



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2012**

French

FREN1

(Specification 2650)

Unit 1: Listening, Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2012 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

General

The examination appeared to have been accessible to the vast majority of students and it discriminated well between the varying levels of ability. This was particularly the case with the essay questions, Question 1 in Section A and Question 9. The mean mark was 73.4 out of 110 which was slightly lower than last June's paper which was 76.9.

A few students are still writing their answers in the essay question on alternate lines. This is not necessary and they should be advised not to do so. It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to use black ink when writing answers and to write letters as clearly as possible. Schools and colleges should not submit the essay planning sheets. Since these are provided, there is no need to use additional sheets for planning essays.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In part 1(a), many students did not score on this question since the key idea was that one in two French people are overweight. Only 44% of students answered the question correctly. Part 1(b) many students found this question challenging and the full three marks were rarely achieved. Many wrote breakfast for *déjeuner*, and there were vague answers about lack of exercise rather than walking specifically. Surprisingly, some even gave the wrong statistics about the increase in the consumption of sandwiches. Part 1(c) was far more successfully answered, with three quarters of students gaining at least three of the four available marks. The main stumbling block was caused by the word *niveau*, with many references to 'new' education. In part 1(d), most students understood the anti-smoking message, but *le sida* caused considerable difficulties, with a great many talking about anti-cider campaigns.

Question 2

This question was very well done. The only parts which caused difficulty were part (d), where *pleurer* and *en larmes* were not connected and part (f) where the verb *trahir*, perhaps understandably, was not recognised.

Question 3

This question, with answers in French, was more successfully answered than in previous series by the vast majority of students. Part 3(a) was well done, though some students stumbled over the spelling of *inviter*. Part 3(b) proved very accessible with over 80% gaining all three marks. In part 3(c) very few students did not score on this question, with half scoring all three marks. The main cause of the failure to score marks was either incorrect spellings of *recevoir* or the wrong number of Euros allowed for the purchasing of the ingredients. Part 3(d) was the least successfully answered. Many students had problems forming a correct past tense, either omitting the auxiliary or using wrong past participles. A substantial minority (20%) did not score at all.

Question 4

This multiple choice question discriminated well, with fewer than half gaining a mark for parts (a) and (d). Many appeared to be confused by the statistics in parts (a) and (d) and did not understand *avoir tort*.

Question 5

This was generally well answered, with virtually all students gaining marks for parts (a), (c)

and (f). Less successful were the answers to part (b), where 48% scored a mark and part (d) where 67% gained a mark. In part (b) the word *têtu* was not recognised, and in part (d) *manquer d'assurance* caused difficulty.

Question 6

Many students coped very well with this gap fill task. For example, 94% scored a mark in part (a). The only significant problem areas were in parts (d) and (g) where only roughly half scored a mark. The two keys words here *détente* and *vagues* proved difficult.

Question 7

Most students coped very well with this accessible question, with at least 90% scoring in parts (a), (b) and (f). All the other parts had at least a 70% success rate.

Question 8

This question was also well answered by most students. Errors tended to occur in part (b) where some did not spot the future tense in *sera bientôt permis* and part (f) where a connection was not established between *les actualités* and *les journaux télévisés*. It was encouraging to note that students coped far more successfully than usual with parts (c) and (g), which required the ND answer. 81% scored in part (c) and 90% in part (g).

Question 9

This question was done very well by able students and, as ever, proved a very good discriminator. Part 9(a) was generally well done, with 80% scoring a mark. In part 9(b) only 35% got it right, mainly due to incorrect or missing accents. In part 9(c), fewer than half (46%) were successful here, again sometimes due to a missing accent but mainly because the present tense of *décrire* was not known. In part 9(d), 60% were successful here. Many students did not score marks for conjugating *souffrir* like *finir*. In part 9(e), many did not add the agreement on the past participle. Part 9(f) was well answered with a 78% success rate. Part 9(g) unfortunately, *prendu* was prevalent here. In part 9(h) whilst 65% gained a mark here, the present participle still caused difficulties for many. Part 9(i) a very wide variety of spellings was seen here, with 63% giving an accurate answer. In part 9(j) the verb *faire* caused great difficulty. Only 58% gained a mark here and there were many examples of *faisent* given as the third person plural.

Section B

Questions 10, 11 and 12

All three questions were tackled, although there was a pronounced preference for Question 11 on new technology.

As usual, there was a huge variation of standard in the answers offered with some impressive efforts which showed a high level of confidence in command of the language. However, there were some very poor essays which tended to be rather short and lacked any kind of comprehensible content. Other essays contained some fair points but they were not sufficiently developed. The mean mark for the essay has gone down by 2 marks since 2010. This can partly be explained by students pre-learning essays and writing material not strictly relevant to the titles. For instance, long passages about TV appeared in Question 11 and there was a lot written about fashion which failed to link this to shopping. In the essay on *concubinage*, many wrote about marriage and divorce and did not refer to living together outside marriage at all.

In the Question 10 essay on shopping, some students failed to answer the second part of the question about the positive effects or otherwise of shopping. Many descended into GCSE style essays about 'what I did at the shopping centre last weekend', even to the extent of giving detailed descriptions of items purchased.

The Question 11 essay on new technology produced some very good topic specific vocabulary and the vast majority of students tackled both parts of the question. There were some very pleasing essays here with many points made and expanded. Obesity was a popular topic due to the sedentary lifestyle encouraged by computers, but some students then went off at a tangent and the essay turned into an account of the dangers to health and the benefits of sport. In the second part of the question, there were some good suggestions given as to the continued popularity of new technologies.

The Question 12 essay on *concubinage* produced some excellent and thoughtful pieces. At the other extreme, some students misunderstood the question and wrote about living alone. The less able students did not plan sufficiently well and there was a great deal more repetition in this essay than in the other two.

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

- problems with *permettre, donner, enseigner* with direct objects.
- *faire* and *rendre* confusion (*cela me fait heureux*)
- the incorrect use of *mieux* and *meilleur*
- *ce qui, ce que* rarely used correctly
- *grâce à, à cause de* (*parce que le stress* rather than *à cause du stress* very common)
- *de plus en plus de* incorrectly used
- possessive adjectives (*les jeunes aiment aller aux magasins avec ses amis*)
- reflexive verbs (pronouns frequently omitted)
- pronouns generally
- lack of infinitive after prepositions
- prepositions used after *vouloir, pouvoir*

There was generally a good attempt at including topic specific vocabulary, even by the less able students, and some appropriate turns of phrase, though many over-use pre-learnt link phrases (eg *le concubinage/Internet/le shopping est un sujet brûlant de l'actualité*). As for variety of structure, subjunctives are widely used but not always correctly or appropriately. Attempts at *si* clauses often result in the whole sentence being written in the conditional.

An introduction and conclusion were usually included and a reasonable range of personal opinions were present. However, many examiners reported that there seemed to be more essays falling into the poor category for Content than in the past. Wherever possible, examiners try to reward students for the points made, but in some essays comprehensible content was hard to find.

Guidance for Writing Section

Question Paper and Answer Booklet

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

Essay Planning Sheet

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

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO THE WRITING QUESTION

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

Students are not expected to include an introduction or conclusion, but it enhances the structure if there is a brief introduction and a concluding short paragraph, possibly including a personal response. One of the criteria is for a logical structure and this would enhance the overall structure of the essay.

Is a personal opinion valid as a point in the argument?

Yes, we give ticks for personal opinions as we consider them valid as developments.

Should each point/opinion be backed up with an example?

Generally, yes. There must be plenty of justification of points/opinions in order to gain marks in the higher bands.

Are the examiners looking for a certain number of points/opinions plus examples, eg 3 arguments for one point of view with evidence and 3 against with evidence?

This would be sensible but we have no hard and fast rule on this since a limited number of points very well illustrated and developed would also be considered for the higher mark bands.

How does the marking scheme work in practice? Is there a list of relevant points, some of which the examiners are expecting to be included? If so, how many represents poor versus sufficient/very good?

There is a list of suggested content points for the guidance of examiners but these are by no means prescriptive and students will get credit for well-argued points not in the list. Examiners tick every relevant, clearly expressed point and give further ticks for development/ examples/ opinions etc. Thus a list of bullet point type arguments with no development cannot access the highest mark band. In order to access the highest mark band, students must also ensure that they meet all the other criteria, eg their ideas are clearly expressed, there is a logical structure to the essay and they have answered fully the question set.

Is it just an instinctive overall rating of logical sequence and therefore individual points are not counted up?

There is no mathematical guide to Content marks - examiners have to make a decision based on the descriptors in the assessment criteria.

Are there any other questions which teachers should be asking to get a better understanding of how students are to be assessed in the essay question?

Yes, there are exemplar materials for the Writing section of Unit 1 as part of the Teacher Resource Bank. The Teacher Resource Bank materials are available on the AQA website.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

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

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