

Report on the Units

January 2009

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

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2651 French Speaking

Introduction

There was a good standard of performance in the Winter 2009 examination and a number of impressive responses to the role-plays and topics. Overall, candidates coped well with the role-plays, most being able to convey the main points of the stimulus material clearly and confidently. Many candidates displayed initiative and imagination in answering the two extension questions and were able to develop their ideas at length. In the topic discussion there was a wide range of subjects, where candidates were following their personal interests. Many of them were able to supply detailed factual information and extend their ideas and opinions impressively.

1. Role-plays

Response to Written Text

Most candidates had spent the preparation time profitably and were conversant with the stimulus material. The most successful performances were those where candidates entered fully into the role and used their initiative to extend their answers to questions on the text, sometimes conveying information without the need for a question in every case.

Task A

This task occurred the most frequently, as it appeared first in the randomisation sequence. The points which caused the most difficulty were 'junction 12' (many candidates did not know *la sortie*), 'snacks', and, in a few cases, 'caravan'. Some candidates did not express clearly the lifestyles from the 19th century to the present and the development of cars over the years, but these points were very successfully conveyed by a large number of them.

Numbers, including telephone numbers, were much more successfully handled than in previous examinations. A few candidates still express the telephone numbers in single digits. The correct days of the week were not always supplied.

Task B

This task was attempted less frequently than the others as it was placed third in the random sequence. It was well handled by many candidates. The points which caused some difficulty were '24-hour room service' and the 'nautically-themed lounge and bar' (where the idea of the theme was omitted in some cases). Although many candidates did not know the French for 'pastries', acceptable alternatives were often supplied.

Task C

This task was also well done by many candidates. Most of them explained that the apartments were spacious, but not all mentioned that this referred to the living area. This point was therefore not always clear. Some candidates did not know the French for the items of kitchen equipment mentioned in the text. The number 71 was frequently rendered as *soixante-onze*.

Response to Examiner

Many candidates were able to convey the two preliminary questions correctly, some of them rephrasing the questions on the Candidate's Sheet with, for example, *Je voudrais savoir* or *Pourriez-vous me dire?* which is to be commended. There were errors in some cases, for example:

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In Task A, *Quel vous avons fait? Vous préféreriez for préféreriez, Qu'est-ce que vous fait? Vos vacances, Quelles sont les activités vous voudriez faire?*

In Task B, *Qu'est-ce que voudriez-vous faire? Vos anniversaire. Qu'est-ce que c'est vous voudriez faire?*

In Task C, *Qu'est-ce que c'est la durée? Est-ce que vous voulez habiter dans quelle région?*
Some candidates did not change the possessive adjective in the first question to *votre*.

Most candidates introduced the text clearly, explaining that they had found a leaflet about the museum, the cruise or the apartments. Some began the introduction with *Je viens de trouver un dépliant*, which is to be commended. Some used an inappropriate tense with *je trouve* instead of *j'ai trouvé* or *je viens de trouver*.

Many candidates responded well to the examiner's questions and conveyed the necessary information confidently and in some cases at some length. Some candidates had difficulty in expressing themselves clearly and in these cases not all the information was completely covered. The most successful candidates responded at length to the two extension questions, which they had obviously thought about during the preparation period. Candidates, who were less successful in this area, tended to lack imagination and replied only briefly, even when asked a further question by the examiner. In some cases the responses to these questions were unclear.

Language

The quality of language varied considerably between candidates. Some candidates were able to convey information and express opinions with few errors, in some cases including complex constructions. Others made a number of errors, some serious, for example:

beaucoup des
nos région
500 mètres du centre-ville (no à)
à le, à les
par conduire
c'est belle
ça coûter
dix-six for seize
à mercredi de dimanche
à 10 heures de 17 heures
de le, de les
dans le dix-neuvième siècle
il sera for il y aura
différent que
qui explorer
en, dans Gaydon
peut bu
plus renseignements
restera-vous
un boit (for boisson)
la croisière départ
un cent, un mille
nombre for numéro
vous êtes
peut expérencer
peut trouve
gens qui ne veut pas
c'est s'agit

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vos famille
jouer le golf
plus for beaucoup
l'adultes

Incorrect genders of words such as *boisson, voiture, sale, maison, région, ville, promenade, chambre, machine, route, système, chose, bouteille, musée, caravane, gamme, siècle, famille, technologie, autoroute, campagne, sécurité, centre-ville, idée, qualité, durée, visite.*

Anglicised vocabulary, for example, *courses for cours, exhibition, Venice, museum, expérierer, snack, space, élévateur, storer, départure, places, signes, century, appliances.*

Examining

The role-plays were mostly well examined by teacher-examiners and the time limit of five minutes was adhered to in most cases. The suggestions for development were appropriately used, but sometimes further questions could have been asked, without exceeding the time limit, to encourage candidates to give fuller information or to clarify points which were not clearly expressed. However, while it is acceptable to ask a candidate for clarification, for example, to correct a wrong number or to complete a point, examiners should leave the point after a second attempt and not waste time trying to drag out information, as this may result in leaving insufficient time for the extension questions. Further questions can be asked at this point also to enable candidates to expand their opinions in response to the extension questions.

2. Topic Discussion

Choice of Topics

There was a good range of topics offered in the Winter 2009 examination. Many candidates had chosen their topic to follow a personal interest, and many of these were very successful. Topics included *Georges Brassens, Kerviel, Édith Piaf, Le Tabagisme, L'Obésité, Le Tour de France, Nicolas Sarkozy, La Corse, L'Impressionnisme, La Résistance, Le Ballet, L'Académie Française, La Bande Dessinée, Le Cinéma, Les Sans-abri, L'Alcool, L'Immigration, La Tour Eiffel, Le Vin, Les OGM, Jeanne d'Arc, Les Médias, Blek le Rat, Astérix, L'Absinthe, Les Banlieues, La Nourriture, Marie-Curie, Lourdes, Le Système Scolaire, Le Centre Pompidou, Aliénor d'Aquitaine, Le Racisme, La Révolution Française, La Coupe du Monde, Le Champagne, Notre-Dame, Coco Chanel, La Gloire de Mon Père, La Religion, La Normandie, La Bourgogne, Napoléon, Marie-Antoinette, La Santé, L'Arche de Zoé, La Police, Le Fromage, L'Étranger, Le Languedoc-Roussillon, Dior, Le festival de Cannes.*

Presentation

There were many well-informed presentations in which candidates conveyed detailed information with supporting figures, where appropriate. The presentations were on the whole well planned, although many of them would have benefited from a conclusion in order to make a clear break between the presentation and the following discussion. In a few cases, candidates had to be stopped by the examiner after three minutes. These presentations could have been planned a little more carefully. Subjects where the candidates were following a particular interest were the most successful in terms of the amount of factual information transmitted and the development of ideas, as there was personal engagement.

Candidates scoring in the 'very good' band presented their topics with style and flair and were able to introduce some unusual details, which distinguished their presentation from those placed in the 'good' band. Many candidates were able to convey further facts during the discussion, either in response to the examiner's questions or spontaneously.

Some topics, such as *Le Tabagisme, L'Obésité and L'Alimentation* tended to be less successful, as candidates presenting these subjects did not convey more than well-worn and usual facts. In

some cases it was difficult to relate these topics specifically to a French-speaking country. It was most encouraging to hear candidates speaking with real enthusiasm about their topics and displaying a considerable amount of research. In the Winter 2009 examination, there were fewer candidates than previously who sounded as if they were relying heavily on notes. It is recommended that candidates use small cards rather than a whole sheet so that they are not tempted to read. It was pleasing to note that this was not a great problem in this examination.

Spontaneity and Fluency

The majority of candidates spoke quite fluently and there were very few who had difficulty in expressing themselves clearly. Most of the discussions were spontaneous and candidates were able to react well to the examiner's questions and extend their answers spontaneously to factual and non-factual questions. A minority of candidates sounded over-rehearsed or to be relying heavily on notes. In these cases, the discussions lacked spontaneity and the development of ideas was very limited.

The most successful candidates in this area were able to build on the facts and develop their ideas and opinions to an advanced stage. They took charge of the conversation and did not rely on the examiner's questions, but spoke at length, being able to convey more than one side of an argument.

Candidates who were less successful in this category did not express many ideas and the discussions remained on a largely factual level. In some cases, the factual base was not sufficiently strong to allow a great development of ideas.

Pronunciation and Intonation

The majority of candidates scored at least 'adequate' in this area and there were not many of them whose intonation was heavily anglicised, and virtually none who could not be understood. There were some errors of pronunciation, for example: *inimaginables, immigrés, inévitable, incluent, instrumentalistes, principal, fin, indépendance, intéresse, Berlin, industrie, important* (*im* and *in* incorrect), *méthodes, théories, thèmes, ethniques* (*th* pronounced as in English), *écran, an, faim, encourage, banlieue, conséquences* (incorrect nasal sound), *capable, invasion, radio, parents, déclarent, préparent, immigration* (*a* pronounced as in English), *est* (*s* sounded), *aspects, respect* (*c* sounded), *six, dix, fassent, argent, cas, art, soldats, femmes, et, habitat, jeunes, abus, commencent, trop, doivent, étaient, cent, dans, ils* (silent endings sounded), *euros*, (*eu* pronounced as in English), *a eu* (*eu* pronounced as in *feu*), *gouvernement* (pronounced as 'government' in English), *alcool* (*oo* pronounced as in 'cool' in English), *maintenant* (*ai* pronounced as in English), *billets, Millau* (*ll* incorrect), *symbole* (*y* pronounced as in 'symbol' in English), *chaîne, semaine, capitaine* (*aine* pronounced as *ain*), *Etats-Unis, aux enfants* (no liaison), *vignobles, ignorant, signaler* (*gn* incorrect), *danger* (*er* pronounced as in *hiver*), *qualité* (*qu* pronounced as in 'quality' in English), *prolonge* (*g* pronounced hard), *chaussures* (pronounced *chassures*), *emploi, inexploité* (*oi* pronounced as in English), *certainement* (pronounced *certainment*).

Language

Many candidates displayed an ability to use complex structures, including the passive, the subjunctive, *après avoir/être*, *en* + present participle, *dont*, *lequel/laquelle*, *ce qui/ce que* and a variety of tenses. The vocabulary of the majority of candidates was at least adequate to the task and a number of them used an impressively wide range of words and expressions. There were some anglicisms, for example *enterprise*, *excess*, *traditional*, *personalement*, *invader*, *changes*, *relevant*, *escapism*, *balance*, *criticiser*, *places*, *distributer*, *billions*, *publisher*, *régulations*, *Florida*, *success*, *units*, *location*, *America*, *abilité*, *figures*, *emblem*, *argue*, *constitute*, *secure*, *propaganda*, *numéreuses*, *spirit*, *strange*, *producer*, *industrial*, *response*, *aeroplanes*, *restricté*, *controversy*, *significance*, *cultural*, *exceptional*, *essential*.

As in the role-plays, the accuracy of candidates' language varied considerably. The most successful candidates were able to use complex structures and speak at length with few major errors. The accuracy of the language of other candidates was inconsistent and there were a number of errors, some serious, for example:

en Etats-Unis
qui suive
de le, de les
nouveau album
beaucoup des
a né
a travaille
pour cette for pour cela
une peinture s'appelle (no qui)
per cent
doit recycle
les gens doit
les jeunes avoir
au janvier
au le
il provoquer
des millions personnes
les jeunes finit
qui redoubler
les profs connaît
doivent dit
ils savoir
les élèves peut
ils sont for il y a eu
les filles et les garçons avoir
sa élection
a retourné
j'aime
il rendre
qui for que
sur la télévision
à les
les filles....ils
l'autres
sont influence
qui fumer
je jouer
ça temps
mieux qualité

j'ai aime
j'ai préfère
vous aime
bon marche
à 1849
a tombé
lui chercher
à fait

Incorrect genders of words such as *finale, population, chose, santé, moitié, fois, matière, jardin, terrain, site, fille, mode, journée, discipline, recherche, qualification, école, limite, plupart, raison, tâche, façon, lutte, bataille, victoire, idée, solution, sécurité, compétition, société, boisson, éducation, maison, personne, langue, pollution, révolution, ville, bière, chiffre, période, connaissance, religion, situation, loi, histoire, semaine, vie, rue, salle.*

Examining

Most of the topics were well examined, with candidates being given the opportunity to convey factual information and to develop their ideas and opinions. The presentations were in most cases kept to three minutes, although some candidates had to be stopped after this time.

Some examiners could have asked more searching questions to allow the candidates to extend their ideas further. There were a number of examples of discussions which remained largely factual with little development of ideas. It is important that examiners ask sufficiently demanding questions to draw out ideas to give the candidates the opportunity to score in the good and very good bands of the Spontaneity and Fluency grid.

In a minority of cases, candidates sounded as if they were relying heavily on notes and either reading or reciting rehearsed material. This is to be discouraged, as it removes any possibility of spontaneity and usually results in the candidate being difficult to follow. Candidates should be encouraged to write short notes on small cards, and examiners should ask spontaneous questions to discourage over-rehearsed answers.

The headings on the Oral Topic Forms were followed carefully by almost all examiners, which allowed the candidates to cover the material which they had prepared.

Conclusion

It was pleasing to hear many role-plays in which the candidates responded enthusiastically, being able to convey information confidently and to express opinions at length. There were also many topics where candidates displayed a real interest in their subject and an ability to talk at length in quite complex and accurate French. The standard of examining was also high, and candidates were given the opportunity to react to questions, to answer at length and to cover in fact and ideas the material which they had prepared.

2652 French Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General Comments

With a legacy paper, the entry is not representative of the full range of ability and the majority of candidates are in the second year of their GCE course. All the same, with some re-taking the paper, possibly after a term without doing much French, the outcome of the January paper covered the full range of marks from 11 to 77.

In this series, Writing stood out as the clearest area of weakness. In Task 4 weaker candidates attempted to transcribe the recorded passage instead of trying to work out what had happened. In Task 6, basic rules, such as agreement of adjectives, were often ignored. Asking questions correctly also proved beyond most candidates.

It was very pleasing to note that all tasks were well attempted, with very few gaps (except in Task 4) and that most candidates managed the transfer of meaning into English (Task 5) using comprehensible language.

Comments on Individual Questions

- Task 1 Part 1** This opening exercise was not found easy and very few candidates managed to score 5 marks.
- (a) There was some confusion as to what part of day *18 heures* was - with a number unaccountably going for A (*fin de soirée*).
 - (b) Aimed at the weaker candidates, this was correctly answered by nearly everyone.
 - (c) This question was also easily accessible: the vast majority of candidates understood *la visibilité était mauvaise*.
 - (d) This was the most difficult question in the *Première partie*: candidates had to understand how areas are measured, so *30cm de large* was a real stumbling block. Many thought it referred to the thickness rather than the width of the platform and incorrectly gave B as the answer, whereas others picked A because they had heard the word *large*.
 - (e) It was surprising to note that a substantial number of candidates were attracted to option B. The unlikelihood of the road being above the skier stranded on the mountain side did not seem to deter them. It could be that they confused *dessus* and *dessous*.
- Task 1 Part 2** Candidates tend to find gap-fill exercises difficult and this was no exception, partly because candidates tried to fill the gaps without listening to the text.
- (f) One of the better answered questions in this exercise, with I the most frequent incorrect answer.
 - (g) Many candidates went for the expected – but incorrect – answer A. Only the better ones understood the situation and accurately chose G.
 - (h) This was the easiest question, and most candidates answered it correctly.
 - (i) With a verb in the 3rd person plural, candidates had to choose from two options, D or I, and very few picked the correct answer.
 - (j) Much guesswork was in evidence. Only those who had truly understood the text – and had therefore answered the previous four questions correctly - managed to supply the correct response.

- Task 2** Generally, this question was well answered and very few candidates scored below half marks. There was no obvious pattern but (c), (e) and (j) were the least well answered elements.
- Task 3** This task produced the full range of marks and it was pleasing to note that very few candidates failed to tick the correct number of boxes. Most frequently ticked correct answers were (l), (p), (q) and (s) and among erroneous items that were frequently selected were (b), (h), (j) and (t).
- Task 4** Scores for comprehension spanned the whole range. However, marks of above 12 were rare.
- (a) Although a few candidates mistook *douze* for *deux*, the mark for the date of the order was frequently gained by candidates, whereas the reference number of the order proved more problematic, with many confusing E and I. In section (iii) candidates either did not understand the word *tasse* or failed to make it clear that more than one was broken.
 - (b) Only the weakest candidates failed to score at least one mark here. Inappropriate and ambiguous rendering of *emballage* and of *livraison* led to marks being lost.
 - (c) Instead of answering the question, many candidates merely transcribed the text, which was inappropriate (*vous recevrez ...*). For the weaker candidates, *à nos frais* remained a mystery which they rendered as *un offrer* or similar. The better ones were able to produce *gratuit / gratuitement*.
 - (d) (i) Aimed at the weakest candidates, this was nearly always correctly answered.
(ii) A few candidates were tempted by B, the distractor.
 - (e) The outcome of this question was rather disappointing. A lot of answers to the first part of the question suggested that the motif was in the catalogue and rare were those who attempted to produce a passive or a future tense. For the second part of this question, candidates did not manage to convey the idea that the order would have to be changed – or confirmed. Gap-fill questions are designed not only to test understanding but also to test candidates' ability to manipulate language. There was very little evidence of the latter.
 - (f) Unfortunately, too many candidates failed to make clear which catalogue André Loup had sent, so they lost the mark.
 - (g) This was not as well done as the other two multiple-choice questions and B was a frequent incorrect answer.
 - (h) (i) Two essential elements were required to score the mark: the order had to be faxed. Some candidates omitted one or the other (generally the former - they just answered *envoyer un fax* and could not score the mark.

In part (ii), a lot of answers were meaningless and only the very best candidates made anything of the phrase *nous pourrons nous occuper en priorité*.

As for the Quality of Language mark, hardly any candidates managed to score 5. Basic errors were numerous and few candidates showed they could manipulate language in question (e). Greater care should be taken to ensure that verbs and subjects agree; far too often, verbs were simply left in the infinitive.

Task 5 The outcome of this task was quite pleasing, although too many made errors that common sense should have told them were not correct, e.g. the rendering of *pièces* as 'rooms' and *motif* as 'motive'. There was less evidence of ungrammatical English, and spelling was mostly accurate, although that of words such as 'commemorative', 'anniversary' 'colour', 'benefit', 'tariff' or 'attached' often caused problems.

Paragraph 1

The first sentence was accessible and candidates coped well, except if they tried to render *en mesure de* word for word, if they did not know the word *assiette*, misread 100th for 10th, or thought that *magasin* was a magazine. Vocabulary was again an issue with the next two sentences, especially *plat*, *cendrier* and *forme*. The end of the paragraph was more taxing and required understanding of phrases such as *il vous suffit de*, *image numérique*, *à votre disposition* and *toute pièce* – which many took to mean the whole item. The word *atelier* was not always understood, but the mark scheme allowed a variety of renderings, so it was seldom an issue.

Paragraph 2

The quality of English often suffered when candidates tried to transfer the meaning of the first sentence of this paragraph. Items which caused difficulty were: *en fonction de*, *taille*, *réaliser* (often thought to mean realism required to produce the piece), and *bien entendu* (literally translated). Several candidates mis-read the French and mistook *quantité* for *qualité*. In the next section *de longue date* was occasionally rendered in an unacceptable fashion, just as 'preferred' / 'preferable tariff' was not acceptable for *tarif préférentiel*. *Au-delà* was seldom understood and this led to imaginative – but inaccurate - rendering of the sentence. *Rabais*, a word that has appeared in the AS Role-Plays on numerous occasions, was not known and was often left unchanged. Many suggested that the reward was an extra item of gift and frequently the error was compounded by the suggestion that it depended on the motif that was chosen. In the last sentence, there was a sprinkling of 'formula' for *formulaire*, but very few candidates recognised *par retour de courrier*. Many thought that a courier was going to be used, so very few managed to score the mark.

As ever, candidates can be led astray by the similarity between French and English words. They are therefore strongly advised to check that what they have written in English does make sense.

Task 6 As at the January series last year, this task was often poorly done: a lot of the work submitted bore witness to considerable gaps in basic grammatical and lexical knowledge. Examples included placing the pronoun after the auxiliary verb, rather than before it, in the item *je l'ai trouvé*, confusion between *meilleur* and *mieux* (*un idée mieux*), multiple gender errors (*un idée*, *la magasin*, *le page*, *un image*, *une article*), failure to ensure adjectival concordance (*la pièce ... serait parfait*, *une meilleur idée*), seriously defective verb forms of the sort *je voulué*, *j'ai veux*, *chaque pièce devez* and, not least, the inability to form simple questions, e.g. *Combien long as-tu besoin de les produire?*, *Comment d'argent est l'ordre ensemble?* Words were often invented (*emballager*, *packager*, *boîter*, *boxer*) or just left in English.

2653 French Reading and Writing

General comments

There were fewer very poor scripts this time, probably because all candidates are in the second year of their course. Nevertheless, quality of language is still a major problem; basic errors, particularly involving incorrect adjectival agreement, verb formation and endings, marred individual performance. Questions are still not being carefully read.

There was, however, considerable improvement in dealing with the non-verbal comprehension questions and the Cloze test of grammatical points.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1

The matching exercise was generally well done; many candidates achieved full marks, and most had at least 5/7. The sections that caused most problems were 6, which was often paired with I – the exact opposite of the correct answer – and 8, where candidates appeared to assume that *scolaire* must be matched with *classe* in E.

Question 2

The gap-fill exercise was also well done. Various methods were used to complete the answers: letters in the grid (as was the original intention), letters in the text, or words written in full in the text; all were accepted. The first half of the exercise proved to be particularly accessible to most candidates, though some chose the wrong infinitive (usually *contrôler*) for 2. 6-8 caused greater difficulty, but most chose correctly for 9.

Question 3

Comprehension of text

This was done less well than usual. Part of the problem seemed to be that candidates had not read the questions properly, so failed to distinguish between the information required in (a) (*pendant la visite*) and (b) (*après la visite*); the points were not interchangeable. Very few made the distinction between younger and older children. Indiscriminate use of the possessive adjectives and 'lifting' from the text meant that the meaning was changed (*les parents expliquent aux enfants leur origine, leur histoire*). Some answers were not sufficiently clear; *ils peuvent parler à leurs amis* is not necessarily the same as *à leur classe*. Most misunderstood *ce qui les touche* to mean 'they like to touch things', but this was not penalised as it was not one of the points required. Some thought that the *cahier-souvenir* was an item that could be bought in the museum shop.

Despite the rubric *Selon le texte*, some answered (a) and (b) imaginatively.

Personal response

The mark awarded in this section is a global one; lack of clarity and repetition may counterbalance good points made elsewhere. Candidates should be looking to answer the question(s) relevantly and to develop the points they are making; 'I think going to museums is a good way of passing the time because it's interesting' cannot score highly. There were some very good answers; often candidates remarked on the importance of knowing about one's own culture and that of other people, the usefulness for one's academic studies, particularly in art and history, the possibility of a family outing, that interactive exhibitions are attractive to children, and (opinions being divided on this point) that museums are expensive or free. More unusual responses included the views that the influence of television means that children want more action and excitement, that a visit to a museum can teach children to behave well in public, and two or three answers detailing the particular points of an artist's work that should be considered.

Many candidates ignored the second question, or if they did offer suggestions they failed to say why they were making the recommendation. Others thought the question meant either 'Would you recommend the museum to others?' or 'What other museums would you recommend?' Answers which listed the candidate's own hobbies were often not relevant, though some were able to make them so by giving their reasons for enjoying the activities. It was pleasing to see a number of answers in which candidates had drawn upon their knowledge of other topics, notably health (*il faut faire de l'exercice pour se maintenir en forme et réduire le taux d'obésité*).

Quality of language

This was often difficult to assess, as individual performances were very inconsistent. Candidates who were confident with various uses of the subjunctive, idiomatic phrases, pronouns and infinitive constructions then spoiled the effect by omitting to make adjectives agree with their nouns, putting singular verb endings with a plural subject, and – a favourite one this time – writing *de le, de les, à le* and *à les* for *du, des, au* and *aux*. Again, the possessive adjective was often wrong (*ses* for *leurs, leurs parent, leur enfants*).

Carelessness such as copying *musée* incorrectly (*mussée, moussée, mousse*) and changing its gender despite several clues in the text, should have been avoided. *Bien que* was often used instead of *quand même*, pre-learnt formulae such as *autant que je sache* and *personnellement* were used inappropriately, and words were invented based on their English equivalents (*abilité, involver*). There was Spanish influence in vocabulary (*j'aime salir avec mes amis*) and German influence in word order. Some sentences were incomprehensible (*vous pourrez les jeux tante le foot, dans un beaucoup de cassés les musées peut-être ennyeux*) and sometimes raised unintentional humour (*les tripes à la zoo est un bonne idée*). As always, however, there were many excellent scripts which were a credit to the candidates and to their teachers, showing understanding of the language and sometimes a real insight into the way it works.

Question 4

Performance in this question was better generally than has been the case for the last two series, and is back to the good standard that was reached in 2006 and 2007. Centres are to be congratulated on the work they have done in covering so many of the grammar points on the QCA list. Most candidates obtained at least 7/15, and many whose overall performance was not good were able to achieve 9, 10 or even 11 here. At the top end, however, there were few full marks.

Most started well with correct answers to a-d, though some mistook the gender of *arts* in (c) despite clues in the text. Infinitive constructions in (g) and (i) were well known, and most had (k) and (m) right. Even the more difficult (f), (l) and (n) were correct in many cases. The main problems were with (h), where most chose *se*, (j) (conditional instead of future) and (o) (the inevitable *leur*).

2655 French Listening, Reading and Writing (Written Examination)

General comments:

The level was appropriate and the paper discriminated well among candidates of different abilities and produced a wide range of marks. Most marks were between 40 and 60, with a few candidates scoring under 20 and some scoring above 70. Many candidates showed a good understanding of the texts they heard and read. There were not many transcription errors in the answers and a lot of candidates found Task 2 more challenging than Task 1. In Task 1 marks were lost for either not giving enough information or not recognising the words they had heard. Candidates seemed better prepared this series for Task 5 and they did better in Task 3 than Task 2, which were both gap-filling exercises. In Task 4 those who lost marks were often those who did not read the questions properly or failed to give the correct number of details. In Task 5, Questions (d), (e) and (i) were the most challenging. In Task 7 the majority of candidates gave enough information to access the full range of marks in the Range criteria. The words they found difficult were 'sequel', 'publisher', 'damages', 'to prevent', 'painter', 'composer'. They usually did better in Question 7g, where they had interesting things to say and where they tended to side with the court's decision. Most answers were the appropriate length. Time management did not appear to be an issue, though some left gaps in Task 7 or gave a very short answer to Question 7g.

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 vocabulary but not all were able to display a variety of complex structures. Accuracy of language was a problem for quite a few. The majority of grammatical errors were related to the wrong verb forms, to the misuse of the passive form and the subjunctive and the lack of agreements. Some scripts were also untidy and difficult to read.

Responses by candidates to individual questions:

Section A

Task 1

A good range of marks was produced here, allowing effective differentiation. Candidates too often write down what they hear without adapting it to fit the question. Sometimes they were giving too much information and sometimes not enough.

1	a	Candidates often lost marks by the addition of <i>aux États-Unis</i> or using the English word 'Brazil' instead of the French word <i>Brésil</i> .
	b	Not many candidates gave the correct answer.
	c	This question was usually well answered and candidates had a choice of 4 possible answers. If they gave more than 2 answers they were given credit for the first 2 correct answers. A few candidates lost marks by using English words instead of French words (e.g. 'motor' instead of <i>moteur</i>).
	d	Many candidates lost marks by not giving enough information (e.g. by not making any reference in their answer to ethanol cars or not mentioning the type of pump). There were also some transcription errors (e.g. <i>il n'y avait aucune pompe; il n'y avait aucune seule pompe; en avant du 25 000; qui on propose pour leur; était à nul for éthanol</i>).
	e	Candidates usually answered this question well, giving all five possible options. Not all answers were accurate though (e.g. <i>gaz</i> often spelt <i>gas</i> and <i>pétrole</i> often spelt <i>petrol</i>).

Task 2

This task discriminated well, and was generally found to be more taxing than the previous one. Many candidates failed to identify the type of words needed in the gaps and also failed to read the rubric. No marks were given to those who tried to fit complete sentences in the gap.

2	1	Candidates usually gave the correct answer. They often felt the need to add <i>depuis</i> . Some wrong answers (e.g. <i>nouvelle, emmener etc.</i>) clearly showed a lack of understanding.
	2	The most common wrong answer was <i>une lettre</i> .
	3	Many candidates failed to see that an adjective was required here.
	4	Some candidates failed to see that a noun was required here and they often answered using a verb (e.g. <i>accéder / utiliser</i>).
	5	They were some candidates who tried to fit in a complete sentence or answered <i>les professeurs</i> . Very often the <i>que</i> needed after <i>temps</i> was missing.
	6	Most candidates knew a verb was needed but they often picked the wrong one (e.g. <i>donner / trafiquer etc.</i>)
	7	This question was usually answered well. Some wrong answers included <i>il y a les avantages / à cause / le résultat etc.</i>
	8	This question was also usually well answered. Wrong answers often included an active verb (e.g. <i>mis / mettre / faire / travailler</i>)
	9	This question was well answered by most candidates.
	10	Candidates usually understood but did not know how to translate <i>on time</i> in French (<i>en temps / au temps correct, assez tôt, bientôt etc.</i>)

Language section A (5A):

Errors were mainly transcription errors, replacing *les voitures* by *ils*, not conjugating verbs (e.g. *Il dégager 70% moins de ...*), not using an infinitive after a preposition (e.g. *de moins réchauffé*) and, in Task 2, not identifying the type of words needed in the gaps.

Section B

The text for the reading section did not cause any major difficulties and was usually well understood.

Task 3

Candidates did better in this task than in Task 2 which was also a gap-filling exercise. The mistakes were usually language-related.

3	1	Candidates usually understood but often gave the infinitive form of the verb instead of the past participle form.
	2	Most candidates understood and gave the correct answer. Some invented words (e.g. <i>gréver</i>)
	3	Weaker candidates found this question difficult some wrote: <i>décision / site / utile / circonscription etc.</i>
	4	This question was answered correctly by the majority of candidates.
	5	Was also answered correctly by the majority of candidates. The mistakes were usually language errors: candidates often used the infinitive instead of the past participle form.

6	For candidates who understood, the mistakes were usually language errors: candidates often used the infinitive instead of the past participle form. Those who failed to understand wrote: <i>employé / créé</i> etc.
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Task 4

This exercise was usually well done with the exception of the candidates who failed to manipulate the language of the text and resorted to straight 'lifts'. Other candidates lost marks because they failed to read the questions properly.

4	a	Some candidates had difficulties conveying the idea that Jean Lassalle had lost weight. Many mentioned 2 points instead of 3. They often missed out that he felt tired.
	b	Many just said <i>Il a le visage déterminé / Il était déterminé</i> without any reference to his eyes or look.
	c	Many failed to see that the question was <i>Qu'est-ce qui?</i> and not <i>Qui est-ce qui?</i> Hence <i>le ministre de l'Intérieur</i> on its own was incorrect.
	d	This question was well answered by many candidates. Some had problems with the future tense. Others used the conditional, which was allowed. Those who did not understand said that the company was going to go ahead with the closure of the present factory and build a new one in the <i>Vallée d'Aspe</i> .
	e	Many lost a mark here because they failed to say he was the first one to go on hunger strike in the <i>Palais Bourbon</i> .
	f	The question was well understood but many candidates failed to give two reasons.

Task 5

Candidates did better in this exercise than in previous years. The majority got 2 out of 4 answers right.

a	<i>Un homme politique</i> was not enough, the candidate had to convey the idea of having been elected / of representing the people. Some thought it meant a <i>deputy</i> and gave definitions like <i>deuxième en charge</i> .
b	There were many good answers but some candidates failed to see the circumflex accent on the <i>jeûne</i> and thought it meant <i>young</i> . <i>Faim</i> was not an acceptable answer.
c	This question was usually well answered but often grammatically incorrect.
d	Very few candidates had problems answering this question. Some good answers included <i>les patrons / les directeurs./ les personnes qui donnent les ordres dans une compagnie</i> .

Task 6

This question discriminated well as it provided a whole range of marks. There were also fewer mistakes in the English language than in the previous years. The rubric was well adhered to and the answers were usually of the expected length.

a	The majority of candidates answered well. A few did not know what <i>maire</i> meant and used the French word in their answer.
b	The majority of candidates understood the question and were able to give the correct answer.
c	Most candidates scored at least one of the two marks; where they did not, it was because they often failed to give a complete answer.
d	For many candidates this was a difficult question. To say that the economy in France was in a poor state was not enough. Some candidate gave here the answer to Question (e) - if they did not repeat that answer in Question (e), they were then given one mark for it.

e	This was also a difficult question and candidates often answered that he was opposed to suicide.
f	Very few knew that <i>hymne</i> meant 'anthem'. Very often candidates missed the key point, which was that he sang in <i>Occitan</i> , his regional language. Some misunderstood the second point and thought that he was against any police presence. Quite a few did not know the meaning of <i>gendarmerie</i> and thought it meant 'the fire brigade'.
g	The majority of candidates got the first point, which was 'with curiosity' but very few knew the meaning of <i>le mépris</i>
h	This question was difficult for weaker candidates, who did not quite understand the text. <i>La valeur symbolique de son combat</i> was particularly difficult.
i	Many candidates did not understand <i>en contournant le fonctionnement habituel des institutions</i> but they usually got the second point right

Task 7

- It was pleasing to see that in Question (g) most candidates did not write extensively and produced a quite condensed and concise answer. Most had been well-prepared for this task, both in terms of language and argument.
- Most candidates found the stimulus material interesting and responded well to it.
- Some candidates, who did not include a minimum of ten content points from the original text, had their mark for 'Range' capped.

7	a	Some candidates did not know the verb <i>décevoir</i> and made up the word <i>déceptionner</i> . Very few knew the French for 'sequel'. Though the words for the 'appeal court' were given at the end of the first paragraph, many candidates referred to it as <i>la court</i> . <i>Pour six année</i> + the wrong tense was often used.
	b	Candidates often translated 'moral rights' correctly but the rest of their answer showed they had not understood what it meant. <i>Les descendants</i> , despite being in Question (c), was often spelt incorrectly. Many had difficulty translating accurately 'writers', 'painters' and 'composers'. 'Name' also proved difficult for some, who translated it as <i>un nomme</i> / <i>un home</i> . Not many candidates knew <i>une œuvre</i> and often used <i>travaille</i> instead.
	c	There were many careless mistakes in this easy question: <i>descendant</i> . <i>Parlement européen</i> often spelt incorrectly; <i>la Président</i> ; <i>ont écrivés</i> / <i>ont écrité</i> ; <i>ministre de culture français</i> or even <i>ministre de la couture</i> ; <i>criticiser</i> . Candidates also had problems using personal pronouns : e.g. <i>En les demandant de critiquer</i> / <i>ils les veulent à critiquer</i> .
	d	Those who understood gave a good answer, but many got confused and their response did not make much sense. Some used <i>romain</i> instead of <i>roman</i> . 'The public domain' was often translated by <i>le domaine publique</i> .
	e	Very few knew how to say in French 'transmissible to heirs'. 'Ruled' was often translated as: <i>a réglé</i> / <i>a roulé</i> . 'The publishers were ordered to pay symbolic damages of €1' was also difficult for many candidates. Candidates also had difficulties with 'appealed' and they often used <i>ont appelé</i> instead of <i>ont fait appel</i> .
	f	Many candidates do not know the French word for 'prevent' as they often use <i>prévenir</i> instead of <i>empêcher</i> .
	g	As usual, this is the section where most candidates write well and try to show what they know linguistically by using a variety of tenses and the complex structures and connectors they have been taught. Opinions were divided; candidates generally wrote on both aspects of the question before taking a stance, which was very often in favour of the court of justice. Some said they had enjoyed reading <i>Les Misérables</i> and would like to read François Cérésa's book. Others only seem to know the musical version as they referred to it as <i>un opéra</i> .

Grade Thresholds

Advanced Subsidiary GCE French 3861 and Advanced GCE French 7861
January 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

<i>Unit</i>		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	58	51	45	39	33	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2653	Raw	60	47	42	37	32	28	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2655	Raw	80	57	50	44	38	32	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	25.1	50.3	67.8	82.4	94.5	100	201
7861	22.7	68.2	90.9	100	100	100	25

226 candidates aggregated this series.

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

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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