

Examiners' Reports

June 2011

H075/H475/R/11

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

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

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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

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Chief Examiner's Report

The outcome of this series was very pleasing. Candidates were well-prepared for the demands of the different units; this allowed them to perform to the best of their ability. Achievement in the AS Speaking unit, and particularly in the Role Play, was impressive; candidates and teacher-examiners alike must be congratulated for their thorough preparation. Speaking at A2 was successful too, with many candidates able to enter into lively discussions of the articles on offer and their themes. Conversations based on topics were of a high standard. The written units performed well too. At AS, the most pleasing improvement was in response to Q7(a) and Q7 as a whole, with all candidates having plenty to say on the theme of the extended writing task. At A2, Section C was also better addressed than previously. Here it is important to make sure that the essay is a response to the specific question itself not an essay on the sub-topic.

There are three areas that offer scope for improvement in future series: handwriting (examiners cannot give credit for what they cannot read), length of response (quantity should not be to the detriment of quality) and more consistent accuracy of language. Allowing time to conduct thorough checks should help with the latter.

F701 French Speaking

Introduction

The performance of many candidates this summer was very impressive, and there were very few candidates inappropriately entered for the examination. Many candidates were well trained for the role-play, showing initiative and imagination as well as an ability to give extended answers to the extension questions. A few candidates did not always successfully explain their ideas in both sections of the test, usually because they used a limited range of vocabulary and errors in grammar prevented clear communication. In the topic discussion, there were some very interesting discussions with well-developed and mature opinions.

Role-plays

Use of Stimulus

This grid is important to candidates' overall marks; over half of the marks in the role-play are awarded for communicating the key points so it is important that sufficient time is given to training candidates for this. Teacher/examiners can assist candidates who omit parts of the stimulus material by asking questions to elicit the missing information.

Task A

Many candidates were able to convey the majority of the points, and gave an appropriate level of detail for the individual key points.

Items that caused some difficulty were: the pronunciation of *films*; the pronoun *son*; the idea of 'applications' (which was glossed); the future tense of *envoyer* and 'accommodation', which was expressed using the English word.

Task B

This task was also done well by candidates, particularly by those who provided the required level of detail: the gardens were fine or the horses were magnificent. It's important that candidates understand that the exact word is rarely needed, and any appropriate positive adjective will be accepted. There were some good attempts at finding an alternative way of expressing 'soldiers' by those who did not know the precise word.

Task C

Many candidates spoke of this visit with enthusiasm, and gave an appropriate level of detail about the various attractions.

Vocabulary items that caused some difficulty were 'exhibitions', 'exhibits' and 'steps'. Many more candidates than in the past were able to find an appropriate word to express 'suitable'. Not all candidates knew the French for Christmas Eve, but were able to express it as *le 24 décembre* or *le jour avant le jour de Noël*, both of which are perfectly acceptable.

Task D

Candidates were able to express the ideas in the role-play on Jane Austen's house museum. Items that candidates did not always know or could not paraphrase were 'industrial revolution' and 'ground floor', and the verb *écrire* was not always known in the tenses required. The majority of candidates could communicate the telephone number successfully.

Task E

Candidates were able to convey the majority of the points, and gave an appropriate level of detail for the individual key points. Candidates were usually able to find an appropriate way round 'bank holidays', but 'ground floor' again gave difficulties. There were some pleasing expressions of the rules given for the castle.

Task F

This role-play contained many accessible ideas for candidates, given that technology is part of daily life, as well as being on the specification. The word 'charges', because it was interpreted as a cognate, was sometimes not communicated, but several candidates showed ingenuity when they did not know the word for 'emergency', giving examples that made their meaning clear.

Response to Examiner

Many candidates completed the whole role-play, starting with the two questions and leading into the main transactional part. More successful candidates gave fuller answers to the questions they were asked, often combining several points to make an extended answer. They also showed imagination by introducing detail that was not in the stimulus text and expressing opinions, thus making the conversation sound more natural. For example, in role-play A, some candidates suggested that the reason the placements were unpaid was because it was a good opportunity. The most successful candidates showed imagination and initiative throughout, and not just in the extension questions.

The quality of the answers to the extension questions varied from a one sentence answer, which is unlikely to secure a top mark, to fuller replies from candidates confident about using their initiative and imagination. Some teacher/examiners ask follow-up questions, which can be helpful for some candidates, especially if they have already successfully conveyed the information in the stimulus text.

Quality of Language

There was a full range of performances and perfection is not required to achieve full marks.

Many candidates found good ways of introducing the questions and centres have clearly worked on this aspect, focusing on verb manipulation and pronouns.

Other areas for future focus would be subject-verb agreements, modal verbs and infinitives after modal verbs, and consistency in different tense usage.

Examining

Teacher/examiners prepare the role-plays well, but there is a marked difference in the amount of help given to candidates, especially in relation to eliciting the key information from the text. It is not necessary to move onto the next question if the candidate has not given all the information that answers the question, and a prompt such as 'Is there anything else to do?' can be very useful.

The questions on the Examiner's sheet are intentionally phrased to be used exactly as they are (but in French) so as not to give away any vocabulary that the candidates need to be credited with for a key point. For example 'Why is the website mentioned' in role-play A will lead to 'because you can visit it to get further information about the jobs', which was the targeted information. If this is rephrased as 'How do I get further information?' then part of the required

answer is already given away. So it is important to keep to the carefully-chosen wording to avoid this sort of situation.

In a similar way, if a candidate has already provided the key information, it is not necessary to ask the question intended to elicit it as this can lead to confusion and hesitation because the candidate is searching for non-existent material to supplement the answer already given.

One simple, and seemingly obvious technique, which is sometimes overlooked but which enables candidates to convey the information effectively is for teacher/examiners to ask one question at a time. If two questions are asked at once such as 'Do you have any details about the placements? Are there many applicants?', candidates tend to answer only the second question and so miss out on an opportunity to convey vital information.

Another effective technique is for the teacher/examiner to respond with very short or even one-word comments so that valuable time is not taken away from the candidate.

Most centres observed the time limit of 5-6 minutes. If a candidate is very fluent and confident and has given all the information and made lengthy replies to the extension questions then it is acceptable to stop the role-play before the recommended time. A good technique to use with candidates who seem to get through the material very quickly is to ask questions to extract more expansive answers to the extension questions or to pick up points from the text that were not mentioned earlier. If the role-play finishes early, the time gained cannot be transferred to the topic, as the two elements are timed separately.

Assessment stops at 6 minutes so it is important to get the timing correct.

Topic discussion

Choice of topics

A wide range of topics relating to France or a French-speaking country were presented by candidates. Eating disorders, food, transport, tourism and cinema were amongst the most common, although some candidates did find interesting angles to take on familiar topics. The subject chosen must directly relate to the list of AS topics, and a topic taken from the A2 topic list is not appropriate.

Films or books can be offered, as long as the themes relate to one or more AS topics. Similarly, if a candidate chooses to talk about a person they should ensure that it is the person's work that is discussed and not their biographical details. Centres are welcome to seek advice if unsure as to whether a topic is suitable or not. The Frequently Asked Questions for unit F701 on the A level French section of the OCR website provide very useful guidance

Ideas, Opinions and Relevance

The most successful candidates expressed a wide range of ideas at length, using their research to justify their opinions. Most candidates tended to give factual information in answer to a question and then comment on it, which could also lead to a good result. It is important that candidates are asked questions that give them access to the higher marks of the assessment criteria. Some candidates gave factual information, preceding it with *à mon avis*, but this is not sufficient to gain credit for ideas, opinions and points of view.

Fluency, Spontaneity, Responsiveness

Candidates had prepared well for the topic and were able to speak very coherently for 9-10 minutes. For most candidates, there was some use of prepared material, and they were able to use it flexibly and be forthcoming when faced with unexpected questions. It is usually clear when

a candidate is reciting prepared material, both from the intonation, and from the stark contrast with the quality of language and delivery in the role-play section. Speech needs to be natural to achieve top marks in this category, and marks are limited for those who are only fluent when answering prepared questions.

Language

There was good topic specific vocabulary and candidates were able to demonstrate that they had studied a wide range of structures appropriate for discussing the issues. It was pleasing to hear the subjunctive, the passive, and structures such as *après avoir* and *après être* used in a natural and unforced way, as well as tenses used consistently accurately.

There was some inconsistency in adjectival agreements, especially where the noun involved is central to the topic being discussed. Errors such as *la cuisine français* and *la culture français* were heard.

Pronunciation

Candidates made a good attempt to sound French and many made a substantial effort to pronounce individual sounds well. It is important that candidates are secure on words that are central to the subject of the topic. A few candidates pronounced silent endings such as verbs ending in –ent or had particularly anglicised pronunciation, and this seemed to be because they were reciting pre-learnt material.

Examining

Teacher/examiners asked a good range of questions that allowed candidates to express a range of opinions supported by a detailed factual knowledge of the subject. They were frequently sensitive to the needs of their candidates, treating nervous candidates sympathetically and finding ways to extend the most able.

This section of the speaking test is intended to be a genuine discussion in which the candidate plays the more important part. It should last 9-10 minutes. Excessively short discussions do not provide candidates with an opportunity to discuss their ideas fully, and, as assessment stops at 10 minutes, it is of no benefit to the candidate to keep them talking beyond the specified time.

Candidates are expected to prepare for the examination but, teacher/examiners should interrupt with genuine unexpected questions or ask for further explanations or justifications in order to elicit spontaneous language.

Administrative matters

Centres took great care to ensure that the administrative requirements were met. Recordings were received or uploaded in good time, and mark sheets and topic forms were sent to the examiner through the post, or scanned and uploaded to the Repository. MP3 and WMA were the most common file types. File sizes varied from 3MB to 24MB. Smaller file sizes are much quicker to upload and download, and are preferred if possible.

F702 French: Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General comments

This paper discriminated very well. The topics were familiar to candidates and gave them opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge fully. Task 1 was particularly successful. Task 2 was challenging for some candidates. Task 3 required candidates to identify numbers correctly. Task 4 required correct tenses and appropriate translations from the English. Task 5 allowed candidates to show their understanding of main points and details. Task 6 was the most demanding task. It showed candidates had been well-trained in manipulating language to move from direct to reported speech. In Task 7, in (a) many were able to identify relevant points, and in (b) all had plenty to say about the theme of children and television and attempted more adventurous language.

Task 1

The first listening task was well done. Very few left questions unanswered and any crossings out were clear and unambiguous.

- (a) The answer depended on understanding a rhetorical statement, and candidates were able to do this well.
- (b) This question was accessible and most candidates answered it correctly although some were tempted by option A (*du temps*).
- (c) This question was answered well, with *planifiez* straightforward to identify.
- (d) Most candidates gave the correct answer, a few ticked A, *le coût*, possibly because it was a logical reason, albeit the wrong one.
- (e) This question was also well answered. Candidates had no difficulty in associating *apporte du plaisir* and *plaire*.
- (f) This question was generally well answered. Candidates could link *à deux* and *trouvez un partenaire*.
- (g) Most candidates selected the correct answer, even though *vous encourager mutuellement* was not an easy phrase to understand.
- (h) This was not uniformly well done. Many thought that *hebdomadaire* meant 'daily'.
- (i) In this last question there were two clues leading to the correct answer (*nourrissez-vous* and reference to needing plenty of energy). Some candidates seemed not to know *nourrir*.

Task 2

The text produced a full range of marks and discriminated well.

- (a) To get the correct response here, candidates needed to know that *Pâques* occurs in spring.
- (b) Here candidates needed to understand the distinction between *difficiles*, *different* and *en difficulté*.

- (c) This was usually correctly answered.
- (d) This was also generally well answered but occasionally (d) and (e) were interchanged.
- (e) As mentioned above, (d) and (e) were sometimes interchanged.
- (f) This was intended to be an accessible question and proved to be so.
- (g) Reference to the listening text produced the correct response but some chose *travailleurs* or *punis* or *contents*.
- (h) This was intended to be a demanding question and candidates had to infer meaning. It discriminated well.
- (i) Careful attention to the details of the listening text produced the correct response but some chose *acceptable* and *contents*.
- (j) Candidates who understood the text and who recognised that a feminine singular word was expected to fill this gap produced the correct response.

Task 3

This task produced a good spread of marks. There were a few rare cases of isolated questions answered in the wrong language.

- (a) An accessible opening question. The second mark was occasionally lost because the French element had been omitted.
- (b) Candidates usually gave the first two possible answers. Some gave the two alternatives of the third possible answer in the same point, i.e. 'a great pleasure' and 'a main occupation'. Attention to detail was essential here.
- (c) This question discriminated well. Some candidates equated *évaluer* with 'value', and wrote 'answer' instead of 'ask' for *en posant*. Giving the wrong number (46, 42 or 55 instead of 45) was more frequent than might have been expected at this level.
- (d) This question also produced good differentiation. Many attempted all four points, often giving points 2 and 3 in tandem. Errors resulted from a lack of precision (e.g. to avoid obesity' as opposed to 'to avoid putting on weight', omission of 'know' and/or the personal reference in the last point).
- (e) Two straightforward points were required here. Most candidates got at least one of the points. A few were unable to express 'funny' appropriately and the word *régime* seemed to be problematic.
- (f) This was a very accessible question but demanded precision (i.e. 'in the studio' and a qualifier with 'audience').
- (g) This was generally well answered but the amount was sometimes rendered as 2,000 or 1,200 Euros.

Task 4

Candidates did well under Grid H.1 because language was accurate enough to communicate the message. There was a full range of performance on Grid C.2.

Transfer of Meaning – Grid H.1

The first element was accessible. Some candidates used *adorer* instead of the intensifier.

In the second element, candidates correctly used *bien s'amuser* or *passer un bon moment* to render 'had a great time'. The phrase *de quelle façon* was used very appropriately.

The third element was possibly the most successfully communicated because there were many possible ways of expressing it. Some used *acheter* or *gagner* instead of *obtenir*.

Candidates were able to convey the fourth element. Initiative was shown when some candidates used *certain* as an alternative for 'specific' but they needed to be aware that its meaning changed according to whether it followed or preceded the noun.

In the final section, many justifiably got round 'being able to contact' by using specific ways of contacting, 'telephone' being a preferred way.

Quality of Language – Grid C.2

Many candidates had been well trained in manipulating and adapting language to convey meaning accurately, some were limited in the type of structures and vocabulary they could use.

Some good expressions included:

- *comment les choisissez-vous ? Comment est-ce qu'on les choisit ?*
- *Pourriez-vous me dire ce que je dois faire ?*
- *Qu'est-ce qu'il faut que je fasse ... ?*
- *Puis-je... ?*
- *..ceux qui ont été sélectionnés ;*
- use of *pour* +infinitive

Some of the grammatical difficulties were:

- the passive form (*comment est-ce qu'ils ont choisi* instead ... *sont-ils choisis*)
- position and agreement of adjectives

Task 5

The two tasks on the first reading text differentiated well.

5A The most easily identifiable correct sentence was (a) and the most difficult to identify were (f) and (j). Candidates needed to know the difference in meaning between *moins de 18* and *au moins 18 ans*, and between *il y a six mois* and *pendant six mois*.

5B Close reading of the text was required to complete this task successfully.

Task 6

This proved to be the most demanding task in the paper, nearly all questions were attempted and it was a good discriminator.

- (a) Candidates explained *banalité* well.
- (b) The majority got the idea of a reduced intake of drugs. Some showed a misunderstanding of *ne fume plus que* and some ignored the past tense (*je fumais*).
- (c) Some answers went beyond the text and made value judgements (e.g. *meilleurs*), some lacked sufficient precision (*les effets sont différents*).
- (d) Some candidates lifted *bronchites* from the text, some explained it (*des maladies pulmonaires*). For the second point, candidates mentioned depression and fear but most used *angoisse*.
- (e) Candidates often gave one or other of the points but not both. It was necessary to include the idea of wanting to take/missing them with drugs and that Jérôme didn't have enough/needed some money.
- (f) This was usually correctly answered.
- (g) This question differentiated well. Most candidates were able to say he got either qualifications or a job but were not always successful in explaining the effect - possibly because the answer had to be inferred.
- (h) This was a challenging question and again differentiated well. Careful reading of the text was required to get the correct response.
- (i) Candidates manipulated the reflexive verb with confidence but some relied on lifting *coupant* from the text.
- (j) This question differentiated well. Candidates needed to show that it was an active decision on Jérôme's part and that his friends supported him.
- (k) The last question required careful reading of the last paragraph to fully understand and explain his opinion on soft drugs.

Quality of language – Grid C2

This task provided plenty of opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their linguistic abilities. They answered in full sentences, using complex structures (pronouns / subjunctive etc.) and accurately manipulated language from the text (rephrasing it with new parts of speech / changing vocabulary (e.g. *illégal* to *contre la loi* or *illicite*).

Task 7

- (a) This question produced a full range of marks and candidates were able to identify the relevant points.
- (b) Candidates had a lot to say about the topic of children (babies to young adolescents) and television, and many went well beyond the original text.

Among the points in favour of television for children were:

- a teaching and information tool
- a way to broaden horizons and awareness of other cultures and languages
- a source of entertainment, providing relaxation, stimulating the imagination
- the possibility for parents to have a break.

Points against television included:

- health risks
- lack of exercise
- anti-social behaviour
- attention problems.

Many concluded that a compromise was desirable and that parents should check what and how much their children watch.

It was evident that many candidates had planned what they wanted to say; answers were structured and covered all necessary areas with development of points of view without repetition.

Quality of language – Range

Candidates used a variety of vocabulary and a range of grammatical structures. Many were at ease with the subjunctive or with *si* clauses and had a good range of words to introduce new or contrasting ideas.

Quality of language – Accuracy

Candidates wrote accurately, even when using complex language but some had problems with verb endings, tenses and adjectival agreement. This is an area that could usefully be the focus of attention with candidates.

F703 French Speaking

General Comments

Candidates found the themes of the texts familiar and the language accessible; they appeared to welcome the opportunity to develop their ideas on the crisis facing the French wine industry, fair trade initiatives, current French attitudes to mental health, the threat of climate change, stem cell therapy and recent developments in the storage of personal data by means of implanting electronic chips. As always, the ability to grasp the essential points, to paraphrase successfully and expansively develop ideas were the differentiating factors between candidates.

Overall, the choice of topics seemed narrower this year [*L'énergie nucléaire, L'environnement, Les SDF, L'immigration, Le racisme* etc.] but some centres bucked the trend with adventurous choices. Topics were well researched, focussed on France or French-speaking countries with many conscientious and capable candidates relating an impressive amount of material, as well as demonstrating an ability to manipulate it flexibly.

Discussion of Article

There was good adherence to the recommended timings and a balance was usually struck between questions testing comprehension and those of a more general nature. The suggested questions are not compulsory and can be changed in response to candidates' previous answers to pursue interesting ideas or if the candidate has already given the relevant information in their initial summary of the passage. Candidates had often made good use of the 20 minute preparation time to think of structures and vocabulary they could use during the discussion.

Texte A (La crise dans l'industrie vinicole française)

This was a popular text. In explaining the first paragraph, it was important to mention that it is à *l'étranger* that French wines are being toppled from the number one slot. A lot of candidates rightly sought a way to paraphrase *la suprématie*. Many candidates successfully gave a detailed explanation of the crisis described in the second paragraph. Details of the solution proposed by the European Union were also readily forthcoming in the majority of cases, as was the reason why the proposal was not a success. Some quite effectively compared the vines to children in order to explain the reluctance of the *exploitants* to accept the subsidy offered. Most candidates explained why the finger of blame had been pointed by the *lobby viticole* at the former Health Minister.

The best of the conversations that followed the comprehension questions were those in which the teacher/examiner took as his/her cue for the next question something that the candidate had said in his/her previous answer. Topics that were covered included alcohol addiction, the efficacy of advertising campaigns warning of the dangers of alcohol, the question of whether alcohol manufacturers should be allowed to promote major sporting events and the devastation wrought by alcohol on individual lives and families.

Texte B (Le commerce équitable)

For this text, comprehension was generally good and there were plenty of ideas forthcoming. Most candidates appeared to have a social conscience and were enthusiastic about this form of international aid. Successful candidates listened to the questions asked and gave a focussed response from an appropriate section of the paragraph. Some of the best general conversations that followed broadened out from the subject of *le commerce équitable* to embrace such topics as the stranglehold of certain supermarket chains and their marketing practices, the criteria

adopted by shoppers to make their choices, the problem of poverty and the need for a more equitable distribution of wealth.

Texte C (Des malades mentaux dans la rue)

This text was done well by many candidates. In the first paragraph it was important to understand some of the key vocabulary (*assassinat; se plante; gesticulant*), that the principal issue under discussion was the protection of the public and that the current debate about people with mental illness in society was sparked off by *un assassinat en pleine rue*. Many gave full details of the problem identified in the second paragraph and also of the reasons why the woman mentioned in the third paragraph was eventually taken to hospital. Good examining techniques here elicited the candidates' own ideas and did not pursue inconsequential minutiae such as the age of the woman and the body responsible for the decision to hospitalise her. In the final paragraph, candidates who used their own words to detail the specifics of the four measures proposed were more effective than those who contented themselves with reading from the text.

The text generated some interesting general discussions that took in such topics as society's responsibility towards the mentally ill, the reasons why there has been a marked increase in recent years in the number of psychiatric illnesses, the best means of treating such disorders and other measures that might be taken to protect the public. A number of candidates were able to draw on personal experience and anecdotal evidence to support their views.

Texte D (Comment s'adapter au changement de climat ?)

Texts on the environment are likely to prove popular and this one was no exception. The first and second paragraphs discriminated well between candidates who gave details of the urgent measures and those who simply gave a summary. Some candidates supplied exhaustive explanations of the *conséquences possibles du réchauffement*, some thought it sufficient to supply just a couple of brief details while others simply read from the card in front of them. When it came to the third paragraph, quite a number had not taken on board that the quantity of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will continue to grow until the twentieth-fourth century even if all emissions are halted immediately. For the fourth paragraph, candidates needed to focus on the economic consequences found in the last three lines.

In the more general conversation that followed, candidates were able to draw on impressive resources of vocabulary to discuss such issues as the nuclear question and reactions to the recent crisis in Japan, the advantages and disadvantages of alternative energy sources, problems posed by climate change and diverging attitudes to the ecological crisis looming over the planet.

Texte E (La manipulation de nos cellules)

This text had considerable appeal for some candidates and they coped very well using their own words to provide clear explanations of the recent developments described. There was an unexpected omission in answers to question 2 – *congeler*, and there was also some uncertainty about the numbers 150 and 1500. In the third paragraph, some candidates not only gave details of the actions of the five players in question but also took the initiative and made the point contained in the following paragraph.

The general discussion that followed ranged over various developments in medical technology, private medicine, the need for closer screening to reduce death rates and whether the advances encourage people to behave less responsibly as far as their health is concerned.

Texte F (L'implantation de puces électroniques)

This text was well understood by the majority of the candidates who were given it. Explanations of the first paragraph were appropriately detailed, particularly when candidates had understood the phrase *attendent des volontaires*. The practical advantages of using the chip as delineated in the second paragraph were well summarised as were the possible benefits for a sick person. Some candidates had difficulty pronouncing *puce* so there were some thumb grafts and electronic thumbs. Candidates who had read the rest of the paragraph in question were able to infer what it meant.

Personal reactions to the prospect of being fitted with a chip were often negative: concerns were voiced about the security of personal details stored in this way and also about possible medical complications. Other areas covered in the general conversation included the pros and cons of using human beings as guinea pigs in scientific experiments and the dangers presented by other new technologies.

Topic Discussion

The range of topics chosen was as diverse as ever. A welcome feature this year was the increased number of topics of a literary and cultural nature. The most popular topics related to the environment and to social issues – especially the *burqa* and inequalities / discrimination. Most candidates had clearly approached their research with energy and enthusiasm and this shone through in their discussions. Most teacher/examiners struck an excellent balance between facts and personal opinion/reaction; they went beyond merely descriptive questions and gave their candidates sufficient opportunity to express and justify ideas.

The examples below show the some of the individual topics chosen:

La laïcité / le voile intégral
La religion et les cultes en France

Les prisons françaises
Les émeutes de 2005

Les femmes politiques en France
L'extrême droite française – une blague ou une menace ?

Les SDF
La pauvreté chez les jeunes en France

Le conflit avec les Roms
Est-ce que la représentation des immigrés en France par les médias est justifiée ?

L'environnement et la campagne 10 : 10
La conservation environnementale en Guyane

Les problèmes de la baisse de fécondité en France
La lutte contre le paludisme au Sénégal : dans quelle mesure a-t-elle été efficace ?

La tauromachie au patrimoine culturel de la France
Oradour-sur-Glane : hier et aujourd'hui

L'impact et l'influence de Léo Ferré dans le monde de la chanson engagée
La Révolution et son influence sur la culture française

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Many candidates used the language spontaneously and with ease, showing they were accustomed to using French as the standard medium in classroom situations.

Grammar was generally acceptable and slips in accuracy, particularly genders and agreements, are to be expected when speakers are spontaneous and responsive. The attempt to vary vocabulary and structures was particularly impressive. Pronunciation, intonation, rhythm and pace of delivery were also of impressive quality.

F704 French Listening, Reading and Writing 2

General comments

The overall standard of candidates' responses suggested that centres were confident with the question types and assessment criteria for this unit. Candidates seemed to have had adequate time to complete all sections. Rubric infringements were rare but a few candidates did not gain credit in a specific question because they wrote two answers of which only one was correct. The standard of candidates' handwriting was generally good, but a few candidates may have unwittingly lost potential credit by not writing legibly.

SECTION A

Task 1

Candidates showed that they had grasped the gist of the recorded interview, but some individual words and phrases caused difficulty.

- (a) An accessible first item on the paper, with very few wrong answers.
- (b) This question was well answered. However some candidates invalidated their response by adding incorrect material, e.g. 'They presented Icub to ten researchers'.
- (c) There were many correct responses, but some candidates did not know *cerveau*.
- (d) This question produced a wide range of attainment. For the first marking point, some candidates showed good understanding of the phrase *fait son apprentissage en observant*, but some interpreted the phrase wrongly. The second marking point, referring to the anticipation of people's needs, was well answered, although sometimes *demandes* was wrongly interpreted as questions.
- (e) This item was a good discriminator as some candidates did not know *veiller sur*.
- (f) This item also discriminated well and required candidates to understand *faire mal* correctly.

Task 2

This task produced a wide spread of marks. The best approach is for candidates to phrase their answer in such a way that it answers the question directly, concentrating on the conveying of key points and not consciously searching for synonyms. If they do that, they will inevitably use some words from the recording, which is fine, but they will also show comprehension by their choice of what to include and by their appropriate manipulation of the syntax.

- (a) Well answered in terms of content. Those candidates who went beyond the quotation of the single words *chômage* and *misère* were able to gain credit towards their quality of language mark.
- (b) There were many correct answers, but a few candidates did not recognise *bandes*.
- (c) Candidates understood either *affirmer leur force* or ... *de pouvoir dire « j'existe »* correctly.

- (d) A good discriminating question. Candidates needed to make the connection between *contrôles* and *musclés* for the second marking point. A good approach was to express the idea of police strength or aggression in straightforward terms, e.g. *La police utilise de la force*.
- (e) The word *colère* seemed to be unfamiliar.
- (f) To give an appropriate answer here, candidates needed to take account of *devraient ... éviter* in the question. Candidates needed also to refer either to the use of language – *...adopte le même langage...* – or to being a rival – *...se présenter comme un rival...* – to get the second marking point.
- (g) Well answered. Tolerance of misspellings of *excitant* stretched to *exitant* (sic) but not *exitent* (sic) which looked too much like the 3rd person plural of a verb.
- (h) This question produced a wide range of attainment. Some candidates had difficulty with the verb *s'ennuyer*.
- (i) Many candidates gained the first mark for mentioning the absent fathers, but in the second part of the answer some wrote *peur* instead of *peu* which conveyed a different meaning and therefore could not be credited.
- (j) In this question, candidates showed whether they had understood the French or not through their spelling of individual words. Unacceptable variants included *service* for *...survie* and *statue* for *statut*.
- (k) This was an intentionally demanding item as candidates needed to form sentences to describe the various measures under consideration. The key to success in this question was the inclusion of all relevant detail: for example it was not enough to mention *en construisant des logements sociaux* without the addition of *dans tous les quartiers*.

Accuracy of Language

The quality of candidates' French in Section A ranged widely. There were examples of simple manipulation and use of own words such as *Cela leur donne un statut* in part (j). Errors were seen in verb endings such as *elle s'ennuit* (sic), agreements such as *les pères ne sont pas présent* (sic) and the spelling of common words e.g. *recontre* (sic) and *gangent* (sic).

SECTION B

Task 3

This task was generally well answered, but some candidates wrongly ticked option (h).

Task 4

Parts (a) and (b) caused some difficulty, but parts (c) and (d) produced many correct responses. In part (c) the omission of *à* in *met fin à* was tolerated but otherwise in this task the answer had to be the exact equivalent of the given word.

Task 5

Candidates showed at least satisfactory gist comprehension of the text. Those who wrote in full sentences and avoided lengthy lifting often put themselves in a strong position to get a good quality of language mark for Section B. As in Section A, it was not necessary to find a synonym for every key noun and verb.

- (a)(i) There were many correct answers.
- (a)(ii) Most candidates made correct mention of the *marchands (d'esclaves)* – it was not necessary to find synonyms for *marchands* and *esclaves* – but it was essential to include the reference to cost.
- (b)(i) This question was well answered.
- (b)(ii) This question was generally well answered, but responses such as *les Africains sont venus en Europe* could not be credited because they did not convey the idea of migration or (re-)settlement.
- (c) A good discriminator. Some candidates seemed not to understand the reference to *l'élite* and gave wrong answers such as *Ils étaient riches*. For the second marking point, it was acceptable to refer to either past or future studies, but any incorrect additional material invalidated the response.
- (d) Well answered - particularly when candidates took account of the word *métiers* in the question.
- (e) A good discriminator. The wording of the question meant that it was not possible to lift *défiant* from the text; instead candidates needed to express the idea in their own words.

Task 6

In this gap fill task, grammatical errors were tolerated for the content mark provided that they did not distort the meaning, e.g. *sentiment* was accepted in part (a). However it was not acceptable for candidates to cross out words in the question in order to make it possible to lift directly from the text.

- (a) This item produced a range of correct and incorrect responses, including the factually wrong *deuxième* in the first gap.
- (b) In this item candidates needed to put the verb *former* into the reflexive or passive form – an answer such as *ont formé* was not acceptable.
- (c) This item was well answered. Among the wide range of correct responses given were *décolonisées*, *libérées* and *des républiques*, all showing a good understanding of the text.
- (d) Many candidates gave a satisfactory answer here. *La droit* (sic) was tolerated for content, but not *la droite*. *La chance* was not accepted because it conveyed a different meaning from 'chance' in English.
- (e) This item was well answered. The unexpected answer *Africains* was given consideration, but it was decided that it could not be credited.
- (f) As in part (c), there were many different ways of filling this gap.

Task 7

This transfer of meaning task produced a good level of attainment overall. Although candidates were not required to write a formal translation, they were expected to account in some way for all the words in the original text. For example, those who omitted the idea of 'more' or 'most' for *(les) plus (gaspilleurs)* lost potential credit. Some of the misunderstood words and phrases were:

- *celui qui pollue* – sometimes given as 'the causes of pollution' or similar
- *gaspilleurs* – sometimes associated with rubbish or refuse rather than wastefulness
- *seront poussés* – not always given in the correct future time frame
- *économies d'énergie* – often given as 'energy economy' or similar

Candidates were also required to write accurate English. Some lost potential credit for writing 'principal' instead of 'principle'.

Task 8

This question made similar demands to Task 5 and produced a similar range of attainment overall.

- (a) The wording of the question intentionally required candidates to interpret the text and express the key idea in their own words. The best answers were often the shortest, e.g. *quatre fois moins*.
- (b) As in part (a), the wording of the question required candidates to re-express the ideas from the text in their own words. Candidates were successful when they understood the word *application* and could link the different elements of the paragraph appropriately.
- (c) Many candidates managed to convey the idea of 'clean energy', but the second marking point referring to the large contribution made by these forms of energy in France proved to be more challenging.
- (d) Many candidates gave one or other of the required points but not both, thereby showing only partial understanding of this section of the text.
- (e) Most candidates successfully conveyed the idea of paying off debts. The first marking point required the idea of the state receiving the money. The best answers here often began with *Il veut...* or similar, in order to fit in with the wording of the question.

Task 9

In this task it was acceptable to either write a word or phrase that fitted the grammatical context of the highlighted phrase, or to write an explanation on the lines of *Cela veut dire que ...*. On the whole the first of these approaches was more successful.

- (a) A challenging question that discriminated well between candidates.
- (b) Here candidates needed to fully understand *ignore*.
- (c) In this item candidates seemed to have understood the French but did not always gain credit because of errors which prevented communication such as *appliquera à* instead of *s'appliquera à*.
- (d) This was the most accessible of the four items in this task. There were a good number of correct answers using past participles such as *n'est pas résolue* or *n'est pas décidée*.

Task 10

Candidates tackled this gap fill task successfully; they showed a good awareness of the grammatical context of each gap as well as comprehension of the stimulus text and questions.

- (a) Many candidates gave a correct answer such as *est contre* or *n'aime pas (l'idée de)*.
- (b) For the first marking point, *chère* was not accepted because, although undoubtedly a true statement, it did not convey the meaning of the stimulus text. For the second marking point, many candidates gave a correct answer such as *peuvent* or *pourront*, but a few wrote *doivent* which conveyed the wrong message.
- (c) This item discriminated well and there were many possible answers ranging from *punit* and *coûte cher à* to *n'est pas juste pour* and *a un effet important sur*.
- (d) Most candidates got the first marking point, but not always the second, perhaps because they did not realise that *les* was an object pronoun referring back to *les personnes à revenus modestes*.

Quality of language

Candidates were assessed globally for the quality of their French in tasks 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10. In order to achieve a mark in the middle band, candidates needed to be secure in their use of basic French, including correct verb endings and adjective agreements. In order to achieve a mark in the top band, candidates needed to maintain a good level of accuracy even when using complex structures. There were some examples of elegant French such as *Les marchands auraient perdu trop d'argent* and *Étant cultivés, ils faisaient partie de l'élite*.

SECTION C

Many candidates chose a title which enabled them to demonstrate the skills and understanding that they had acquired during the A2 course and they wrote a focused response to the question set. The discursive titles tended to be more popular than the imaginative titles and the majority of the entry chose either Question 11 on unemployment or Question 13 on pollution. Essays varied greatly in length; it was possible to get full marks with a 250-word response, but in practice essays in the 300 to 400 word range produced the best results. Some essays were too long which was detrimental to the quality.

Relevance and points of view

To get a good mark for relevance and points of view, candidates needed to fulfil two requirements: to remain focused on the question at all times, and to make effective use of evidence and examples from a French-speaking country. It is not sufficient to add *en France* or *à Paris* to a sentence that could be true of any part of Europe or the world. Some candidates quoted material from Sections A and B of the paper, which is entirely acceptable provided that it suits the task and that the candidate uses such material to support a valid argument.

Structure and analysis

A detailed essay plan seemed in many cases to have helped candidates produce a well structured and coherent response, maintaining a clear sense of direction from start to finish. It is important to not only present ideas in a logical manner within a given paragraph, but also to link each paragraph clearly with the one before it. Introductions and conclusions need to be equally thought out, and to be equally impressive as the body of the essay. It was tempting for some candidates to digress from the task – perhaps in order to include material that they had

previously practised during the course – but this could detract from the coherence required for the higher mark bands.

Quality of language (accuracy and range)

Many candidates used a wide variety of structures, with varying degrees of success. Tenses were often well used, as were the passive and common occurrences of the subjunctive. Areas of difficulty seem to be the correct sequence of tenses after *si*, correct dependent prepositions, the correct use of the subjunctive/indicative after impersonal phrases and the correct use of *qui* and *que*.

Examples of good lexis were the appropriate use of *banaliser*, *faire le bilan*, *les licenciements*, *le personnel*, *postuler* and *l'enjeu*. Lexical errors included *issue* (in the sense of English 'issue'), *involver* (sic), *préventer* (sic) and *les bénéfiques* (instead of *allocations*).

Question 11

The most effective responses were often those which concluded that unemployment could reasonably be reduced but not eliminated. Most candidates included some information about the unemployment rate in France, often broken down into different groups e.g. young and old, immigrants. Many candidates wrote at some length on the causes of unemployment and used the information to support a line of argument in answer to the task, mentioning factors such as education, immigration, the economic crisis, the reluctance to accept low paid jobs and the difficulty of mothers returning to the workplace.

Question 12

Responses were most effective when they remained focused on the task, pursued a logical line of argument, and incorporated information from a French-speaking country. This task provided good opportunities to use the correct sequence of tenses with *si* and to adopt a persuasive tone with phrases such as *N'oubliez pas que...*, *J'ai du mal à croire...* and *Ne permettez pas...*

Question 13

The best responses tended to be those that acknowledged the difficulty of eliminating the causes of pollution and went on to evaluate ways in which pollution could be reduced without drifting too far into a detailed discussion of the merits of different energy sources. Other aspects of pollution that could reasonably be used in response to this task included transport, household refuse and agricultural waste. Some candidates made the observation that such forms of pollution could certainly be reduced but only at the expense of our standard of living. A few candidates made interesting comparisons between national initiatives and *les petits gestes*; this approach can work well as long as the link with the question is explicit.

Question 14

This question invited candidates to explain and justify an environmental project. The projects chosen ranged widely from local recycling initiatives and nature reserves to a self-help scheme for a community in Africa.

Question 15

In response to this question some candidates considered the use of the internet and/or mobile phones, which led to some interesting observations on the speed of technological innovation – where will we be in 20 years' time?

Question 16

This question invited candidates to write a letter of complaint about the social security system in France and candidates needed to have some specific factual knowledge in order to produce a good response.

Question 17

The choice of topic for responses to this question was justifiably broad and included immigration, the economy, voting rights and education. Candidates needed to know some basic facts in relation to government decisions in order to answer the question successfully.

Question 18

In response to this question, works chosen included *Amélie*, *La Haine*, *L'enfant de Sable* and *Bonjour Tristesse*. There were clear and precise references to the chosen book or film, which were used in an appropriate way to address the question *à qui... ?* Some responses were limited to explaining why the book or film was good and/or the details of the plot, which were not appropriate.

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CB1 2EU

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