

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/01

Speaking

Key messages

Candidates should:

- make sure that the presentation is not just factual, but contains ideas and opinions and also allows further discussion in the Topic Conversation.
- ask questions of the Examiner in both conversation sections and make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic or topics under discussion in order to be awarded maximum marks.
- remember that the Topic Presentation must make clear reference to a francophone culture or society.

General comments

It is important for Examiners to remember that this examination is an opportunity for candidates to show what they have learnt and a chance for them to express and develop their ideas and opinions. Examiners should see their role as providing and facilitating this opportunity.

The way in which an Examiner asks a question can make a huge difference to how a candidate is able to respond – Examiners need to be aware that very long, complex questions or closed questions often prompt short answers, sometimes just ‘yes’ or ‘no’, whereas open questions such as *Comment?* or *Pourquoi?* may allow a candidate the freedom to answer at much greater length and in greater depth.

The examination should be a conversation, which can only be achieved by engaging with and responding to what the candidate says, not by asking a series of entirely unrelated questions with no follow-up. Going through a list of pre-prepared questions rarely results in a natural conversation.

Administration

Recordings this year were mainly clear, though there are still examples of faulty recording equipment and of the microphone favouring the Examiner rather than the candidate. There were a number of cases where recorded material was unplayable or where the recording had not been transferred correctly or where the original recording was inaudible. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the Examiner’s own contribution.

A number of recordings presented problems because of the recording format chosen. Where Centres use digital recording software, each candidate’s file must be saved individually, as .mp3, and finalised correctly, so that each candidate’s examination can be accessed for moderation. Files should be identified using precise candidate details rather than just “number 1, 2” etc.

Please ensure that all recording material (including CD and cassette cases) is labelled with details of the Centre, syllabus, and candidates, listed with their names and candidate numbers in the order of recording. Where a Centre has candidates at both A and AS, they should be recorded on separate CDs or cassettes. If using cassettes, only ONE candidate should be recorded per side of a 60 minute cassette and a maximum of TWO candidates per side of a 90 minute cassette. It is very disruptive to candidates for the Examiner to have to turn over a cassette in the middle of an examination – with the inevitable result that parts of the conversation are lost.

Centres are reminded that the sample of recordings they send should represent candidates throughout the range of the entry, from highest to lowest. There were some cases where there were significant gaps in the range, which impaired the moderation process.

Care should also be taken with the packaging of recorded material – CDs are not unbreakable and there have been a few cases of inadequately packaged CDs so damaged in transit that it has been impossible to

listen to candidates. Please also avoid sticky tape or labels coming into contact with the recording side of CDs, as this makes them unplayable and runs the risk of damaging the equipment on which they are played.

There were a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transcribing them to the MS1 - this should be checked carefully before submission and all paperwork enclosed with the recordings. For the size of sample needed, please see the details in the syllabus booklet.

Centres are reminded that for moderation, in addition to the recordings, they need to send the Working Mark Sheet, the MS1 (computer mark sheet or equivalent), the Attendance Sheet and any other relevant paperwork.

Centres and Examiners are reminded that the Examiner and the candidate must be in the same room during the examination and not speak long-distance.

Format of the examination

There are 3 distinct parts to the speaking test:

- Presentation – to last 3 to 3½ minutes;
- Topic Conversation – to last 7 to 8 minutes;
- General Conversation – to last 8 to 9 minutes.

In order to be fair to all candidates across the world, these timings have to be observed – where examinations are too short, candidates are not given opportunities to show what they can do, and where conversations are over-extended, an element of fatigue creeps in and candidates sometimes struggle to maintain their level of language. Examiners must also remember that the longer their own contributions, the less time candidates have to develop their ideas. Responses to questions asked by candidates should be kept brief.

Presentation (3 to 3½ minutes)

In this part of the examination, the candidate gives a **single** presentation, lasting about three minutes, on a specific topic of his or her choice, taken from one of the topic areas listed in the syllabus booklet. This is the only prepared part of the examination and the only part for which candidates are able to choose what they want to talk about.

The topic list gives candidates a very wide choice – the most popular this year, at both A and AS Levels, were *Le Sport*, *Le Conflit des Générations*, *La Famille*, *La Cuisine Française* and *La Pollution*. There were a number of the usual favourites, such as drugs, unemployment, marriage, violence in society, discrimination, racism and immigration, some dealing with culture or politics in a French-speaking country, personal interests such as art or music, as well as a small number of topical presentations. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues.

For the most part, candidates were clearly aware of the need, stated in the syllabus, that the presentation **must** demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken. Where this is not the case, candidates will have their mark for *Content/Presentation* halved (see Speaking Test mark scheme in the syllabus document).

Since the topic is chosen beforehand, candidates have usually researched quite widely, and have to select and structure their material to fit into 3 to 3½ minutes – additional material which cannot be included in the actual presentation because of the time constraint may well prove very useful in the topic conversation section. In general, candidates had no problem speaking for the required time and many were able to give full and interesting presentations.

Candidates would be well advised to steer clear of very factual subjects – the mark scheme criteria for the *Content/Presentation* element makes it clear that in order to score well, the presentation should contain not just factual points, but ideas and opinions. Candidates need to think carefully before making their final choice and consider whether it will be possible to develop and expand their chosen topic.

Candidates only present ONE topic and the Topic Conversation which follows will seek to develop that same topic.

Topic Conversation (7 to 8 minutes)

In this section, candidates have the chance to expand on what they have already said and develop ideas and opinions expressed briefly during the presentation. Examiners need to beware of merely asking questions which allow a repetition of the same material already offered – their aim should be to ask more probing questions in order to give candidates opportunities to expand on their original statements and then respond to what the candidate says. There are not necessarily “right” answers either here or in the General Conversation section and it is in the nature of a genuine conversation that those taking part may not agree with opinions expressed.

At both A and AS Level, questions should go beyond the sort of questions appropriate at IGCSE Level. Candidates need to be able to show that they are capable of taking part in a mature conversation. In some cases, candidates were not able to offer much development or sustain the level of language used in their presentation, but many were successful in expressing additional ideas and seeking the opinions of the Examiner.

In each conversation section there are 5 marks available for questions the candidates ask of the Examiner: they should ask more than one question and Examiners must prompt them to do so. Examiners should make sure that they do not spend too long on their own answers to candidates’ questions, thereby depriving candidates of valuable time.

Examiners should note that it is helpful both to candidates and Moderators to signal the end of the Topic Conversation and the beginning of the General Conversation.

General Conversation (8 to 9 minutes)

The General Conversation is the most spontaneous section of the examination. Candidates will have prepared their own choice of topic for the Topic Presentation (to be continued in the Topic Conversation), but here they do not know what the Examiner will choose to discuss (and it is the Examiner who chooses, not the candidate). Clearly the areas of discussion will be those studied during the course and there were many varied and interesting discussions heard. In a Centre with a number of candidates, candidates should not all be asked to talk about the same list of subjects – themes should be varied from candidate to candidate and should on no account return to the original subject of the presentation.

This section is intended to be a conversation between Examiner and candidate, so it is not appropriate for the Examiner to ask a series of unrelated questions, to which the candidate responds with a prepared answer, after which the Examiner moves on to the next question on the list! Examiners should display sensitivity in asking questions about topics of a personal nature i.e. religion and personal relationships and should try to keep their questions general rather than moving inappropriately into personal areas..

Examiners should aim to discuss a minimum of 2 to 3 areas in **depth**, giving candidates opportunities to offer their own opinions and defend them in discussion. Although the section may begin with straightforward questions about family, interests or future plans, which can, in themselves, be developed beyond the purely factual (questions asking “why?” or “how?”), candidates at both A and AS Level should be prepared for conversation to move on to current affairs and more abstract topics appropriate to this level of examination.

Candidates should be prompted to ask questions of the Examiner in order to give them the opportunity to score marks for this criterion, though Examiners should once again be wary of answering at too great a length.

Assessment

The greatest source of adjustment of a centre’s marks were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where topics did not relate to a francophone country. A number of Examiners also found it difficult to establish an acceptable level for *Comprehension/Responsiveness*, *Accuracy* and *Feel for the Language*, while others found it tricky to differentiate between the bands for *Pronunciation/Intonation*.

Where candidates ask questions during the course of conversation, this should clearly be rewarded, but Examiners must remember to prompt candidates in both conversation sections – the mark scheme gives the criteria for awarding marks for this element of the examination and these marks should be awarded regardless of whether questions are spontaneous or prompted, provided that they are relevant to the topic under discussion.

Centres are reminded that, except in extenuating circumstances, they should engage only one Examiner per syllabus, regardless of the size of the entry. In cases where the engagement of two or more Examiners on the same syllabus is unavoidable, the Examiners must co-ordinate with each other to establish an agreed standard. **All** Centres are asked to advise CIE, using form NOE, about the Examiners they intend to employ (by 1st April for the June session and 1st October for the November session).

In rare cases, Examiners misapplied the mark scheme, most frequently by awarding marks out of 10 for those categories like *Pronunciation/Intonation* and *Seeking Opinions* which carry a maximum of 5 marks.

In Centres with a number of candidates, Examiners were generally able to establish a logical rank order and appropriate marking pitch, but this is more difficult to achieve where Centres only have one or two candidates. Examiners should be congratulated on their efforts to apply the criteria of the mark scheme so conscientiously.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/21
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. Including additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (cut/copy and paste) phrases unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not copy out the question as a preamble to their answer.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

There were some first-rate scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, and whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them, there were elements which were accessible to nearly all.

The topic generally appeared to be one of which was close to candidates' hearts.

The majority of candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently less well, it was often because they copied phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Quite a lot of answers were unduly lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible: sometimes the answers were longer than the whole paragraph of the text to which they referred. **The practice of copying out the question in Questions 3 and 4 as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker**, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract greatly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. There were also significant numbers of other candidates who insisted on trying to incorporate the words of the question as an introduction to every answer: *Pourquoi les appareils électroniques contribuent-ils au problème du manqué de sommeil est parce que ... (3d)* or *Pourquoi les associations des employeurs seraient-elles contre des vacances d'été plus longues est parce que ... (4c)*. **Answers beginning with *Parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.**

Candidates would do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, copying wholesale from the text has diminished considerably in recent session, but remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' sections directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. The rubric clearly states that candidates

should answer *sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte*. Candidates should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs, or infinitives into finite verbs) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement.

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays generally appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the ‘footprint’ of the word or words which they are replacing.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realize the importance of the word limit clearly set out in the rubric of a total of 140 words for both sections. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (not doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste a significant proportion of the available words on this for no reward: for example *Il y en a beaucoup des bienfaits de commencer les cours plus tard le matin et aussi d’avoir de vacances scolaires plus courtes*. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points, and from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/résumé of specific points from the texts that is requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay which is quite likely to score 0/10.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *Qu’est-ce que c’est?* The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

There seemed to be a new tendency in some Centres to write longer Personal Responses than Summaries. This is not to be recommended, as the Summary carries ten marks as opposed to the Personal Response’s five. An approximate balance of 90-100 words for the Summary and 40-50 for the Personal Response would therefore appear logical.

In general, candidates who keep their answers reasonably short and straightforward and concentrate on doing the simple things efficiently tend to score better than those who demonstrate a desire to *épater* and impress with over-elaborate phrasing and overambitious vocabulary.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a very straightforward first exercise which enabled the vast majority of candidates to get off to a high-scoring start. The most common reason for loss of marks was the inclusion of redundant words: *soulignent le besoin (a)*; *laisse tranquilles (b)*; *se contenter (d)*; *en classe (e)*. Occasionally, candidates offered *tranquilles* without its final *s* or added an *s* to *classe*.

Question 2

There were some very good answers to this question from the strongest candidates, but as usual the task proved quite demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures.

Item 2(a): many candidates didn't remove the *s* on *diplômés*, having changed to a singular subject. The change of *dorment* to the singular also caused a large number of errors. Some altered the tense unnecessarily.

Item 2(b): the change to the passive gave rise to a number of creative but wrong endings for *souigné*. *Someil/somiél* and *besion* were sometimes incorrectly copied from the original, and some again decided to change the tense for no apparent reason.

Item 2(c): the success rate here tended to vary greatly. In some cases need for the subjunctive was widely appreciated and correctly handled, even if *aillent* and *ayent* sometimes made an appearance. In others, this seemed uncharted territory.

Item 2(d): the transformation to the active was generally the most successfully handled item.

Item 2(e): this prompted a variety of tenses of *devoir* (or its omission). Although there were different elements to manipulate here, they were all individually very straightforward for those who remembered to see the job through. There was a fair amount of unnecessary changing of vocabulary here too.

Question 3

Item 3(a): the first mark concerning the need for more than nine hours of sleep got most candidates off to a successful start. The comparison required for the second mark was not understood by some who said that over-eating was harmful whereas the more sleep the better for your health. Some thought that eating too much before going to bed would lead to indigestion and a sleepless night.

Item 3(b): most candidates made the straightforward comparison between sleep patterns in school-time and in holiday-time for the first mark. Many understood the consequence for academic performance for the second mark but often lifted *moins bien diplômé*. The third mark required candidates to express *pas bien dans leur peau* which was not difficult to re-phrase.

Item 3(c) asked what pupils might find it *plus difficile de faire*, hinting at the best way to answer it being through using verbs. Those who took the hint generally sailed through with four marks here: *se concentrer* (A), *contrôler leurs émotions* (B), *avoir assez d'énergie* (C), *réagir vite* (D).

Item 3(d) saw some mentioning *les hiboux* to illustrate their point. Mentioning light's effect as a stimulus on the brain earned the second mark here for a good number.

Item 3(e) offered four marks. The first was usually successfully scored by those who avoided lifting *retarder le début des cours* in expressing the idea of delaying the start of lessons (not just as a means of avoiding late arrivals), and the last by pointing out the spectacular improvement in results. Some were insufficiently precise in trying to identify the most productive times for lessons, and many failed to mention the reduction in pressure on public transport (or simply either lifted *déchargé les transports publics* or mentioned a too-vague reduction in traffic jams.)

Question 4

Marks here were somewhat lower than on **Question 3**, partly perhaps because candidates resorted to lifting more often.

Item 4(a): a good number scored the first two points here, but the last two were much less successfully handled. Some did not appear to understand *s'ennuyer* or used *l'ennuiement* or *ennuyeux* when referring to pupils. Some sensibly attempted to avoid lifting *perte de connaissances académiques* by using the obvious verb but found conjugating its present tense difficult. The idea of better spreading the work over the year (fourth point) proved particularly elusive, largely no doubt because candidates regularly misunderstood *répartir* as *repartir*.

Item 4(b) was generally well handled with many candidates scoring the full three marks, even if some lifted the easily avoidable *journées moins longues*.

Item 4(c) saw a confusion between *employeurs* and *employés*, with some suggesting that it was the employers rather than the employees who would be wanting to go off on holiday with their children. The second mark concerning overload/pressure on tourism and transport proved elusive, particularly for those who interpreted *la surcharge* as a surcharge/additional payment.

In **Item 4(d)**, a fair number of candidates managed to express *d'une durée intolérable* in their own words, but found it more difficult to express the concept of interrupting the academic flow, or struggled to conjugate *interrompre*.

Item 4(e) proved straightforward and a large proportion of candidates made the most of it to score both marks, taking care to re-phrase *une diminution* (often *dimunition*) *de l'absentéisme* either with a verb or with a synonym (*réduction/baisse*).

Item 4(f) saw a fair amount of lifting of *maintenir une attention qui épuise*, and a reluctance to be precise enough about the times involved.

Question 5

This Question asks the candidates to summarise the benefits/advantages of both starting the school day later and of shortening school holidays, and then to express a personal view as to whether parents should impose a strict bed-time. Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme for the **Summary** identified 12 rewardable points. The most commonly identified benefits of a late start included allowing pupils extra sleeping time, thereby making them more vigorous, using the times at which pupils work best and improving results. As for shorter holidays, commonly mentioned advantages included avoiding boredom and the loss of previous knowledge, allowing a shorter working day and a less intense working week.

Candidates who scored fewest marks of all included those who wrote general essays for which there was no evidence in the texts and therefore no mark.

The **Personal Response** gives the candidate the chance to express their feelings on the topic, which some candidates did with imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. Weaker candidates tended to seek refuge in the text and ventured very little else, resulting in some unambitious and derivative responses: *Les parents devraient imposer une heure de coucher, comme ça l'adolescent ne sera pas fatigué, pourra bien travailler en classe et il n'aura pas de troubles d'attention*. Others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or slant of their own: *Oui, parce que ça donne des bonnes habitudes pour la vie, mais aussi l'adolescent n'aime pas qu'on lui impose des choses et pourrait devenir agressif. Il vaut toujours mieux faire confiance et négocier plutôt qu'imposer*.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to poor. Some candidates found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form. Verbs (even entirely regular ones) were as usual by far the most common sources of error. *les élèves risque; les jeunes manque; les élève dorment neufs heure; les élèves sont moins diplômé/performant; les adolescent devrait*. This was exacerbated by a general interchanging within the same sentence of *il* with *ils* and therefore of *son/sa/ses/leur/leurs* – the distinction between the last two in particular remaining a source of mystery. Particularly in longer sentences (of which there was no shortage!), candidates appeared to forget the subject they had started with and switched apparently at random.

Qui and *ce qui* appeared interchangeable for some candidates – *l'adolescent peut se sentir mal dans sa peau qui peut créer des frustrations* – as did *c'est/ces/ce/se/ceux/ceux-là* and *cela* which very commonly appeared with a plural verb.

Constructions with certain common verbs caused regular problems: *permettre, aider, encourager, empêcher, avoir tendance*. Some comparatives and superlatives were also sources of error: *plus bon/plus meilleur/plus mieux/plus beaucoup/plus bien*.

That said, the linguistic ability of most candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and accurate French which was a pleasure to read.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

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Item 2(a): many candidates didn't remove the *s* on *diplômés*, having changed to a singular subject. The change of *dorment* to the singular also caused a large number of errors. Some altered the tense unnecessarily.

Item 2(b): the change to the passive gave rise to a number of creative but wrong endings for *souigné*. *Someil/somiél* and *besion* were sometimes incorrectly copied from the original, and some again decided to change the tense for no apparent reason.

Item 2(c): the success rate here tended to vary greatly. In some cases need for the subjunctive was widely appreciated and correctly handled, even if *aillent* and *ayent* sometimes made an appearance. In others, this seemed uncharted territory.

Item 2(d): the transformation to the active was generally the most successfully handled item.

Item 2(e): this prompted a variety of tenses of *devoir* (or its omission). Although there were different elements to manipulate here, they were all individually very straightforward for those who remembered to see the job through. There was a fair amount of unnecessary changing of vocabulary here too.

Question 3

Item 3(a): the first mark concerning the need for more than nine hours of sleep got most candidates off to a successful start. The comparison required for the second mark was not understood by some who said that over-eating was harmful whereas the more sleep the better for your health. Some thought that eating too much before going to bed would lead to indigestion and a sleepless night.

Item 3(b): most candidates made the straightforward comparison between sleep patterns in school-time and in holiday-time for the first mark. Many understood the consequence for academic performance for the second mark but often lifted *moins bien diplômé*. The third mark required candidates to express *pas bien dans leur peau* which was not difficult to re-phrase.

Item 3(c) asked what pupils might find it *plus difficile de faire*, hinting at the best way to answer it being through using verbs. Those who took the hint generally sailed through with four marks here: *se concentrer* (A), *contrôler leurs émotions* (B), *avoir assez d'énergie* (C), *réagir vite* (D).

Item 3(d) saw some mentioning *les hiboux* to illustrate their point. Mentioning light's effect as a stimulus on the brain earned the second mark here for a good number.

Item 3(e) offered four marks. The first was usually successfully scored by those who avoided lifting *retarder le début des cours* in expressing the idea of delaying the start of lessons (not just as a means of avoiding late arrivals), and the last by pointing out the spectacular improvement in results. Some were insufficiently precise in trying to identify the most productive times for lessons, and many failed to mention the reduction in pressure on public transport (or simply either lifted *déchargé les transports publics* or mentioned a too-vague reduction in traffic jams.)

Question 4

Marks here were somewhat lower than on **Question 3**, partly perhaps because candidates resorted to lifting more often.

Item 4(a): a good number scored the first two points here, but the last two were much less successfully handled. Some did not appear to understand *s'ennuyer* or used *l'ennuiement* or *ennuyeux* when referring to pupils. Some sensibly attempted to avoid lifting *perte de connaissances académiques* by using the obvious verb but found conjugating its present tense difficult. The idea of better spreading the work over the year (fourth point) proved particularly elusive, largely no doubt because candidates regularly misunderstood *répartir* as *repartir*.

Item 4(b) was generally well handled with many candidates scoring the full three marks, even if some lifted the easily avoidable *journées moins longues*.

Item 4(c) saw a confusion between *employeurs* and *employés*, with some suggesting that it was the employers rather than the employees who would be wanting to go off on holiday with their children. The second mark concerning overload/pressure on tourism and transport proved elusive, particularly for those who interpreted *la surcharge* as a surcharge/additional payment.

In **Item 4(d)**, a fair number of candidates managed to express *d'une durée intolérable* in their own words, but found it more difficult to express the concept of interrupting the academic flow, or struggled to conjugate *interrompre*.

Item 4(e) proved straightforward and a large proportion of candidates made the most of it to score both marks, taking care to re-phrase *une diminution* (often *dimunition*) *de l'absentéisme* either with a verb or with a synonym (*réduction/baisse*).

Item 4(f) saw a fair amount of lifting of *maintenir une attention qui épuise*, and a reluctance to be precise enough about the times involved.

Question 5

This Question asks the candidates to summarise the benefits/advantages of both starting the school day later and of shortening school holidays, and then to express a personal view as to whether parents should impose a strict bed-time. Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme for the **Summary** identified 12 rewardable points. The most commonly identified benefits of a late start included allowing pupils extra sleeping time, thereby making them more vigorous, using the times at which pupils work best and improving results. As for shorter holidays, commonly mentioned advantages included avoiding boredom and the loss of previous knowledge, allowing a shorter working day and a less intense working week.

Candidates who scored fewest marks of all included those who wrote general essays for which there was no evidence in the texts and therefore no mark.

The **Personal Response** gives the candidate the chance to express their feelings on the topic, which some candidates did with imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. Weaker candidates tended to seek refuge in the text and ventured very little else, resulting in some unambitious and derivative responses: *Les parents devraient imposer une heure de coucher, comme ça l'adolescent ne sera pas fatigué, pourra bien travailler en classe et il n'aura pas de troubles d'attention*. Others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or slant of their own: *Oui, parce que ça donne des bonnes habitudes pour la vie, mais aussi l'adolescent n'aime pas qu'on lui impose des choses et pourrait devenir agressif. Il vaut toujours mieux faire confiance et négocier plutôt qu'imposer*.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to poor. Some candidates found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form. Verbs (even entirely regular ones) were as usual by far the most common sources of error. *les élèves risque; les jeunes manque; les élève dorment neufs heure; les élèves sont moins diplômé/performant; les adolescent devrait*. This was exacerbated by a general interchanging within the same sentence of *il* with *ils* and therefore of *son/sa/ses/leur/leurs* – the distinction between the last two in particular remaining a source of mystery. Particularly in longer sentences (of which there was no shortage!), candidates appeared to forget the subject they had started with and switched apparently at random.

Qui and *ce qui* appeared interchangeable for some candidates – *l'adolescent peut se sentir mal dans sa peau qui peut créer des frustrations* – as did *c'est/ces/ce/se/ceux/ceux-là* and *cela* which very commonly appeared with a plural verb.

Constructions with certain common verbs caused regular problems: *permettre, aider, encourager, empêcher, avoir tendance*. Some comparatives and superlatives were also sources of error: *plus bon/plus meilleur/plus mieux/plus beaucoup/plus bien*.

That said, the linguistic ability of most candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and accurate French which was a pleasure to read.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/23
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. Including additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) phrases unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not copy out the question as a preamble to their answer.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored.
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was certainly stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one of which candidates had some awareness.

Many candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently less well, it was often because they copied phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Most candidates managed to attempt all questions and there was little evidence of time pressures. Quite a lot of answers were unduly lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible: sometimes the answers were longer than the whole paragraph of the text to which they referred. **The practice of copying out the question in Questions 3 and 4 as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker**, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract greatly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark : *pourquoi les chefs de nos jours devraient-ils favoriser la cuisine régionale est que ... 3(c) ; pourquoi la cuisine moderne artistique est-elle surprenante est que ... 4(b)*. **Answers beginning with *Parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.**

The more successful candidates clearly appreciated the need to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, copying wholesale from the text has diminished considerably in recent sessions, but remains a common feature amongst some candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' sections directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. The rubric clearly states that candidates should answer ***sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte***. Candidates should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming

nouns into verbs) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement.

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of the need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the ‘footprint’ of the word or words which they are replacing.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90-100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (not doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste 20% of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points, and from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay which is quite likely to score 0/10.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *Qu'est-ce que c'est?* The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a very straightforward opening exercise in vocabulary substitution which was very successfully handled by a large majority of candidates, many of whom scored full marks with apparent ease. *Nombreuses* was occasionally offered for *variés* in **(e)**, forgetting that although it might have made approximate sense, the adjective needed to be in the masculine. *Animations* was not always found for *activités* in **(d)**. Otherwise, such marks as were lost tended to be either the result of including unnecessary words (*moment spécial*), or carelessness in transcribing from the text (*privilégé; célébré*).

Question 2

There were some very good answers to this question, but as usual the task proved demanding for candidates whose command of grammatical structures was less than secure.

Item 2(a): required a transformation into the passive, which held no fears for many candidates, but defeated quite a number of others who commonly produced *Cet héritage doit être transmettre / doit transmettre / doit transmet*. Having done the hard bit, a few ignored the clue as to the gender of *héritage* to produce *transmise*.

Item 2(b): required another passive. Some candidates who set about things in the right way altered the tense of the original unnecessarily with *sont proposées* and so lost the mark. Others failed to make the agreement despite the clue as to the gender of *animations*.

Item 2(c): reversed the challenge of **2(b)**, requiring the use of *on* to avoid the passive, which most candidates found an easier process, although *lui* appeared instead of *le* in some scripts. Some found satisfactory alternative ways of expressing the idea, e.g. *On considère que c'est un plat national*.

Item 2(d): required a subjunctive, which many candidates handled well (even if some undermined things somewhat with *mangéions*) but which was clearly uncharted territory for others.

Item 2(e): required two adjustments as part of the transformation into direct speech. These were generally successfully negotiated by all but those who forgot to change *leur* to *notre*, having altered the person of the verb, or by those who unnecessarily changed its tense.

Question 3

Item 3(a): candidates generally got off to a good start on the first of the two comprehension exercises, with a good number scoring the full three marks by pointing to the view of the vast majority of the French that *la cuisine française* is something they should pass down, to the fact that UNESCO has declared it to be part of the cultural heritage, and that there is now a national day in its honour. There was a fourth (less popular) alternative available for pointing out the importance of cooking in French family life. Some did not score one of the marks because they 'lifted' *transmettre aux générations futures*, which would not have been difficult to express in their own words.

In **Item 3(b):** most candidates mentioned the long history of the *pot-au-feu*, also pointing out its cheapness. The third mark proved more elusive for some who either went too far (*mangé par toutes les familles en France*) or not far enough (*plusieurs gens en France le mangent*).

In **item 3(c)**, a good number of candidates found little difficulty in scoring the full three marks, indicating that the dishes involved were eaten on special occasions or following physical exertion, and were not part of the daily diet. Those who did not do so often resorted to 'lifting' *après une dure journée de ski* or *ne font pas partie de l'alimentation quotidienne*, both of which would have been easily enough rephrased. Others were rather too vague: *lors de certains événements* or *après les activités*.

In **Item 3(d)**, candidates often found commendably simple and efficient ways of expressing at least two of the three required ideas. Some were too vague in saying simply that *les touristes aiment la cuisine locale* or *ils aident la région*. The environmental (as well as economic) benefits of using local products were often satisfactorily expressed simply by exchanging *diminuent* or *baissent* for *réduisent* or by rephrasing with a noun (*réduction/diminution*).

Item 3(e): saw most candidates correctly pointing to the relative cheapness of preparing traditional dishes at home and to their social benefit in bringing people together in the process. Others were prone to 'lifting' *éviter de consommer ... plats tout préparés qu'on achète au supermarché* or the easily rephrased *mauvais pour la santé*.

Question 4

Item 4(a): this was generally well answered, with candidates successfully expressing the combination of artistic and culinary skills and interests. The occasional candidate appeared to think that *culinaire* or *artistique* were nouns, but full marks were common here.

In **Item 4(b):** candidates needed to mention the combining or contrasting of tastes which were not normally put together and the use of new techniques to score the first two of the four available marks. The remaining two were scored by mentioning the aim of surprising/shocking the diner and of altering his/her perception. Some fell back on lifting *l'association ... de produits différents* or *contraster des goûts traditionnellement opposés*, but most found ways around this, often by transforming *association* into *associer* or using a different verb such as *combiner/mélanger/mettre ensemble*.

In **Item 4(c):** most candidates correctly identified the benefits to health of using natural products, but not all managed to point to the appeal of the modern to the young, or express the new opportunities presented to aspiring chefs without resorting to 'lifting' *se distinguer/se différencier* or *l'expression de leur individualité* unaltered from the text. Some sensibly tried to render *expression* as a verb but came up with *expresser*.

In **Item 4(d):** most candidates indicated the high cost, but quite a number missed the point about *la cuisine expérimentale* not being understood. Probably the most difficult of the three marks here involved expressing

the idea of the overturning of tradition as being a feature of the new style, but those who managed to find an alternative to *bouleverse* (*déranger/démolir/détruit* etc. but not *la bouleversation*) were duly rewarded.

In **Item 4(e)**: a large number of candidates correctly pointed to the need to book tables months in advance. Some offered the rather understated *On a vendu plusieurs livres de cuisine expérimentale* or *il y a plusieurs livres ...* whilst others couldn't re-phrase *nombre de livres vendus*. Some suggested that the new techniques were now taught in all schools rather than specifically in *les écoles de cuisine*.

Question 5

This Question asked the candidates to summarise the merits of both types of cooking and then to say which sort of food they would serve if they were to open a restaurant, and why. Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 15 rewardable points. The most commonly identified merits of *la cuisine traditionnelle* included its history, its low cost, and its benefits for health, for the local economy and the environment. The most usually mentioned merits of *la cuisine expérimentale* included unusual combinations of different ingredients, the chance for young chefs to make a name for themselves and health benefits.

Candidates who scored fewest marks of all included those who wrote general essays for which there was no evidence in the texts and therefore no mark, or who made one or two points early on and then repeated them in different guises.

The Personal Response gives the candidate the chance to express their feelings on the topic, which some did with a fair degree of imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. Some candidates tended to seek refuge in the text and ventured very little, resulting in some rather unambitious and derivative responses, whilst others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own.

Quality of language

The quality of language varied from very good to poor. Many candidates displayed a broad range of vocabulary, structures and idiom, and an ability to use complex patterns confidently and competently. Some found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, with verbs (even entirely regular ones) as usual being far the most common sources of error.

Sometimes this was a question of errors in forming the verbs correctly: *ils ne comprennent pas ; j'avai ; les gens croivent ; il (per)mit (present) ; cela join ; j'ouvrierais/servirais*. At other times, it was simply a matter of not making the verb agree with its subject: *on mangent ; elle aiment ; on réduisent ; il veulent ; les chefs vise ; les gens mange ; la cuisine peuvent ; la nourriture viennent , il mangeions*. *Les restaurants qui vendents* on the other hand took agreements to a new level.

A similar pattern of not making the necessary agreement applied to nouns and articles or nouns and adjectives: *les plat ; des produits normale ; les plats traditionnel/riche ; un plats traditionnelle ; les ingrédient ne sont pas normale ; les programmes culinaire est ; les autre chefs ; des conséquences nuisible ; les restaurants populaire*. These could presumably have been greatly reduced by more thorough checking.

Some candidates displayed a distinctly phonetic approach to grammar - *elle a était mise ; ils ont étaient vendus ; il faut réservés ; un avantage et quelle diminue*.

Ce/se/ceux were apparently interchangeable in some scripts, as were *leur* and *leurs* and *qui/ce qui*.

The distinction between *depuis* and *pendant* and the tenses they require was a common source of error, as were the constructions following certain common verbs: *permettre, aider, encourager, inviter, empêcher, apprendre*.

Accurate spelling of some very basic words caused unexpected problems: *cé-là* (very common, and regularly followed by a plural verb for reasons unknown); *parceque; quel que; un peut; neaveaux*.

Some candidates' erratic use of *cuisine / cuisiner / cuisinier / cuisinière* confused issues.

That said, the linguistic ability of most candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote commendably idiomatic, fluent and accurate French.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/31

Essay

Key Messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to select a title with which they feel comfortable and write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherently structured. The use of French should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature as well as showing a good use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary. Sentence patterns should show some evidence of complexity and the style should be easy to follow.

General comments

Again this year, this paper generated some truly excellent work which bore witness not only to accurate and fluent linguistic production but also to maturity of thought, commendable knowledge and understanding of the pertinent issues and, not least, to the candidates' ability to hone a convincing and coherent discursive essay. At the other end of the range, there was a small proportion of seriously deficient pieces of work, but the bulk fell within the middle range. The significant weakness in a large number of cases proved yet again to be injudicious focus with regard to the question title: a lot of candidates who scored perfectly respectable and even good and very good marks for language wrote essays that more or less completely ignored the title set or contained just one or two paragraphs that were pertinent. Such essays could only be awarded very modest marks for Content. Less widespread but nonetheless worthy of comment is the number of candidates who continue to write at inordinate length, sometimes more than twice the upper limit of the recommended 400 words, presumably in the hope that quantity may compensate for lapses in quality. This is most definitely not the case: a succinct, relevant and carefully planned essay is far better than a lengthy "stream of consciousness" which endlessly works and re-works a small number of points. When ideas are in short supply, many tend to resort to padding, be it in the form of definition-based introductions, of irrelevant, often mangled and sometimes misattributed quotations or of detailed and often spurious statistics from which few if any relevant and cogent conclusions are drawn. Pertinent illustration and exemplification are, of course, encouraged and duly rewarded, but there really is little point in providing, for example, as many candidates did this year in **Question 1**, an exhaustive list of fast-food outlets to be found in their country.

With regard to quality of language, the best scripts combined high levels of accuracy, fluency and complexity. At the other end of the spectrum there were scripts where poor language meant that ideas could not be communicated. The majority of the work submitted was characterised by at least a fair level of accuracy, a positive attempt to ensure variation in the use of vocabulary and structures and some effort to rise to the demands of fluent expression, despite some clumsiness and occasional lapses in clarity of meaning. Some of the most common linguistic errors and infelicities are listed below:

- confusion over tense usage with modal verbs: *doit/devait/devrait, peut/pouvait/pourrait*
- use of the past participle after modal verbs, e.g. *elles doivent resté à la maison, on peut allé au gymnase*
- use of the wrong preposition after common verbs followed by an infinitive structure, e.g. *aider de, préférer de*
- insertion of a redundant *de* before a second infinitive, e.g. *il faut être constamment actif et de ne pas rester devant son ordinateur, passer son temps à faire du jogging et du bouger un peu*
- lapses of register, e.g. *truc, bouffer, les vieux, la télé, les gosses*, the inappropriate omission of *ne* in negative forms.

- the use of singular noun forms where a plural form is required and vice versa, e.g. *le voyage joue un grand rôle dans la vie des gens, la cigarette est très néfaste pour la santé,, le repas doit être bien équilibré, les progénitures*
- confusion between homonyms, e.g. *ce mettre, ce faire des soucis, ses personnes, tout ceux qu'ils veulent faire*
- the use of *cependant, néanmoins, en revanche* and *d'autre part* where no contrast was being made
- the failure to adapt vocabulary given in the question to a new context, e.g. *les plus âgées*
- random use of subject pronouns when referring back to a previously mentioned noun, e.g. *le gouvernement.....ils..., les personnes obèses.....ils..., la population/le public....ils...*
- common mis-spellings included *gouvernement, recruter, resources, exercise, campagne, par jours, exemple, revenue, grignotter, pillier, status, accueillir, recommandé, nutritioniste*
- use of *qui* in contexts where *ce qui* was required
- use of *le fait que* rather than *du fait que* and of *à cause de/que* in contexts where *parce que* was needed
- tautologies of the sort *à mon avis je pense, comme par exemple, tel comme, mais cependant*
- use of the passive voice with intransitive verbs, e.g. *ils ont été défendus de, ils sont donnés du fast-food, ils sont conseillés de*
- anglicisms e.g. *place* for *endroit*, *balancé* for *équilibré*, *avertissement* (often spelt *advertissement*) for *publicité*, *dépendre sur*
- confusion between the indirect object pronoun *leur* and the possessive adjective *leurs*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

L'obésité est devenue un problème mondial. Comment la combattre?

This proved to be by far the most popular title. Good essays concentrated throughout on possible means with which to combat obesity. However, a lot of the work submitted focused largely and, not infrequently, almost exclusively on the causes of obesity and, supported by statistics, on the devastating toll it takes on people's lives, particularly in certain developed parts of the world: this was NOT the question! Many too wandered from the required focus and wrote, in more general terms, about the need to practice healthy eating, dwelling at some length on such aspects as the virtues of organic foodstuffs, the need for controls on restaurant hygiene and the vogue for *le slow food*.

Essays which did not diverge from the question often contained a good range of points. Many of their authors expressed the view that the prime responsibility for ensuring a healthy diet, and thereby avoiding becoming obese, lies with the individual who needs first and foremost to keep a very close eye on what he eats and drinks, always taking care that his daily intake of calories equates to the amount of energy expended. Foodstuffs and drinks with a high fat content and a high sugar content (i.e. cheese and other dairy products, red meat, crisps, biscuits, chocolate, fizzy drinks, alcohol and the like) should be eschewed in favour of those that are low in calories (fish, chicken, vegetables, water, diet drinks etc.). The favoured drink should be water. The temptation to snack between meals and while relaxing in front of the television is one that must be banished without further ado. Exercise should become an integral part of daily life: sporting activities are a source of relaxation and enjoyment but they have the added bonus of burning the calories which otherwise would translate into unwanted kilos. Rather than use the car to travel short distances to work and to go shopping, people need to get into the habit of walking or cycling. Difficult though it may be, every effort must be made to keep lifestyle and stress levels in check, since it is when people are tired and stressed that they are most prone to succumb to excessive consumption of alcohol and of the sorts of foods that do the most harm.

Enemy number one in the fight against obesity is the fast-food industry. Hence the need to ensure that it is strictly regulated: possible measures might include the introduction of health warnings, similar to those imposed on the tobacco industry, to be displayed in all fast-food outlets, a tax levy on the products that they sell that are particularly bad for the health and a ban on advertising.

Education has a vital role to play in the fight against obesity. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that, from an early age, children are made aware of the importance of good dietary practices and that family meals are used as an opportunity to set children on the right path as far as healthy eating is concerned. Schools too must play their part. Nutritionists could be employed by schools and lesson time set aside for the express purpose of giving children the information calculated to arm them against the poor dietary habits that lead to obesity. More schools must follow the example of those which have already banned the sale in school shops and canteens of all the products rich in sugar (chocolate bars and other sweets, fizzy drinks etc.) of which children tend to be particularly fond but which are emphatically not part of good dietary practice.

Government too has an important role to play in the promotion of healthy eating. It is not simply a matter of appointing a regulator to watch over the fast-food industry. Advertising campaigns are needed to make people more aware of the link between eating habits and health. Not least, state funding needs to be forthcoming to build gyms and leisure centres, thereby allowing people better access to the sort of facilities needed if they are to keep themselves fit and in shape.

Some essays pointed out that obesity is quite often rooted in an underlying psychological problem and that, in such cases, the first step on the road to combatting it must be therapy of a psychological nature. It is also a fact that sometimes obesity is inherited at which point gene therapy was proposed as the way forward to correct the genetic defect. Other medical procedures suggested that might be used in more straightforward cases included liposuction, jaw wiring, gastric bypass surgery and drugs to suppress appetite.

Lexical mistakes that commonly figured in essays on this topic were *combattre contre*, the use of *les nourritures* rather than the correct *les aliments*, *les restaurations rapides* rather than *la restauration rapide*, *pratiquer le sport* rather than *faire du sport/pratiquer un sport* and confusion between *la malnutrition* and *la mauvaise alimentation* and between *malade* and *maladie*. In quite a lot of the work submitted, there was also over-reliance on *il faut* and *on doit*, as though these were the only way to introduce actions that might be taken.

Question 2

La mondialisation: phénomène positif ou négatif pour les pays en développement?

This title was not widely chosen. Good essays marshalled a range of evidence to support both sides of the case and then made some sort of value judgement based on the points made for and against. A small proportion of candidates focused exclusively on just one side of the argument and, in the final paragraph, conveniently brushed aside the counter-argument as being of minor import. A few candidates seemed to confuse globalisation with foreign aid, which meant that they neglected to consider the wider socio-cultural implications of the phenomenon.

According to the candidates globalisation has brought in its train much closer collaboration between nations on a number of levels, not least at the economic level: poorer countries have benefited a great deal from foreign aid and investment. The arrival of foreign firms has meant that thousands of new employment opportunities have been created, and the revenues generated by their presence, along with foreign aid and investment, have enabled Third World countries to improve schools and universities, to provide better health care and to build new homes, new roads, new transport systems and other new infrastructures. Also of great economic benefit to many developing countries has been the tremendous boost to tourism given by the advent of globalisation. Opportunities to study abroad, often at prestigious European and American universities, have also greatly increased in number. The large-scale influx of tourists and the access to foreign media sources have had a very positive influence on people's attitudes: they tend to be less insular, less inward looking, more open to differences and more tolerant whether it be in the matter of race, religion or sexual orientation. This change in attitude has been reflected in the much higher number of mixed marriages and marriages between people of different religious creeds.

However, these changes for the good have been countered by a certain number of adverse effects entailed by the globalisation movement. Perhaps chief among them has been the regrettable but inevitable erosion of local traditions: traditional local crafts such as weaving and pottery no longer interest the young, traditional local dress has been abandoned in favour of jeans, tee-shirts and leather jackets, traditional local cuisine

has lost a lot of ground to international dishes (particularly convenience food), among young people the local language has been largely displaced by English, and the decline of religion, also attributable in large measure to foreign influence, means that the number of traditional religious festivals is in decline. The concomitant erosion of traditional values by foreign values has taken a particular toll among teenagers and young adults a number of whom have allowed themselves to be dragged down by the scourges of western society (alcohol, drug taking, sexual promiscuity etc.) which were virtually unknown fifteen years ago. Many young adults now eschew marriage in favour of cohabitation. The influence of foreign films has led to a marked increase in violence. It is true that the opportunities to study abroad are much more numerous but, alas, many of those who are given the opportunity to do so, never return. Added to which, many of the best graduates from local universities and other young people who have risen swiftly within their chosen professions are lured away by foreign firms, thereby depriving the country of a great deal of talent. The defection from traditional cuisine to convenience food has affected people's health: obesity is on the increase and there has been a marked increase in the number of cases of diabetes and cardio-vascular problems. Notwithstanding the obvious economic benefit, the advent of mass tourism has also brought its share of ills, most notable among which are damage to sites of natural beauty, higher levels of pollution, a more unashamedly materialistic outlook on life among the local population and, not least, the spread of prostitution. Moreover, the arrival on the scene of international firms has not always been an altogether positive development: many cases have been reported of the local workforce being exploited and made to work for extremely low wages, of scant respect being accorded to the local environment which has suffered irreversible damage at the hands of greedy foreign entrepreneurs and of the depletion of a country's natural resources the profits from which have been of far more benefit to the country of origin of the international entrepreneur than to the inhabitants of the Third-World nation itself.

A linguistic feature of quite a few essays on this topic that militated rather against fluency was the repeated use at the beginning of sentences of the phrase *Avec la mondialisation*.

Question 3

Tourisme et conservation sont-ils compatibles?

This was the second most popular title. The authors of good essays had fully taken on board that the essential issue here is compatibility, in other words whether tourism and conservation can indeed go hand in hand. Alas, a large number of candidates who chose the subject were content to reproduce ostensibly pre-prepared material on the ills and sometimes also the benefits of the tourist industry in their country, but paid scant if any heed to the conservation side of the debate. One sensed in certain cases that the term *compatibles* had not been understood, especially as the word was tellingly avoided in concluding paragraphs; candidates should beware of opting for titles containing terms over which they may have doubts. Lamartine was allowed to have the last word in a significant number of essays – “Il n'y a pas d'homme plus complet que celui qui a beaucoup voyage” – even though the quotation had no bearing whatsoever on the subject for discussion.

A brief overview of the ills of tourism – greatly increased levels of pollution and the concomitant effects on the environment, deforestation and the destruction of plant and animal life, the depletion of natural resources and the erosion of local traditions and values – was a perfectly pertinent starting point for many who did go on to write relevantly about the steps that can be and, indeed, already are taken to curb those ills in order to ensure a degree of compatibility between tourism and conservation.

A raft of measures can be taken to ensure that the pollution generated by the tourist industry is kept to a minimum. By levying taxes on air transport, the government can raise money to be used for environmental purposes. Noise pollution can be kept to a minimum by ensuring that new airports and runways are built with a view to ensuring that air traffic is kept away from built-up areas. Scientists must continue their research with a view to devising aircraft engines and also land-based transport systems used by large numbers of tourists that are more eco-friendly both in terms of fuel consumption and noise emission. The high energy consumption of tourist hotels, cruise liners and the whole panoply of services and activities that cater for tourists must be supplied as far as possible from alternative energy sources. The enormous quantities of water used by tourists necessitate the use of an efficient waste water treatment system in order to avoid the depletion of a resource that is in short supply in many areas of the world that are favoured tourist destinations. By ensuring that priority is given to the recycling of other waste materials such as paper and glass that are generated in large quantities by the tourist industry, again its impact on the environment can be minimised.

The construction of the accommodation needed to house the tourists and of the facilities calculated to attract them should make maximum use of synthetic materials in order to conserve precious natural resources. Strict controls must also be put in place to ensure that they are not built in areas of natural beauty or areas where their presence would result in the destruction of the natural habitats of plant and animal life.

Education also has a vital role to play in trying to ensure that tourism and conservation are indeed compatible. It is the joint responsibility of travel agents, tour operators and the owners of the hotels and facilities patronised by large numbers of tourists to do all in their power to educate tourists in the ways calculated to minimise the impact on the local environment of mass tourism. It needs to be explained to them, for example, that the reuse of towels and bed linen in hotel rooms, rather than insisting on their being changed every day, represents an enormous saving in terms of energy and water consumption, and that the dropping of litter not only creates a visual eyesore but also poses a threat to people's health and to animals, birds and sea creatures that might ingest materials that could result in their death.

With regard to the erosion in many popular tourist destinations of local traditions and values entailed by contact with foreign tourists, it falls to governments and local communities to do all in their power to promote such aspects as local crafts, local dress and local cuisine. The judicious use of media resources, the organisation of special festivals whose aim is to celebrate various age-old local traditions, the promotion in schools of skills and ways of life that are under threat from foreign influences are all calculated to ensure that the local heritage is preserved and lives on. Not least, it is the responsibility of governments, schools and parents to put young people living in the countries in question on their guard against the pernicious influence of certain aspects of western life – alcohol, drugs, sexual promiscuity – to which the presence of large numbers of foreign tourists exposes them.

The general consensus was that, whatever efforts are made on however many fronts to lessen the impact of mass tourism on local communities, tourism will continue to take a significant toll on the countries and communities that have come to depend on it. However, much can be done to lessen its negative impact and to ensure at least some degree of compatibility between the desire to enjoy the economic benefits brought by tourism and the desire to protect the local environment and local traditions and values.

Question 4

Le conflit des générations n'existe pas: au contraire, il existe une forte interdépendance entre les jeunes et les personnes plus âgées.

This title was the third in order of popularity. Good essays struck a balance between the sources of conflict that divide young and old and examples of areas where they are clearly very dependent on one another. However, given the way the title is couched, it was of course perfectly acceptable for candidates to weight their essays more towards *interdépendance*. The weakness pinpointed in the report on **Question 3** was equally apparent here where there were *two* terms where misunderstanding was very common, notably *interdépendance* and, more surprisingly, *personnes plus âgées*. The title generated a multitude of accounts seen solely from a teenager's perspective, more often than not complaining of parental lack of empathy, whilst recognising somewhat grudgingly a youth's financial dependency on parents. Precious little reference was made to parental dependency on offspring other than at the level of digital technology, and in many cases it was not referred to at all. Misinterpretations of the term *les personnes plus âgées* meant that some essays restricted themselves to child-grandparent relations, whilst a minority of candidates wrote on old people in general. One memorable essay whose author had fully grasped the import of the title concluded rather perceptively: "*Comparons cette relation jeunes-personnes plus âgées à celle de Tom et Jerry: ils se battent constamment, mais au fond ils ne peuvent continuer d'exister l'un sans l'autre.*"

The starting point for many was the fact that children and teenagers are highly dependent on their parents for help and support in many areas. Not least, since they are unable to work until they have attained the age of 16, they look to their parents to clothe them, to feed them, to pay for the materials they need for school, to buy them the technological gadgets that are the stock in trade of the young and to provide them with the money necessary to finance their leisure time activities. They are also highly reliant on their parents for guidance and advice on a whole range of subjects. Much of the social and moral education that they receive is provided in the home. As potential easy prey for the scourges of modern-day society – drugs, alcohol, pornography, Internet predators, sexually transmitted diseases – it is important that their parents are on hand to watch over them and put them on their guard. When there are problems at school, emotional crises engendered by the failure of a teenage relationship or the death of a grandparent or some other loved one, choices to be made regarding subjects to be studied at school or university or regarding their future career, again it is to their parents that they turn for support and guidance.

However, it is not all one way. The parents' emotional life centres on the children they have brought into the world and their whole universe would crumble if something untoward befell the offspring for whom they feel such unbounded love. In many families, both parents work in order to be able to give their children every comfort and the best possible start in life, and, as a result, many count on their children to help with the running of the household. After a long, tiring day at work they look not least to their children to allow them to forget and recover from the strains and stresses of the workplace. One reads too in the media of cases where a sick or handicapped parent is wholly dependent on his or her child or children who effectively act(s) as carer(s). When it comes to computer and telecommunications technology young people are often more skilled than the older generations, and both parents and grandparents often turn to their children and grandchildren to show them how to operate their computers, i-pads, smartphones and the like.

In other respects too, there is often a particularly strong interdependence between grandparents and grandchildren. Some grandparents are elderly and infirm and look for help in all manner of domains – shopping, housework, gardening etc. – to their grandchildren. An increasing number of grandparents, for whatever reason, act as full-time parents or child minders to their grandchildren who look to them for all their needs. Grandparents often have savings that they do not need and use them to enable their grandchildren to enjoy privileges and material benefits that their hard-pressed parents simply cannot afford. Conversely, there are quite a lot of old people who have few or no savings and who are entirely reliant on the state pension the funding of which depends on the fiscal levies that it will be the turn of the young to start to pay as soon as they enter the world of work: the entire pension system is rooted in interdependence between young and old.

That there is a high level of interdependence between young people and the older generations is incontrovertible but equally incontrovertible is the fact that there comes a point in every young person's life when he feels that he wants a measure of independence and a chance to assert himself. Sometimes this transition generates minimal friction and conflict but sometimes sparks fly. The fault can lie on either side or indeed on both sides. The young are sometimes too demanding and overstep the mark in their desire for greater freedoms but equally, some parents wrongly interpret the least demand as a sign of rebellion to which they react with unjustified severity, thereby only serving to exacerbate the situation and stoke the conflict that other parents skilfully manage to avoid by striking the appropriate balance between the assertion of parental authority and respect for their child's position. In short, given an appropriate degree of tact and respect exercised on both sides, the perils of the so-called generation gap can be more or less entirely circumvented.

Question 5

L'éducation est la réponse au problème de l'inégalité des chances. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez?

This proved to be the least popular title. The essential focus here had to be the role of education in furthering the cause of equality. Essays that confined their treatment to various aspects of the issue of inequality – men/women, the feminist struggle, rich/poor, able-bodied/handicapped – without linking them to the role of education in forming an individual's and society's attitudes and behaviour towards others could not be highly rewarded.

Education seeks to instil a certain open-mindedness and to break down barriers of prejudice. It promotes tolerance and the acceptance of differences, thereby encouraging young people to welcome into their fold people who differ from themselves, perhaps because the colour of their skin is different or because they have a physical handicap or perhaps because they have been brought up in a different faith. However, to what extent, the question was asked in introductory paragraphs, do the atmosphere and values that prevail in the school or university community translate into equal opportunities later in life for those who, for whatever reason, have traditionally found it more difficult to advance in society?

It is thanks to education that women have been able to make such progress in society. Equal educational opportunities being extended in most countries of the world to girls as well as boys, girls have been able to develop their talents and skills with the same facility as their male counterparts, to attain the same level of academic achievement and thereby to compete on an equal footing with boys whether it be for university places or for jobs. Far from inciting jealousy, the success achieved by women at school and university has brought men to appreciate the contribution that their female peers have to make to society, thereby further breaking down the barriers of prejudice erected by bygone generations.

Education also serves to break down the barriers between rich and poor and thereby promote social equality and mobility. The children of poor parents who make the most of the educational opportunities afforded them and do well in public examinations are able to escape from the poverty trap and aspire to a standard of living and a social status beyond their parents' wildest dreams. Countless examples can be cited of individuals

from the humblest of backgrounds who, thanks to the start in life given to them by their education, have succeeded in attaining the highest offices in the public and corporate domains.

The more enlightened society that we live in today, that owes much to the efforts of educators at all levels, looks far more favourably on people whose way has traditionally been barred by their physical and mental characteristics, notably physical handicaps, impairments of a mental nature and skin colour. The result has been changes in the law which reflect the commitment of governments to equality of opportunity for all such individuals and which require employers to look with equanimity on applications from handicapped people and those from ethnic minorities and, in the case of those with both physical and mental handicaps, to make 'reasonable adjustments', viz. to effect a physical modification to equipment or to the work environment, to allow flexible working hours or, in the case of job applications, to give more time to complete the recruitment test.

However, notwithstanding all these social advances and changes in the law for which education has paved the way, education is by no means always the answer to the problem of inequality of opportunity. Indeed, in certain respects education can be seen to breed inequality. Schools do not all offer the same facilities or the same range of subjects and some schools that have the best facilities available and that are able to recruit the best teachers by offering the highest salaries are only open to those whose parents can afford to pay. In many countries, the most academic candidates in the state system are singled out and sent to special academic schools while the less gifted are consigned to institutions where the standard of teaching is of an altogether less good quality and where they often find themselves in classes taught by teachers who take little interest in them and whose pedagogical competence is frequently questionable. A significant proportion of candidates leave School with no qualifications and no diploma. As a result, they find it impossible to secure employment and consequently fall prey to the classic social scourges of delinquency and drug-taking.

It is also the case that despite all the inroads made by a better and more enlightened educational system and all the concomitant social advances and changes in the law that promote equality of opportunity, there remain, particularly among the older generations, certain ingrained prejudices that militate against the achievement of an egalitarian society. The egalitarian values inculcated by the formal education delivered at school and university continue to be undermined by the informal education that quite a lot of young people receive at home where they are exposed to the values of parents and grandparents who have been imbued by their forbears with notions of the superiority of one race or one category of person over another and with patriarchal values that make no concessions to female or any other sort of social equality.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/32

Essay

Key Messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to select a title with which they feel comfortable and write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherently structured. The use of French should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature as well as showing a good use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary. Sentence patterns should show some evidence of complexity and the style should be easy to follow.

General comments

Again this year, this paper generated some truly excellent work which bore witness not only to accurate and fluent linguistic production but also to maturity of thought, commendable knowledge and understanding of the pertinent issues and, not least, to the candidates' ability to hone a convincing and coherent discursive essay. At the other end of the range, there was a small proportion of seriously deficient pieces of work, but the bulk fell within the middle range. The significant weakness in a large number of cases proved yet again to be injudicious focus with regard to the question title: a lot of candidates who scored perfectly respectable and even good and very good marks for language wrote essays that more or less completely ignored the title set or contained just one or two paragraphs that were pertinent. Such essays could only be awarded very modest marks for Content. Less widespread but nonetheless worthy of comment is the number of candidates who continue to write at inordinate length, sometimes more than twice the upper limit of the recommended 400 words, presumably in the hope that quantity may compensate for lapses in quality. This is most definitely not the case: a succinct, relevant and carefully planned essay is far better than a lengthy "stream of consciousness" which endlessly works and re-works a small number of points. When ideas are in short supply, many tend to resort to padding, be it in the form of definition-based introductions, of irrelevant, often mangled and sometimes misattributed quotations or of detailed and often spurious statistics from which few if any relevant and cogent conclusions are drawn. Pertinent illustration and exemplification are, of course, encouraged and duly rewarded, but there really is little point in providing, for example, as many candidates did this year in **Question 1**, an exhaustive list of fast-food outlets to be found in their country.

With regard to quality of language, the best scripts combined high levels of accuracy, fluency and complexity. At the other end of the spectrum there were scripts where poor language meant that ideas could not be communicated. The majority of the work submitted was characterised by at least a fair level of accuracy, a positive attempt to ensure variation in the use of vocabulary and structures and some effort to rise to the demands of fluent expression, despite some clumsiness and occasional lapses in clarity of meaning. Some of the most common linguistic errors and infelicities are listed below:

- confusion over tense usage with modal verbs: *doit/devait/devrait, peut/pouvait/pourrait*
- use of the past participle after modal verbs, e.g. *elles doivent resté à la maison, on peut allé au gymnase*
- use of the wrong preposition after common verbs followed by an infinitive structure, e.g. *aider de, préférer de*
- insertion of a redundant *de* before a second infinitive, e.g. *il faut être constamment actif et de ne pas rester devant son ordinateur, passer son temps à faire du jogging et du bouger un peu*
- lapses of register, e.g. *truc, bouffer, les vieux, la télé, les gosses*, the inappropriate omission of *ne* in negative forms.

- the use of singular noun forms where a plural form is required and vice versa, e.g. *le voyage joue un grand rôle dans la vie des gens, la cigarette est très néfaste pour la santé,, le repas doit être bien équilibré, les progénitures*
- confusion between homonyms, e.g. *ce mettre, ce faire des soucis, ses personnes, tout ceux qu'ils veulent faire*
- the use of *cependant, néanmoins, en revanche* and *d'autre part* where no contrast was being made
- the failure to adapt vocabulary given in the question to a new context, e.g. *les plus âgées*
- random use of subject pronouns when referring back to a previously mentioned noun, e.g. *le gouvernement.....ils..., les personnes obèses....ils..., la population/le public....ils...*
- common mis-spellings included *gouvernement, recruter, resources, exercise, campagne, par jours, exemple, revenue, grignotter, pillier, status, accueillir, recommandé, nutritioniste*
- use of *qui* in contexts where *ce qui* was required
- use of *le fait que* rather than *du fait que* and of *à cause de/que* in contexts where *parce que* was needed
- tautologies of the sort *à mon avis je pense, comme par exemple, tel comme, mais cependant*
- use of the passive voice with intransitive verbs, e.g. *ils ont été défendus de, ils sont donnés du fast-food, ils sont conseillés de*
- anglicisms e.g. *place* for *endroit*, *balancé* for *équilibré*, *avertissement* (often spelt *advertisement*) for *publicité*, *dépendre sur*
- confusion between the indirect object pronoun *leur* and the possessive adjective *leurs*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

L'obésité est devenue un problème mondial. Comment la combattre?

This proved to be by far the most popular title. Good essays concentrated throughout on possible means with which to combat obesity. However, a lot of the work submitted focused largely and, not infrequently, almost exclusively on the causes of obesity and, supported by statistics, on the devastating toll it takes on people's lives, particularly in certain developed parts of the world: this was NOT the question! Many too wandered from the required focus and wrote, in more general terms, about the need to practice healthy eating, dwelling at some length on such aspects as the virtues of organic foodstuffs, the need for controls on restaurant hygiene and the vogue for *le slow food*.

Essays which did not diverge from the question often contained a good range of points. Many of their authors expressed the view that the prime responsibility for ensuring a healthy diet, and thereby avoiding becoming obese, lies with the individual who needs first and foremost to keep a very close eye on what he eats and drinks, always taking care that his daily intake of calories equates to the amount of energy expended. Foodstuffs and drinks with a high fat content and a high sugar content (i.e. cheese and other dairy products, red meat, crisps, biscuits, chocolate, fizzy drinks, alcohol and the like) should be eschewed in favour of those that are low in calories (fish, chicken, vegetables, water, diet drinks etc.). The favoured drink should be water. The temptation to snack between meals and while relaxing in front of the television is one that must be banished without further ado. Exercise should become an integral part of daily life: sporting activities are a source of relaxation and enjoyment but they have the added bonus of burning the calories which otherwise would translate into unwanted kilos. Rather than use the car to travel short distances to work and to go shopping, people need to get into the habit of walking or cycling. Difficult though it may be, every effort must be made to keep lifestyle and stress levels in check, since it is when people are tired and stressed that they are most prone to succumb to excessive consumption of alcohol and of the sorts of foods that do the most harm.

Enemy number one in the fight against obesity is the fast-food industry. Hence the need to ensure that it is strictly regulated: possible measures might include the introduction of health warnings, similar to those imposed on the tobacco industry, to be displayed in all fast-food outlets, a tax levy on the products that they sell that are particularly bad for the health and a ban on advertising.

Education has a vital role to play in the fight against obesity. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that, from an early age, children are made aware of the importance of good dietary practices and that family meals are used as an opportunity to set children on the right path as far as healthy eating is concerned. Schools too must play their part. Nutritionists could be employed by schools and lesson time set aside for the express purpose of giving children the information calculated to arm them against the poor dietary habits that lead to obesity. More schools must follow the example of those which have already banned the sale in school shops and canteens of all the products rich in sugar (chocolate bars and other sweets, fizzy drinks etc.) of which children tend to be particularly fond but which are emphatically not part of good dietary practice.

Government too has an important role to play in the promotion of healthy eating. It is not simply a matter of appointing a regulator to watch over the fast-food industry. Advertising campaigns are needed to make people more aware of the link between eating habits and health. Not least, state funding needs to be forthcoming to build gyms and leisure centres, thereby allowing people better access to the sort of facilities needed if they are to keep themselves fit and in shape.

Some essays pointed out that obesity is quite often rooted in an underlying psychological problem and that, in such cases, the first step on the road to combatting it must be therapy of a psychological nature. It is also a fact that sometimes obesity is inherited at which point gene therapy was proposed as the way forward to correct the genetic defect. Other medical procedures suggested that might be used in more straightforward cases included liposuction, jaw wiring, gastric bypass surgery and drugs to suppress appetite.

Lexical mistakes that commonly figured in essays on this topic were *combattre contre*, the use of *les nourritures* rather than the correct *les aliments*, *les restaurations rapides* rather than *la restauration rapide*, *pratiquer le sport* rather than *faire du sport/pratiquer un sport* and confusion between *la malnutrition* and *la mauvaise alimentation* and between *malade* and *maladie*. In quite a lot of the work submitted, there was also over-reliance on *il faut* and *on doit*, as though these were the only way to introduce actions that might be taken.

Question 2

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However, these changes for the good have been countered by a certain number of adverse effects entailed by the globalisation movement. Perhaps chief among them has been the regrettable but inevitable erosion of local traditions: traditional local crafts such as weaving and pottery no longer interest the young, traditional local dress has been abandoned in favour of jeans, tee-shirts and leather jackets, traditional local cuisine

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A raft of measures can be taken to ensure that the pollution generated by the tourist industry is kept to a minimum. By levying taxes on air transport, the government can raise money to be used for environmental purposes. Noise pollution can be kept to a minimum by ensuring that new airports and runways are built with a view to ensuring that air traffic is kept away from built-up areas. Scientists must continue their research with a view to devising aircraft engines and also land-based transport systems used by large numbers of tourists that are more eco-friendly both in terms of fuel consumption and noise emission. The high energy consumption of tourist hotels, cruise liners and the whole panoply of services and activities that cater for tourists must be supplied as far as possible from alternative energy sources. The enormous quantities of water used by tourists necessitate the use of an efficient waste water treatment system in order to avoid the depletion of a resource that is in short supply in many areas of the world that are favoured tourist destinations. By ensuring that priority is given to the recycling of other waste materials such as paper and glass that are generated in large quantities by the tourist industry, again its impact on the environment can be minimised.

The construction of the accommodation needed to house the tourists and of the facilities calculated to attract them should make maximum use of synthetic materials in order to conserve precious natural resources. Strict controls must also be put in place to ensure that they are not built in areas of natural beauty or areas where their presence would result in the destruction of the natural habitats of plant and animal life.

Education also has a vital role to play in trying to ensure that tourism and conservation are indeed compatible. It is the joint responsibility of travel agents, tour operators and the owners of the hotels and facilities patronised by large numbers of tourists to do all in their power to educate tourists in the ways calculated to minimise the impact on the local environment of mass tourism. It needs to be explained to them, for example, that the reuse of towels and bed linen in hotel rooms, rather than insisting on their being changed every day, represents an enormous saving in terms of energy and water consumption, and that the dropping of litter not only creates a visual eyesore but also poses a threat to people's health and to animals, birds and sea creatures that might ingest materials that could result in their death.

With regard to the erosion in many popular tourist destinations of local traditions and values entailed by contact with foreign tourists, it falls to governments and local communities to do all in their power to promote such aspects as local crafts, local dress and local cuisine. The judicious use of media resources, the organisation of special festivals whose aim is to celebrate various age-old local traditions, the promotion in schools of skills and ways of life that are under threat from foreign influences are all calculated to ensure that the local heritage is preserved and lives on. Not least, it is the responsibility of governments, schools and parents to put young people living in the countries in question on their guard against the pernicious influence of certain aspects of western life – alcohol, drugs, sexual promiscuity – to which the presence of large numbers of foreign tourists exposes them.

The general consensus was that, whatever efforts are made on however many fronts to lessen the impact of mass tourism on local communities, tourism will continue to take a significant toll on the countries and communities that have come to depend on it. However, much can be done to lessen its negative impact and to ensure at least some degree of compatibility between the desire to enjoy the economic benefits brought by tourism and the desire to protect the local environment and local traditions and values.

Question 4

Le conflit des générations n'existe pas: au contraire, il existe une forte interdépendance entre les jeunes et les personnes plus âgées.

This title was the third in order of popularity. Good essays struck a balance between the sources of conflict that divide young and old and examples of areas where they are clearly very dependent on one another. However, given the way the title is couched, it was of course perfectly acceptable for candidates to weight their essays more towards *interdépendance*. The weakness pinpointed in the report on **Question 3** was equally apparent here where there were *two* terms where misunderstanding was very common, notably *interdépendance* and, more surprisingly, *personnes plus âgées*. The title generated a multitude of accounts seen solely from a teenager's perspective, more often than not complaining of parental lack of empathy, whilst recognising somewhat grudgingly a youth's financial dependency on parents. Precious little reference was made to parental dependency on offspring other than at the level of digital technology, and in many cases it was not referred to at all. Misinterpretations of the term *les personnes plus âgées* meant that some essays restricted themselves to child-grandparent relations, whilst a minority of candidates wrote on old people in general. One memorable essay whose author had fully grasped the import of the title concluded rather perceptively: "*Comparons cette relation jeunes-personnes plus âgées à celle de Tom et Jerry: ils se battent constamment, mais au fond ils ne peuvent continuer d'exister l'un sans l'autre.*"

The starting point for many was the fact that children and teenagers are highly dependent on their parents for help and support in many areas. Not least, since they are unable to work until they have attained the age of 16, they look to their parents to clothe them, to feed them, to pay for the materials they need for school, to buy them the technological gadgets that are the stock in trade of the young and to provide them with the money necessary to finance their leisure time activities. They are also highly reliant on their parents for guidance and advice on a whole range of subjects. Much of the social and moral education that they receive is provided in the home. As potential easy prey for the scourges of modern-day society – drugs, alcohol, pornography, Internet predators, sexually transmitted diseases – it is important that their parents are on hand to watch over them and put them on their guard. When there are problems at school, emotional crises engendered by the failure of a teenage relationship or the death of a grandparent or some other loved one, choices to be made regarding subjects to be studied at school or university or regarding their future career, again it is to their parents that they turn for support and guidance.

However, it is not all one way. The parents' emotional life centres on the children they have brought into the world and their whole universe would crumble if something untoward befell the offspring for whom they feel such unbounded love. In many families, both parents work in order to be able to give their children every comfort and the best possible start in life, and, as a result, many count on their children to help with the running of the household. After a long, tiring day at work they look not least to their children to allow them to forget and recover from the strains and stresses of the workplace. One reads too in the media of cases where a sick or handicapped parent is wholly dependent on his or her child or children who effectively act(s) as carer(s). When it comes to computer and telecommunications technology young people are often more skilled than the older generations, and both parents and grandparents often turn to their children and grandchildren to show them how to operate their computers, i-pads, smartphones and the like.

In other respects too, there is often a particularly strong interdependence between grandparents and grandchildren. Some grandparents are elderly and infirm and look for help in all manner of domains – shopping, housework, gardening etc. – to their grandchildren. An increasing number of grandparents, for whatever reason, act as full-time parents or child minders to their grandchildren who look to them for all their needs. Grandparents often have savings that they do not need and use them to enable their grandchildren to enjoy privileges and material benefits that their hard-pressed parents simply cannot afford. Conversely, there are quite a lot of old people who have few or no savings and who are entirely reliant on the state pension the funding of which depends on the fiscal levies that it will be the turn of the young to start to pay as soon as they enter the world of work: the entire pension system is rooted in interdependence between young and old.

That there is a high level of interdependence between young people and the older generations is incontrovertible but equally incontrovertible is the fact that there comes a point in every young person's life when he feels that he wants a measure of independence and a chance to assert himself. Sometimes this transition generates minimal friction and conflict but sometimes sparks fly. The fault can lie on either side or indeed on both sides. The young are sometimes too demanding and overstep the mark in their desire for greater freedoms but equally, some parents wrongly interpret the least demand as a sign of rebellion to which they react with unjustified severity, thereby only serving to exacerbate the situation and stoke the conflict that other parents skilfully manage to avoid by striking the appropriate balance between the assertion of parental authority and respect for their child's position. In short, given an appropriate degree of tact and respect exercised on both sides, the perils of the so-called generation gap can be more or less entirely circumvented.

Question 5

L'éducation est la réponse au problème de l'inégalité des chances. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez?

This proved to be the least popular title. The essential focus here had to be the role of education in furthering the cause of equality. Essays that confined their treatment to various aspects of the issue of inequality – men/women, the feminist struggle, rich/poor, able-bodied/handicapped – without linking them to the role of education in forming an individual's and society's attitudes and behaviour towards others could not be highly rewarded.

Education seeks to instil a certain open-mindedness and to break down barriers of prejudice. It promotes tolerance and the acceptance of differences, thereby encouraging young people to welcome into their fold people who differ from themselves, perhaps because the colour of their skin is different or because they have a physical handicap or perhaps because they have been brought up in a different faith. However, to what extent, the question was asked in introductory paragraphs, do the atmosphere and values that prevail in the school or university community translate into equal opportunities later in life for those who, for whatever reason, have traditionally found it more difficult to advance in society?

It is thanks to education that women have been able to make such progress in society. Equal educational opportunities being extended in most countries of the world to girls as well as boys, girls have been able to develop their talents and skills with the same facility as their male counterparts, to attain the same level of academic achievement and thereby to compete on an equal footing with boys whether it be for university places or for jobs. Far from inciting jealousy, the success achieved by women at school and university has brought men to appreciate the contribution that their female peers have to make to society, thereby further breaking down the barriers of prejudice erected by bygone generations.

Education also serves to break down the barriers between rich and poor and thereby promote social equality and mobility. The children of poor parents who make the most of the educational opportunities afforded them and do well in public examinations are able to escape from the poverty trap and aspire to a standard of living and a social status beyond their parents' wildest dreams. Countless examples can be cited of individuals

from the humblest of backgrounds who, thanks to the start in life given to them by their education, have succeeded in attaining the highest offices in the public and corporate domains.

The more enlightened society that we live in today, that owes much to the efforts of educators at all levels, looks far more favourably on people whose way has traditionally been barred by their physical and mental characteristics, notably physical handicaps, impairments of a mental nature and skin colour. The result has been changes in the law which reflect the commitment of governments to equality of opportunity for all such individuals and which require employers to look with equanimity on applications from handicapped people and those from ethnic minorities and, in the case of those with both physical and mental handicaps, to make 'reasonable adjustments', viz. to effect a physical modification to equipment or to the work environment, to allow flexible working hours or, in the case of job applications, to give more time to complete the recruitment test.

However, notwithstanding all these social advances and changes in the law for which education has paved the way, education is by no means always the answer to the problem of inequality of opportunity. Indeed, in certain respects education can be seen to breed inequality. Schools do not all offer the same facilities or the same range of subjects and some schools that have the best facilities available and that are able to recruit the best teachers by offering the highest salaries are only open to those whose parents can afford to pay. In many countries, the most academic candidates in the state system are singled out and sent to special academic schools while the less gifted are consigned to institutions where the standard of teaching is of an altogether less good quality and where they often find themselves in classes taught by teachers who take little interest in them and whose pedagogical competence is frequently questionable. A significant proportion of candidates leave School with no qualifications and no diploma. As a result, they find it impossible to secure employment and consequently fall prey to the classic social scourges of delinquency and drug-taking.

It is also the case that despite all the inroads made by a better and more enlightened educational system and all the concomitant social advances and changes in the law that promote equality of opportunity, there remain, particularly among the older generations, certain ingrained prejudices that militate against the achievement of an egalitarian society. The egalitarian values inculcated by the formal education delivered at school and university continue to be undermined by the informal education that quite a lot of young people receive at home where they are exposed to the values of parents and grandparents who have been imbued by their forbears with notions of the superiority of one race or one category of person over another and with patriarchal values that make no concessions to female or any other sort of social equality.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/33

Essay

Key Messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to select a title with which they feel comfortable and write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherent. They should use accurate and idiomatic French with evidence of complexity both in structure and vocabulary. They should plan essays carefully using the introduction to show their understanding of the parameters of the topic and the conclusion to show their considered final judgment of the issues that they have raised.

General Comments

In this paper, candidates are given a choice of 5 questions and are awarded up to 24 marks for quality of language and up to 16 for content. It was clear that most candidates understood the rubric for this paper and wrote essays of approximately the right length. Planning is an important first step in writing a discursive essay. Many candidates did attempt a short plan but this was often in English and very superficial. The essays of those who did not plan were poorly constructed and full of alterations. When a candidate defines the terms of the question in his/her own mind and organises the material before starting to write, the mark for content is generally higher. A logical argument that is clearly relevant to the question and that comes to a reasoned conclusion is highly rewarded in the content mark for the paper. It is clear that candidates who did not plan their essays put themselves at a significant disadvantage since their ideas and thoughts were thrown together haphazardly with the argument very hard to follow. It is vital that candidates turn their answers to the particulars of the question and address all elements. Essays on the overarching topic area (e.g. *l'alimentation et les boissons*) will always score poorly on content as much of the material is irrelevant given the question title itself. Candidates' first paragraphs often contained formulaic definitions of the words in the topic heading such as *l'alimentation* and *les boissons*. These had clearly been learned by heart and added little to the essay as they were not specifically related to the question. Often, accuracy in language dropped off after this opening paragraph. Quotations were often used in an attempt to impress but were often misquoted, inappropriate or wrongly attributed.

In terms of language and range of structures, many candidates used set, pre-learnt phrases which often did not fit naturally into the flow of language. Clumsy use of idiom and a significant proportion of anglicisms were common along with frequent examples of phonetic spelling. There were some cases where candidates showed very little grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness and whose essays were largely incoherent and with persistent serious errors. The more successful candidates used a range of structures and appropriate vocabulary, did not over-reach themselves and managed to express their ideas in accurate, ambitious and succinct language.

Examples of good use of language include:

Linking words/phrases such as *cependant*, *pourtant*, *d'abord*, *de même*, *d'ailleurs*, *en outre*, *ensuite*, *néanmoins*, *en fin de compte*, *en revanche*, *de prime abord*

Range of structures including correct forms of the subjunctive such as *bien qu'il y ait*, *il est nécessaire qu'on fasse*

Range of topic appropriate vocabulary demonstrating that candidates have read a range of media in the target language

Correct use of idioms such as *il va de soi*, *en d'autres mots*, *faire obstacle à*, *au revers de la médaille*, *le débat s'ouvre*, *quant à*, *d'après un sondage*

Common errors

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *manque, travail, pays, touriste, environnement, développement, gouvernement, monde, planète, rôle, exemple, avis, phénomène, crime, deuxièmement, fossé, problème, dernier, aspect*

Incorrect agreement of past tense with avoir – e.g. *ils ont essayés*.

Overuse of *aussi* at start of sentences and paragraphs.

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de* and *car* for *pour*.

Overuse of the word *chose/choses* and *cela*.

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Inaccurate and erratic use of double letters in words such as *développeur, agressif, ressources*.

Inaccurate and careless use of accents including words used in the questions such as *phénomène, générations, égalité* and examples of candidates using one type of accent for all occurrences. Accents used randomly where not appropriate.

Confusion between/misuse of : *ces/ses, les/des, place/endroit, bon/bien, mauvais/mal, c'est que/ceux que, ceux qui/ce qui, ou/où, a/à, sa/ça* (overused instead of *cela*), *mieux/meilleur, leur/leurs*.

Use of *qui* in contexts where *ce qui* was required

Confusion of *eux* and *leur(s)*.

Use of *à les* for *aux* and *de les* for *des*.

Use of the past participle after modal verbs, e.g. *elles doivent resté à la maison, on peut allé au gymnase*

Use of the wrong preposition after common verbs followed by an infinitive structure, e.g. *aider de, préférer de*

Use of *avoir besoin de* instead of *devoir*.

Use of anglicisms – e.g. *tout en tout, le chose est translaté, place for endroit, balancé for équilibré, avertissement for publicité, dépendre sur*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1:

This was a popular question which was on the whole well understood. Most candidates had some views on how to make young people eat more healthily including courses on nutrition at school, government initiatives, advertising on the television and on social media sites. They felt that modern culture meant that parents were no longer at home to prepare healthy meals or to teach their children the basics of cooking. An increasingly hectic lifestyle brought in its train a dependence on fast foods both by adults and young people. For the young people, the fast food restaurant has become the meeting place of choice, where the food is tasty, quickly prepared and cheap. Little attention is therefore paid to the quality of the food, its constituents or the way in which it is prepared. Candidates could see that this diet was unhealthy but saw it to be an inevitable consequence of today's fast moving world. Arguments were usually clearly stated but often simplistic. Good candidates managed to point out that, as with most things, healthy eating is an individual responsibility; government awareness campaigns to make people eat more fruit and vegetables and advertisements in cinemas and magazines are all very well but in the end each person must decide between a desire for instant gratification and a diet concomitant with a long and healthy life.

Question 2:

This was not a popular question and was mostly attempted by candidates of higher ability. It was felt that poverty was a very serious barrier to progress in the developing world as it meant that people were poorly educated and had little chance to develop their potential. Candidates were very clear that current international aid strategies did not appear to be working and that it was obvious that aid was not always reaching those in need. Candidates mentioned corruption and greed as two factors that could affect the fair distribution of aid. They also felt that the only way to improve the situation was to educate and inform so that people in the developing countries can begin to take control of their own destinies. Projects involving agriculture and technology were mentioned as well as initiatives to improve health and sanitation. Answers were generally well balanced with a range of ideas of how best to support developing countries to overcome poverty.

Question 3:

This together with **Question 4** was the most popular question and there were answers across the whole range of abilities. All candidates appeared to understand the implications of the question and provided responses commensurate with their knowledge and linguistic standards. It was clear to candidates that mass tourism can bring both positive benefits but also significant difficulties to the host countries. Many of them seemed to have first-hand experience of the difficulties encountered by local people when large numbers of tourists flock to their country. Tourists' needs were seen to be considered more highly than those of the local inhabitants. Candidates mentioned the huge consumption of water and energy in hotels and restaurants and the constant building projects in coastal areas as some of the factors which caused consternation among the native population. It was felt that natural attractions were being spoiled by massive development and that pollution of all kinds was seriously affecting the environment. It was also felt that local cultures were being lost as tourists brought with them ideas and customs often at odds with the local way of life. On the other hand, it was widely understood that tourism was vital for the economies of developing countries and could lead to a better way of life for the local people. Jobs would be created and tourists would bring in large quantities of money. The infrastructure would be improved to allow tourists to enjoy the expected levels of comfort such as safe transport, good roads, health facilities and tourist attractions and this would have a significant positive impact for the locals. The question aroused strong feelings and candidates offered plenty of examples. Some candidates wrote an essay on tourism paying little heed to the idea of *tourisme de masse*.

Question 4:

This was a very popular question which aroused much debate among candidates. Some of them appeared to read only the first part of the question and wrote an essay about *le conflit des generations*. They missed the second part about apportioning blame. It was clear to candidates what conflict meant within the family, having experienced it themselves but it was not enough merely to describe the tensions of family life to obtain a good mark. Good candidates saw that there were many causes for the conflict between two groups of people of different ages. They talked about the growth of technology and its impact on the lives of young people, the adolescent hormones, and the desire for independence in the young as they try to break away from parental controls and develop their own identity. They showed how these factors come into direct conflict with the desire of parents to support, advise and guide their children and to prevent them from making the same mistakes as they had made when young. They felt that solving the problem was more important than attributing blame to either party and suggested strategies for building bridges between them. Some candidates railed against their parents' disciplinarian attitudes and old fashioned ways and saw little chance of resolving the problem which they saw as inevitable.

Question 5:

This was by far the least popular question and was attempted by just a few candidates. They understood the parameters of the question and described how people's attitudes to the disabled still led to lack of understanding and discrimination in the workplace. It was felt that disabled people, when employed, were often overlooked for promotion and not offered the same opportunities as able bodied workers. Despite laws supporting integration and inclusion, disabled people still struggle to make their voice heard and to make a full contribution.