

Report on the Units

January 2007

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2651 French: Speaking

Introduction

In the winter, 2007 examination there was a range of performance. Many candidates were well prepared and fluent. Others struggled to convey information and to express their opinions and had considerable problems with accuracy of language. Many candidates, however, were able to handle the role-plays confidently and to display a good knowledge of their topics with evidence of research and interesting ideas, opinions and personal reactions. Some topics were more successful than others, allowing candidates to follow their own interests and to develop facts and ideas to an advanced stage.

Role-play

Response to Written Text

Task A

This was the most frequently used role-play, as it came first in the randomisation sequence. Most candidates covered the key points without too much difficulty. The information about the history of the company proved challenging for some candidates, as they had problems in expressing the 19th century and moving to new premises. Numbers, as in previous examinations, caused problems for some candidates. The date 1999 and the telephone number were not always correctly conveyed. Some candidates did not express the points about the mustard pots and tins and the mustard trail clearly, but in general they coped well with this task and were able to convey a good amount of information.

The word moutarde was frequently mispronounced, despite the fact that it was used several times by the examiners.

Task B

This task, being the third in the randomisation sequence, occurred only in centres with five or more candidates. As in Task A, most candidates were able to cover the majority of the key points without difficulty. Words, which caused problems for some candidates, were famous brands and cash machines. Some candidates did not explain fully what could be obtained in the cafés and restaurants. As in Task A, the telephone number was not expressed correctly in every case, and some candidates were unable to explain clearly how to get to the shopping centre.

Task C

This task was attempted by a large number of candidates, who conveyed most of the information clearly. The items measured by the counter caused problems for some candidates, who did not know durée and used the anglicised form duration. When discussing the advantages of the exercise bike, many candidates omitted to say that it was stable and practical. The numbers of the dimensions were nearly always correctly conveyed, but par was usually used instead of sur. In this task the telephone number was in most cases correct, although some candidates, by not grouping the figures in pairs in the French way, caused confusion by expressing the final figures by six cent deux instead of soixante zéro deux. Some candidates were unable to express the price correctly. The figure 90 caused the most problems.

Response to Examiner

The most successful candidates asked the two preliminary questions fluently and correctly. Some of them introduced these questions with je voudrais savoir or pourriez-vous me dire? which is to be commended. As in previous examinations, some candidates were not able to ask questions correctly, for example, quelles choses à voir à Dijon? (no verb), qu'est-ce que voulez-vous? qu'est-ce que choses voir? qu'est-ce qu'il y a fait? est-ce que for qu'est-ce que in Task A. In Task B errors included quel s sont les types de magasins vous visitez? quels types de magasins allez-vous? In Task C the verb s'intéresser à caused problems for some candidates with formulations such as avez-vous intéresse dans, pourquoi le vélo vous intéressez? pourquoi le vélo est vous intéresse? qu'est-ce que vous intéresse?

Many candidates were able to convey the points from the text fluently and confidently, striking a good balance between answering the examiner's questions and supplying information spontaneously. It was encouraging to hear candidates, who presented the material in a lively way and treated the task as if they really were in that situation. Other candidates relied heavily on the examiner's questions. Some of them were not able to express themselves clearly or to cover points fully.

The extension questions were well handled by many candidates. Those, who were most successful, were able to respond at length and to go beyond the material found in the text. They were both fluent and imaginative, displaying a variety of ideas. Candidates, who had more difficulty with this part of the role-play, gave only basic replies to the questions. Some merely repeated information from the text while others responded rather briefly and did not express many ideas.

Language

Accuracy varied considerably in the role-play. The most successful candidates used complex language with few errors. Their vocabulary was good and they were able to convey the necessary information clearly and confidently. Candidates, who were less successful in this area, made a number of errors, some serious, for example:

Vocabulary

discouvrir
process
traditional
industrial
nombre for numéro
part for partie
place for endroit
cartoon
founder
mustard
centoaire for siècle

location for locaux or endroit
improver
stomach
practical
display
expecter
ordrer
history
per cent
exhibition

Grammar

à le, à les
de le, de les
les enfants peut
9h30 de 5h
la compagnie est 200 ans
vous faisez
peut regarde
doit a
les jeunes peut
lundi de samedi
peut choisi
le centre fermer
dans le télévision

le vélo sont
dans Angleterre
en, dans Norwich
beaucoup des
ça problème
par changer
si vous voudrez
peut découvre
peut va
peut comprennent
ont intéressants

Incorrect genders of words such as plupart, expérience, numéro, moutarde, famille, télévision, santé, chance, réduction, boîte, histoire, rue, région, gamme, guerre, variété, route, compagnie, méthode.

Examining

The role-plays were correctly conducted by the majority of teacher-examiners and in most cases the time limit of five minutes was adhered to. However, some examiners did not ask sufficient questions to allow the candidates either to cover the key points or to clarify points, which were unclear or incomplete. Care should be taken not to give information, which the candidate is expected to supply or to phrase questions in such a way that the candidate can simply answer oui or non. Credit cannot be given for information already supplied by the examiner. Care should also be taken not to ask for information, which has already been given by the candidate. This causes considerable confusion and wastes time. In some cases, candidates could have been encouraged to speak at greater length in response to the two extension questions to allow them to develop their ideas further. It is also helpful if, after the two preliminary questions, the examiner asks the candidate what he/she suggests. This avoids an awkward silence and invites the candidate to begin to explain the key points of the text. This is suggested in the examiner's booklet.

Topic Discussions

Choice of topic

Candidates chose a wide variety of topics for this examination. Some of the more interesting topics, which allowed candidates to convey a good amount of factual information and to develop their ideas and opinions, included La Résistance, Les Choristes, La Danse classique, Descartes, Les SDF, La Course Camargaise, Debussy, Marie-Antoinette, Les Misérables, La ville de Metz. The most successful discussions were those where the candidate was able to follow an interest and to display some personal experience. Candidates presenting topics such as La nourriture, L'alcool, Le tabac, L'éducation, L'immigration tended to convey less detailed and rather obvious information.

Presentation

The most successful presentations were those in which candidates gave detailed and well-ordered information with an introduction, main part and conclusion. Statistics, where appropriate, were used to illustrate the facts. Candidates, who scored in the very good band in this area, were able to present their topics in an interesting way, with an impressive understanding of the subject.

Some of the presentations were over-prepared with the candidates relying too heavily on notes. Although it is understood that the information for the presentation needs to be learnt to some extent, candidates are advised to have only headings to prompt them, rather than copious notes, which tend to be read out. They should try to deliver the presentation as spontaneously as possible.

Some candidates relied on raw statistics, rather than using them to support other factual information. A list of figures is not helpful if there is little further information. In some cases the information presented was obvious and there was not a great deal of evidence of research. Such presentations are unlikely to score above adequate. In order to be placed in the good band, candidates are expected to give evidence of research and to convey detailed and clear information. They should try to present some less known facts and take care over planning. It is also important that the information relates mainly to a French speaking country. In this examination some of the information presented was very general, and it was not always clear to which country the candidate was referring.

Further factual information should be added in the discussion, both in response to the examiner's questions, and also spontaneously.

Spontaneity and Fluency

The most successful candidates in this area spoke spontaneously and fluently and were able to develop their ideas and opinions to an advanced stage. They took charge of the conversation and responded at length to the examiner's questions. They also showed initiative in extending their ideas without being reliant on the examiner.

Candidates, who were less successful, were rather lacking in ideas, and some of the discussions did not extend beyond the factual. In some cases the responses to the examiner's questions sounded rehearsed and the discussion did not extend beyond the headings on the Oral Topic form. In many of these cases the discussion was superficial and did not develop beyond the obvious. The weaker candidates tended not to speak either spontaneously or fluently and had some difficulty in expressing themselves clearly.

Pronunciation and Intonation

The most successful candidates in this category sounded French most of the time and their intonation was good. The intonation of some candidates was rather anglicised and there tended to be a number of significant errors, for example: ville (pronounced as vie), gens (pronounced as jeunes). Confusion also occurred in l'amour/la mort and personne/pour cent. Other errors included the sounding of silent endings of words such as ils, dans, alors, adversaires, voudraient, et, tard, risques, soldats, candidat, d'abord, état, causent, moins, gens, respect, cas, aspect.

The im- and in- prefixes still cause problems for some candidates in words such as important, intéressant, interdire, immigrés, insulter.

Other words sometimes incorrectly pronounced included: eu (pronounced as in feu), août (a sounded), condamner (m sounded), fils pronounced as fille), homme (h sounded), femme (e incorrect), musulman, sang (incorrect nasal sound), dîner, danger, fumer (er pronounced as in hiver), parents, situation, rare, racisme, déclarer, radio, occasion (a

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pronounced as in English), thème, méthode (th pronounced as in English), gagner (gn incorrect), mangent, habitent, soient (ent sounded), alcool (pronounced as cool in English), gouvernement (stress on the wrong syllable), est (s sounded), façon (pronounced facon), bouteille (ei incorrect).

Language

Vocabulary

In most cases vocabulary was adequate to the task, but there were some instances of anglicised words, for example: insignificant, pièce for morceau, locations, advantages, essential, additional, professional, traditional, changes for changements, success, réacter, salaries, magnificent, places for endroits, personalement, attractent, advertisements.

Grammar

The accuracy of candidates' language varied considerably and errors included:

<u>per</u> cent	beaucoup <u>des</u>
<u>qui</u> for <u>que</u>	parce que <u>tourisme</u>
<u>de le</u> , <u>de les</u>	les gens <u>a</u>
ils <u>boit</u>	a <u>emploi</u>
les personnes <u>préférer</u>	<u>dans</u> Angleterre
je <u>préférer</u>	qui <u>visiter</u>
plus <u>femmes</u>	ils <u>acheter</u>
je ne <u>fumer</u> pas	<u>à le</u> , <u>à les</u>
<u>il y a</u> mauvais	a <u>dire</u>
a <u>utilise</u>	<u>au</u> Londres
<u>parce que</u> for <u>à cause de</u>	<u>dans</u> la manière
j'ai <u>découvert</u>	si je <u>pourrais</u>

Incorrect genders occurred in words such as ville, région, cathédrale, guerre, saison, fin, surprise, plupart, langue, vie, culture, boîte, question, maison, éducation, bataille, chose, variété, cause, drogue, capitale, siècle, consommation, campagne, famille, chance, raison, victoire, fois, violence, problème, télévision, tradition, boisson, banlieue, forme, situation, ligne, société, qualité, partie, équipe, robe, majorité, solution, clef, baisse.

Examining

The Oral Topic forms were mostly appropriately used by examiners, but there were some cases where the headings were not referred to sufficiently. In some cases these forms were used, but no further questions were put to the candidates. It is important to ask questions arising out of points made by the candidates during the presentation and discussion in addition to the headings on the Oral Topic form.

In many centres a wide range of questions enabled the candidates to convey factual information and to develop their ideas and opinions. In some cases, however, insufficient questions were asked to allow the candidates to convey information during the discussion. In a number of the discussions insufficiently searching questions were asked and the candidates were not given the opportunity to develop their ideas and opinions. Some of the discussions were superficial and the candidates were not encouraged to take the lead in the conversation. In a minority of cases, the discussions sounded rehearsed and there was little spontaneity. Considerable responsibility rests with the examiner to ask sufficiently searching questions to allow the candidates to give detailed factual information and to develop their ideas, opinions and personal reactions. It is important to encourage spontaneity and to prevent candidates from relying too heavily on notes.

2652: Listening, Reading and Writing (1)

General Comments

The January paper proved to be accessible and differentiated effectively; it produced a very wide spread of marks, possibly because candidates re-taking this unit in their second year of study managed to score highly. Others, only just one term beyond GCSE had not yet reached AS standard; this particularly showed in their poor performance on Tasks 5 and 7. Listening and Writing remain the most challenging skills for the majority of candidates who need to increase their vocabulary and develop an ability to identify synonyms. They also need to listen to full sentences rather than to latch on to isolated words, to learn grammatical rules and apply them consistently.

Comments on Individual Questions

- Task 1 This exercise proved quite challenging, even for the better candidates, mainly because basic transport-related vocabulary was not known or recognised. The first two questions were designed to provide a gentle start to this task, but in Q(a), a number of candidates found it difficult to distinguish between *est* and *ouest*. However, Q(b) was generally well-answered. Q(c) was very badly answered and very few could associate the word *volant* with *conducteurs*, which was most disappointing. Q(d) was designed to be more testing: only the best candidates correctly linked *la neige ne tient pas encore* to A; the others tended to go for C, which was just the opposite. The outcome of Q(9d) was also rather disappointing; too many candidates did not seem to know that *décoller* and *s'envoler* were synonyms. Finally, the last question (e) was generally well-answered, although quite a number of candidates misunderstood the passage and went for option A.
- Task 2 This task discriminated well at the lower end of the range but not so successfully at the other end with average candidates managing to score at least 4 marks out of 5. Q(c) and Q(e) seemed to be the most demanding. It was pleasing to note that candidates had taken note of the mark allocation and instances where more or fewer than 5 ticks were given were very rare.
- Task 3 Scores for this task span the whole range. The better candidates paid attention to details and coped well with this exercise, whilst the weaker ones relied on guesswork and took no notice of obvious grammatical markers, which should have steered them away from some choices. It is also possible that some treated this exercise as a reading test. Surprisingly, J (*remarquable*) proved a popular incorrect choice for both Q1 and Q5, probably because it provided a plausible answer. Yet *un modeste ouvrier* (Q1) should not automatically be linked with *remarquable*; as for Q5, the first clue was provided by the use of *évolution* and the second by the list of products from which the skis were made (*du bois au métal puis à la fibre de verre*), both leading to the correct answer B (*continu*). Q 8 and Q9 were the most accessible questions and Q7 was generally well-answered too, although candidates who opted for D should have realised that a masculine singular adjective could not describe *une skieuse*.

Task 4 This exercise produced the full range of marks. Some candidates found this task demanding and left blanks and others just wrote letters at random. In a few cases, candidates wrote over an earlier choice, which led to ambiguity. When an Examiner cannot distinguish which of the two letters is meant to be the candidate's final choice, no mark can be awarded.

Questions 3, 4 and 8 were the most frequently correctly answered. The following were the most frequent errors made by candidates: in Q2 the word *façade* in the description of the *Palais Jacques-Coeur* induced quite a lot into choosing K; for Q5, many saw the word *art* but had not understood *de la pêche*, which led them to choose L; in Q9, D was the choice of the significant number of candidates who were too ready to allow themselves to be lured by individual words and who either failed to consider or failed to understand the meaning of the whole sentence. Finally, for Q11 the common choice of I was presumably the result of candidates making the connection in their minds between the word *architecture* and the stones used in the construction of the *abbaye*.

Task 5 The performance on this exercise was mixed: some coped with the task well but a significant number of candidates left several blanks. A common problem was due to candidates trying to transcribe sections of the text rather than answer the question. Generally, the quality of language was disappointing: even good candidates made a number of basic careless errors in their application of grammar rules.

- (a) Quite well answered though a significant number of candidates failed to focus on the phrase *directeur du marketing* and, as a result, chose A as their answer.
- (b) Another well-answered question, although A proved to be a common mistake, presumably because candidates who had only partially understood had heard the word *énorme* and saw *grandes* on the page in front of them. The not uncommon choice of *traditionnelles* could have been the result of guesswork.
- (c) Few scored full marks for this question, though most were able to score on the last element *en Grande-Bretagne*. However, it was rather disappointing to note how few could spell it correctly. The verb *élargir* was a stumbling block for many, as was the sense and spelling of *succursales*. Many candidates had only partially understood, as was evidenced by such transcriptions as *délagir*, *en autre marché*, *douvrir*, *sur cassales / sucre salles* and *en Bretagne*.
- (d) This was the most successful of the questions requiring an answer in French. Unfortunately, relatively few came up with the idiomatic *faire traduire*. Given that only one mark was allocated to this question, it was surprising to note that so many supplied unnecessary information (*il cherche une agence capable de faire ce travail correctement et le plus rapidement possible*). Some candidates seemed unaware of the need for a subjunctive after *vouloir* and produced unacceptable responses such as *il veut nous traduire des documents en anglais*. Many spelt *anglais* with a capital A.
- (e) Good candidates scored two easy points here but the nuances in meaning were a problem for quite a few candidates. A, E and F all figured quite commonly in lieu of either C or D but most candidates managed to get one correct answer. In spite of clear indication in the question and the mark allocation, a significant number of candidates only ticked one box and threw away the chance of scoring an extra mark.

- (f) For the first element of this question, quite a few were content simply to put *formation*, as in the text, even though a verb was clearly called for. Others wrote *travaillent*, a grammatically and logically possible answer but not mentioned in the text. In the second part, a significant number omitted one of the two essential elements of the phrase *la réussite de l'entreprise*. There were some good renderings, even if few knew the construction of *dépendre*. The weaker candidates were unable to transcribe *pourrait dépendre* which sometimes emerged in very mangled form. Few seem to know the difference between *travail* and *travaille*.
- (g) One of the best-answered questions in this task.
- (h) Many of the weaker candidates did not attempt to answer this question. Sentence completion questions require candidates to manipulate language. Although *de* after *combien* was often missing, it was pleasing to note that in the second gap, a verb in the infinitive was frequently supplied after *pour* but there were still rather a lot of past participles. The most common wrong answers suggested for the first gap were *de mots* and *d'argent*. As for Q(f), these were possible logical answers but they did not reflect the sense of the passage. Candidates must remember that this task is a comprehension exercise.
- (i) The majority of candidates had not understood the phrase *au plus vite* which they gave as *plus vite*. The best of their number, however, rose to the challenge by demonstrating both comprehension and the ability to manipulate the subjunctive.

Task 6 Although some answers erred on the poor side, this exercise produced good scores for many candidates. There were some very polished translations and generally, the quality of English has improved. Only when candidates fail to understand the meaning of the French passage do they produce ungrammatical English, occasionally bordering on gibberish. Candidates should be discouraged from providing alternatives whenever they are unsure of the meaning of a word because only the first of the alternatives is considered; additionally, the mark awarded for Grid 2B may be reduced because the English that ensues is no longer accurate syntactically. As for spelling, the following words were often incorrectly spelt: century, technological, until, appreciate, pleasure, dimensions, advice and clientele.

Paragraph 1

This proved demanding for the numerous candidates who did not know the word *cuisinière* – a GCSE minimum core item. Consequently, they were not sure whether Cuitout sold kitchens, food or even chefs. Other words which were poorly rendered were: *s’efforcer de*, *désormais*, *grâce à*, *points de vente*, *à la portée de tous*, *quels que soient*, *n’avoir aucun mal à*, *rechercher*. Occasionally, candidates left gaps when they did not know a word, which meant they could not score marks on the transfer of meaning markscheme and at the same time produced ungrammatical English.

Syntax in the opening sentence led to some odd translations: candidates automatically translated *depuis* as ‘since’ followed by a verb in the present tense, as in the French construction. Details were not always taken into account. For example, when faced with *adapter les progrès technologiques à la tradition gastronomique*, many wrote to adapt to technological progress *in* the gastronomic tradition. The last sentence was also very challenging for many candidates. They went for a word-for-word translation which made little sense.

It was pleasing to note, however, that a number of candidates were successful in reproducing the advertising register of the French text.

Paragraph 2

This paragraph was more successfully rendered than the first and seemed to present fewer problems, especially in the middle section. Words and phrases that were frequently problematic include: *des questions techniques*, *des conseils d’utilisation*, *savoir-faire*, *revendeurs*, *coordonnées* and *service clientèle*. The failure to recognise *foyer* often resulted in fanciful renderings of the whole of the last phrase, eg. “your heart will be in your food”, “you will have a healthy heart” or “make your food the best way to your heart”.

The middle section (*Pour trouver ... un plaisir de vous aider.*) was accessible to all, although some candidates mistook *ou* for *où*, another example of lack of attention to detail.

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Task 7 In this exercise, the whole range of performance was in evidence. At the top end, the best candidates displayed quite an array of business style phrases which they used judiciously to give their letter a feeling of authenticity and competence. However, there were many candidates who brought to the task very little knowledge of grammar or syntax. Verb forms and verb structures were particularly weak in many cases, with some candidates unable to make the most basic subject/verb concordances (eg *nous voudraient*, *nous envoyer*, *plusieurs facteurs sont prendre*). Possessive adjectives were also problematic (*nos personnel*). Adjectival agreement was also frequently more than a little haphazard as was the knowledge of genders of even common nouns and nouns conforming to well-known gender patterns.

Lack of vocabulary limited many candidates' ability to complete this task successfully. The following words were frequently inappropriately rendered: this work (*cet travail*), the highest standards (problems with superlative), taken into account, the cost, an invoice (variously rendered as *l'addition*, *la coûte*, *le facteur* but often left in English), on completion, to be settled, within (*pendant*), to be printed

The fourth bullet point was occasionally totally incorrectly transferred with candidates implying that the translation would be completed within four weeks. Very few candidates failed to attempt all the items contained in the stimulus.

Most candidates managed to communicate the first part of the message in spite of limitations in their language, but the last two bullet points defeated many because they tried to translate the English word for word and the resulting French made no sense. Candidates need to be trained to think their way round an English phrase that might, at first sight, seem quite tricky if not impossible to render. For example, too many candidates wrote *sur completion* while others who had given the matter more careful thought came up with *quand la traduction sera finie* or *après avoir fini la traduction*. Similarly, instead of falling into serious grammatical traps by attempting a literal rendering of *if he wants us to arrange for the documents to be printed here in Great Britain*, more thoughtful candidates found perfectly acceptable solutions of the sort *Nous pourrions faire imprimer les documents en Grande-Bretagne, si vous voulez*.

2653 French Reading and Writing

General Comments

As is usually the case for the January paper, the standard of candidates' performance varied widely. At the top end there were some outstanding scripts; at the lower end the level of language in particular was extremely disappointing. Some candidates may have been entered after one term of their A level course; in most cases this was too soon, as many were unable to express themselves coherently, and their vocabulary was very limited. This was apparent in the comprehension questions as well as the writing exercise.

The grammar question continues to be well done, and reflects the hard work done by centres in covering the long list of structures to be learnt. Candidates should be reminded, however, that there is no point in leaving gaps either in this or in the other non-verbal questions.

Tâche 1

Most candidates obtained four or more marks for this question, but it was rare to find a completely correct answer. There were few mistakes in nos. 2 and 6, but many candidates confused the three time phrases in A, B and N. In some cases, candidates' handwriting made it impossible to distinguish between the letters H and M for no. 8.

Tâche 2

Again, there were few completely correct answers, though most candidates achieved over half marks. This passage (and the questions themselves) needed to be read carefully; some of the choices made would indicate that too little attention had been paid to the words of the text. It was particularly disappointing to see how few candidates recognised that SNCF referred to *chemins de fer* (qn. 5).

Tâche 3

Quality of language

This was often very poor. There were many basic errors; adjective agreement was rare; it was usually missed when the adjective was separated from its noun (*les émissions sont violent*) and with the possessive: *leur enfants* and *leurs enfant* were rife, even in the work of the best candidates. The correct position of the negative is still not known (*c'est ne pas nécessaire*), and it was disappointing to see so many candidates writing *de les parents* and *à les enfants*. Verb endings and formation were often wrong (*je croire, ils faissent*) and the conditional tense of any verb was used to mean 'should'. Sentences such as '*nous fautons minimisé le problem*', '*ils expliques que les medias ne toujours pas vraiment*' and '*les nouvelles on peut éducatives*' underlined the impression that some candidates were not ready to take the paper.

There was, as usual, a considerable amount of confusion with regard to vocabulary, often leading to misunderstanding: *content* was used for *contenu*, *terrifiants* and *terrifiés* were interchanged, as were *inquiétant* and *inquiété* (*je suis inquietant, les bulletins sont inquiétés*). There was one instance of *sein* being used instead of *soin*, leading to unintentional humour: *ils choisissent les images avec plus de sein pour le bulletin de 18h*. There were many instances of invented words (*improver, reconniser, allouer* ('allow'), *providier, attempter, appropriaté* and *suitable* (the latter may have been an attempt to render *souhaitable*). Spelling and vocabulary were sometimes influenced by Spanish and German, and there were many examples of words miscopied from the passage, notably *emmission, actualitie, desatre, choississent, effect, publicaires, announces*.

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There were, as always, some scripts written in excellent grammatically correct French using a wide variety of appropriate structures, but there were fewer of these than has been the case in the past. The biggest improvement this time, for candidates of all abilities, was in the use of the direct object pronoun.

Comprehension of text

Candidates should be reminded that it is advisable to read all the questions in (a) and (b) before starting to answer. Many made no distinction between a(i) and (ii), although (ii) clearly related '*aux enfants en particulier*'. Some candidates - sometimes whole centres - ignored the instruction *Selon le texte*, and wrote what the TV companies should do instead of what they are doing.

Candidates found the first two questions difficult; the mark scheme took this into account, and was generous in its interpretation. In (a)(i), very few mentioned the point that precedence is often given to bad news, but most recognised that news items are delivered with a particular angle which may influence viewers. In (a)(ii), many missed the fact that items may be chosen with care for the early evening bulletin, and most misunderstood *prennent la précaution*. (b) was understood quite well, but vocabulary caused problems: a significant minority did not understand *publicités* and based their answer on television in general, some thought *enregistrer* meant 'register for', and others thought that *annonces* meant 'news'. The mis-spelling of *jeu* as *joue* changed the meaning; similarly, *baisser la télé* is not the same as *baisser le volume*.

'Lifting' was a particular problem this time; whole phrases taken from the text cannot, of course, be assessed as part of the candidate's own language, but attention should be drawn to Assessment Grid 3B: no more than four marks may be awarded if the candidate 'merely transcribes sections from the original passage', as the examiner has no way of knowing whether the text has been understood. There must be some attempt to re-word the original. There were several candidates for whom this mark limit had to be implemented.

Response to the text

The mark for this section is awarded globally: positively, taking into account relevant points made; and negatively, incorporating repetition, contradiction, confusion, and comments which would not be understood by a sympathetic native speaker who knows no English.

The response was, on the whole, less imaginative than in the past, but many good points were made; it is parents' responsibility to monitor their children's viewing, there should (or should not) be censorship of current affairs, young people should know what is going on in the world, there are news bulletins specifically for children, TV can be educational. Some said that children are in no physical danger while they are watching television, and that companies use advertisements to awaken a desire for their products and increase profits. Others used their knowledge of other topics – acceptable provided that it is made relevant – and referred to the problem of obesity which is encouraged by advertisements for junk food.

The quality of candidates' French was a significant factor; sentences such as *l'enfant est trop jeune de savoir quoi le monde est comme*, *l'auteur est droite dans ses opinions*, *television est seulement un problème si vous permis il être*, *c'est un doits humain*, *avec plus et plus gens avant un télé nos jours* are just some examples of the type of comment felt to be incomprehensible.

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Some have clearly been drilled in the use of particular phrases which they are determined to use at all costs; they should be advised that there is no point in stringing together a series of such phrases unless they lead towards a coherent comment. Others (perhaps native speakers?) write as they would speak, producing phrases such as *ce qui space dans le monde*. On a positive note, the structure of candidates' answers is improving steadily as they learn how to link sentences well.

Tâche 4

The passive (qn. c), *en* + present participle (f), the use of the subjunctive (g) and the infinitive (k), and the sequence of tenses after *si* (o) were all well known. The same could not be said of the rest, though it is true to say that many candidates made no more than three or four mistakes overall. It was disappointing to find so many choosing *on* in (d), *des* in (e), *ses* or *leur* in (i), and *aucune* in (n). However, this question remains the strongest section of the performance of many candidates, who are nevertheless often unable to transfer their theoretical knowledge of grammar to their written French.

2655/01: French Listening, Reading and Writing

General Comments

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

Many candidates showed a good understanding of the texts they heard and read. There were some transcription errors in the answers to the first task but candidates generally found the first listening passage easier than the second. Most candidates tackled all sections of the paper and there were very few unanswered questions. Question 10f was generally well answered and very few gave too long or too short answers.

There was a lot of evidence of good and appropriate preparation, with many candidates performing relatively evenly over the different skills demanded in this paper. Candidates generally displayed a good knowledge of topical vocabulary but there was less variety of complex structures. Accuracy of language was a problem for quite a few. Verb errors were the most frequent in this paper and the passive form was often misused. Many candidates were able to show their knowledge of the subjunctive in their answer to question 10f, but they often missed the opportunity to use it in their answer to questions 6a.

Candidates followed the instructions given especially in task 4 where they are required to give the exact equivalent and in the gap filling exercises. A lot of candidates find the later exercises difficult as often they fail to identify first, the type of words which is required in the gap.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION A

Task 1 was usually better done than task 2.

Task 1

- (a) Candidates had problems transcribing *extinction* which sometimes became *extraction/extansion*. The e at the end of *majeure* in *crise majeure* was often left out.
- (b) Question was usually well answered. Some did not know how to spell *flore* which became *fleur*.
- (c) Again candidates showed understanding but they had problems spelling accurately *nourrit* and *soigne*. Many failed to see that *l'espèce humaine* was feminine and used the masculine form of the pronoun in their answer.
- (d) Many did not know how to spell *abeilles* (eg *abayes / abeyes / habilles / abbés / hybee / abei*) and thought it was a masculine noun. Some avoided the problem by referring to them as *les insects*, which was an acceptable answer. All candidates understood the idea of carrying pollen from one plant to another. Some who did not understand the passage wrote *les aggressions transportent le pollen*.
- (e) Usually well understood and answered. Some had difficulties with the verb *il manquerait*. *Chacun* was often misspelt (eg *chaque un/chaqu'un*). A few who did not understand wrote: *on les a consacrées / elles sont sacrées*.
- (f) Many said wrongly that France was the country with the most endangered species and others could not spell *rang* (eg *rank/rend/rende/rond*)
- (g) *Public* was often spelt with *-que*. *entreprises* was often written *enterprises* and *auprès* was often spelt in 2 words.

Task 2

- Candidates often fail to identify what type of word is needed and some try to fit in whole phrases when the rubric says one or two words.
- (1) Usually correctly answered.
 - (2) Many used *offrir/donner* in the passive form and often did not know the past participle form of *offrir* (eg *offrit/offré*).
 - (3) Usually correctly answered but not always accurately (e.g: *marche / réussit*).
 - (4) Candidates usually wrote *utilisent/se servent*. Some mistakes included *servent/lisent / voudraient*.
 - (5) Many picked the correct verb *divertir* but did not know how to conjugate it (eg *divertirent / divertirs / divertit*)
 - (6) Some failed to see a verb was needed and wrote *actualités*. Others used *passee* instead of *se passe* which conveyed another meaning.
 - (7) Usually well answered. There were some anglicisms like *subscribe*.
 - (8) *Payé* was often used instead of *payer*.
 - (9) Usually well answered but many failed to use the plural form of the adjective.
 - (10) Candidates usually understood the idea and conveyed it in an adequate manner.

SECTION B

- Task 3 This was an easy question and most candidates scored 3 out of 3.
- Task 4 Very few candidates wrote more than the words required.
- (a) Usually well answered but some candidates wrote more than what was required (eg *ce n'est pas par hasard*) and lost a mark.
 - (b) Usually well answered.
 - (c) Some wrongly wrote *appelle /appel / prête*.
 - (d) Usually well answered.
 - (e) Some wrote *couvertures*.
- Task 5 Candidates found this question quite difficult.
- (a) Some failed to read the instructions in the rubric [selon le texte] and defined it as a newspaper, which it is not what it is in the text.
 - (b) Not many knew what it meant. Many thought it meant *public power/ the public in general*.
 - (c) Candidates usually understood what it meant but had difficulty explaining it.
 - (d) Candidates usually understood what it meant but had difficulty explaining it.
- Task 6 This was another difficult question for the pupils who do not know how to manipulate the language successfully.
- (a) *Depuis 1957* was often left out. Many missed their opportunity to use the subjunctive. *Construire* gave problems to quite a few candidates. The most frequent wrong answer was *on ait besoin de plus de quatre millions de logements*.
 - (b) The word *rapatriement* caused a problem to quite a few candidates who were not sure what it meant.
 - (c) Not many candidates gave the correct answer.
 - (d) Candidates often started with the wrong word (eg *location/placement...*) which fortunately was followed by the correct explanation.
- Task 7 Some candidates found this task quite difficult and it was a good discriminator as those who had understood the text had no problem filling in the gaps.
- (1) Usually well answered. Some wrong answers included *en / au commence de / depuis*.
 - (2) Those who did not understand the text wrote *l'emploi / malade*.
 - (3) Usually OK, but many wrote *la monte* instead of *la montée*.
 - (4) Candidates found this question difficult. Some wrong answers were: *le droit / prêts d'accession / sans abris*.
 - (5) Candidates also found this question difficult. Many used the wrong tense.

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- (6) This also was a difficult question for some. Some wrote : *plus personnalisé / rien du tout/ gratuit...*)

Task 8 Most questions were well answered.

- (a)(i) Often failed to mention *social/council* in front of the word *housing* which was essential to the answer.
- (a)(ii) The most comment answer was *high unemployment*.
- (b) Correct for all.
- (c) Few answered this question properly (eg *a change in political stance over social housing / a fight against poverty*).
- (d) Not many got the 3 marks. *Au moins* was often misunderstood.
- (e) They usually got the second part of the answer, but they failed to identify who was "they. Some thought that *amende* meant *amendment*.
- (f) *Campaign* was often wrongly used instead of *manifesto* and many failed to say that he was asking for *immediate action*.
- (g) Some said *poor / homeless* instead of *excluded*.
- (h) Not many got all 3 right. Some wrong answers included: *systems of solidarity / inflation / politics...*

Task 9 The majority of candidates wrote the correct answer.

SECTION C

Task 10 All candidates made a good attempt at answering this question and the majority managed to convey between 5 and 10 points. In order to qualify for the full range of marks in the Range, variety and appropriateness criteria candidates had to convey at least 10 points and one opinion. Many showed a good knowledge of topical vocabulary but few used a variety of complex structures.

Some candidates failed to express an opinion and thus lost one mark.

On the whole candidates responded well to the task and most of them had interesting and varied views on the topic. Some thought that working longer hours to earn more money would appeal to young people who want to earn a lot of money but would not be so attractive to people with children. They usually favoured free choice and flexibility.

The word *travail* was often spelt incorrectly or misused. *Employees* was often translated by *employées*.

Satisfait / content usually followed by *avec* instead of *de*. Candidates had difficulties expressing in French: *slow down; manual workers, save money (sauver / sauvegarder)*.

Candidates often wrote *la 35 heures semaine* instead of *la semaine des 35 heures*.

**Advanced Subsidiary GCE French 3861
and
Advanced GCE French 7861
January 2007 Assessment Series**

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
2651/01	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2651/02	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2652	Raw	80	62	54	47	44	33	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2653	Raw	60	45	40	35	31	27	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2655	Raw	80	58	52	46	40	34	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

Specification Aggregation Results

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

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

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

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3861	22.6	4.0	64.1	81.5	96.8	100.0	248
7861	25.0	58.3	83.3	100.0	100.0	100.0	12

260 candidates aggregated this series.

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;
http://www.ocr.org.uk/exam_system/understand_ums.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication

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