apportioned the blame not just to the two groups mentioned in the question but also to employers, who needed to play their part more effectively in creating jobs. Good examples of evidence from French-speaking society included:
- approximate data on benefits, minimum wage, etc (precise figures were not required)
- reference to specific regions e.g. Nord-Pas de Calais
- reference to government initiatives e.g. *partage du travail*, *Pôle Emploi*, *réforme des 35 heures*
- examples of large firms providing employment
- recent Air France redundancies.

Some responses to this question tended to be too general, writing about the causes and effects of unemployment but not really getting to grips with the question set. Some candidates presented evidence but did not make effective use of it: for example they mentioned a link between unemployment and a lack of qualifications but did not make it clear whether they thought this reflected badly on the individuals or on the State. Responses that placed the blame entirely on one or other of the parties tended to be simplistic and present extreme views that were difficult to justify.

Question 12

This question, which invited candidates to write a letter about youth crime, was a fairly popular choice. Most of those who chose it produced a plausible letter, including appropriately persuasive and in some cases emotional language to express their concerns and frustrations. In terms of evidence from French-speaking society, the approach that worked best was to focus on a town or region that the candidate had studied in detail and give examples of the problems that had occurred in that place. It was also appropriate to include general evidence such as the low success rate at the *bac* in inner cities, the riots of 2005 and ZEPs. One or two responses to this question read too much like a discursive essay on who was to blame for youth crime.

Question 13

This question on the wisdom (or not) of taxing those who pollute was the most popular choice in Section C. Many responses to this question reached the 7–8 band for Relevance and Points of View and the 10–12 band for Structure and Analysis, but relatively few reached the 9–10 and 13–15 bands respectively. The best essays gave a balanced view and many concluded that taxation had a part to play but it should not be the only measure; carrots as well as sticks were important. Most candidates were keen on taxing big companies rather than private individuals. Very few candidates mentioned how the revenue from taxes might be used to promote green initiatives, which would have been a strong point in favour of taxation. Many responses focused mainly on transport, which was entirely appropriate. Examples of good logic were: it is unfair to tax all car drivers because often it is the poor who have to use their car to get to work; and while it is good for the government to subsidise the use of environmentally friendly cars it tends to be only wealthier people who can afford to buy them. Good examples of evidence from French-speaking society included:
- free public transport in Aubagne and Gap
- *Vélib'* and *Autolib'*
- ZAPAs
- donnons.org
- *Grenelle Environnement*
- detailed references to Sarkozy's policies
- Hollande's recent promises
- *taxe carbone*
- *pastille verte*
- statistics regarding energy sources

Some responses tended to stray away from the question and discuss pollution in general terms, perhaps mentioning *Vélib'* and *covoiturage* but without making an explicit link with taxation. Some candidates veered too far towards discussing the relative merits of different energy sources, perhaps including a token reference to taxation in their introduction and/or conclusion. Others focused on *petits gestes*, some going as far as claiming that if we all 'did our bit' there would be no need for extra taxation. Again, mention of *petits gestes* was valid but only if clearly linked to the question. A few candidates did not seem to understand the notion of taxation at all, which was surprising if they had studied this topic in depth.

Question 14

A reasonable number of candidates opted for this question, which asked them to write a website contribution persuading others to take action in protecting their local environment. While there were some really good responses, many candidates who chose this question did not take account of the wording *environnement local* and instead wrote about environmental issues in general, including the French nuclear industry. Indeed some candidates did not make any reference to a specific French-speaking region beyond the phrase *dans notre région*. In the better responses to this question it was good to read simple but effective examples of persuasive language such as *Mais que faites-vous pour sauver votre environnement local?* and *En ce qui concerne le transport pourquoi pas prendre le vélo au lieu de la voiture?* Finding specific evidence to support the answer was sometimes challenging, but a number of candidates found eye-catching statistics such as *J'ai lu dans un article qu'une tomate d'Algerie a fait 3238 km avant d'arriver en France*.

Question 15

A small number of candidates chose this question on the pros and cons of genetically modified organisms. Some responses showed convincing evidence of research, with references to Séralini, the University of Caen, *faucheurs volontaires* and well-chosen information on Francophone countries. Most candidates thought that genetically modified organisms were defensible in the fight against world hunger even if they had serious drawbacks, for example *En fait toutes les 3.6 secondes quelqu'un meurt de faim … Dès qu'on aura accepté l'utilisation des OGMs, on commencera de combattre le problème de la faim*.

Question 16

Very few candidates opted for this question on the likely benefits of medical advances for the future lives of young French people. Unfortunately most of those who attempted it tended not to have the necessary information to hand and they wrote too generally about cures for cancer, flu, AIDS and so on.

Question 17

Only a small number of candidates chose this question on the importance of the European Union for young French people today. The quality of the responses varied: while some focused too much on the history of the EU, others managed to explain and evaluate how the EU affects the lives of young people in specific areas, such as justice, human rights, immigration and the economy.

Question 18

This question, which invited candidates to sing the praises of a French film, attracted some very good responses. Although it was tempting to spend too much time talking about the plot, most candidates gave just enough information and then said why they thought each aspect of the film made it worth watching. One or two candidates included actual quotations from the script of the film they had studied, which was not essential but very nice to see. The most popular choice of film was *La Haine*, but several less well-known titles appeared in candidates' scripts too.

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