

FRENCH

Paper 9779/01
Speaking

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part I, consider the issue raised in their chosen article and their own reaction(s) to it
- in Part II, choose a subject which genuinely interests them and which clearly relates to a country where the target language is spoken
- in Parts I and II, be prepared to take the lead in the conversation
- in Parts I and II, be ready to engage in natural and spontaneous discussion.

General comments

There were some excellent performances in this year's examination. Many candidates demonstrated extensive research of personal topics and communicated their ideas with fluency and ease.

All administrative arrangements were dealt with efficiently by Centres.

Discussion of Article

Of the four articles, by far the most popular choice was the media, followed by employment, and travel and tourism. Fewer candidates chose the article on war and peace.

The one-minute introduction to the subject was dealt with appropriately by the vast majority of candidates, who provided a brief overview of the issues to be expanded on. A few candidates attempted to read out notes that they had made during the preparation time: candidates are instructed not to do this.

Most candidates were able to contribute ideas relevant to the wider thematic area of their chosen card; in just a few cases, candidates chose a card with a theme they did not have many ideas about.

1. Media

Many candidates expanded on the changing nature of socialisation, the importance of privacy controls, both self-imposed and site-generated, and the risks for young people and adults. Many were also keen to question the negativity of the article, putting forward ideas about the more positive aspects of social sites. Advertising, illegal downloading and phishing were other issues covered well by candidates. Lexis presented few problems in the majority of cases. In the general discussion, subjects covered included the varying roles of the media, communication bulimia, political manipulation, tabloid sensationalism, the death of the newspaper and parental responsibilities.

2. Travel and Tourism

Candidates who chose this article usually seemed very much at home with the issues involved and were often very knowledgeable about the ecological effects of the tourist industry. Air travel, budget airlines, carbon tax, sex and drug tourism were among the topics discussed and, again, there were few problems with vocabulary. Subjects for general discussion ranged from border control to gap year travel and, generally speaking, a good range of ideas was forthcoming.

3. War and Peace

In general, candidates who chose this article were able to discuss the issues with maturity and confidence. The link was made between the increasing number of conflicts in the world and the desire of emerging nations to become more democratic. Developed countries, it was maintained, should proceed with caution because often they do not understand the reality in the countries that are affected by civil war. There was also a feeling that intervention often makes matters worse. With regard to the aims mentioned in the last paragraph of the article, all of the candidates had clear but differing views as to which one was the most important. In the thematic discussion, all demonstrated an impressive knowledge of current affairs, and subjects covered included the war against terrorism, religious fundamentalism, current conflicts, nuclear threats and the role of the United Nations.

4. Employment and Unemployment

Many candidates saw young people as the main victims of the economic downturn: they lack experience and, as a consequence, are not hired to fill vacancies or they are the first to be sacked. Many felt that long-term unemployment not only damages future employment prospects but also leads to a lack of self-confidence. All candidates thought that the measure referred to in the last paragraph of the article was a good initiative, though not all understood that it involved training whilst pursuing academic studies. Among issues discussed on a more general level, there figured the nature and purpose of work, retirement, sexism in the workplace, work-induced stress and government policies on employment and unemployment.

Topics

A very wide variety of topics were chosen. The extent of research carried out was in some cases very impressive. In just a few performances, the topic seemed not to have been explored in sufficient depth and, as a result, candidates were unable to produce the range of ideas and supporting analysis expected. A small number of candidates chose topics which were either too descriptive in nature or too narrow in scope, lacking analytical potential. Where candidates wish to discuss a literary topic, preparing to discuss one or two works in some depth tends to be a more successful approach than focusing solely on the biography of a chosen author/artist. The following gives an idea of the impressive range of topics chosen this year:

Literary: Verlaine, Ronsard, Baudelaire, Maupassant, Beckett, Molière, Hugo, Pagnol, Voltaire, Camus

Philosophical: Existentialism, Sartre, Le Café Philo

Artistic: Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, Manet, Matisse, Ravel, Renoir, Godard, Henri-Georges Clouzot, Jacques Audiard, *La Haine*, Edith Piaf, Claude François, Misa, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Coco Chanel, Cartier-Bresson, la chanson française

Historical: Dreyfus, Napoléon, les Années Folles, Jeanne d'Arc, La France et le Vietnam, la Commune de Paris, la Révolution française, Marie Antoinette, la déportation et le sauvetage des enfants juifs pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale, le conflit malien, la révolution haïtienne, la guerre d'Indochine, la guerre d'Algérie

Social/Political: L'Abbé Pierre, la laïcité, l'islamophobie, l'immigration en France, le chômage en France, l'euthanasie, la peine de mort, le Grand Paris, l'énergie nucléaire et les énergies renouvelables, la loi HADOPI, le dopage et le Tour de France, les élections de 2012, François Hollande, le Front National, la mentalité écologique, les Grandes Écoles, l'homophobie en France

Language

The whole range of performance was heard. At the higher end, candidates brought an impressive range of appropriate vocabulary and idiom to the discussion of their topics, while less-well prepared candidates showed some reliance on anglicisms and invented words. Quite a number of candidates made good use of a variety of phrases and structures commonly used to express ideas, e.g. *Il me paraît que*, *Il me semble que*, *Je dirais que*, *J'estime que*, *Je ne pense pas que* followed by the subjunctive.

Pronunciation and intonation were generally good and quite often very good: among a number of recurrent faults were the sounding of the final *s* of *ils*, nouns ending in *-tion* pronounced as though there was a *sh*, and confusion between the pronunciation of *jeunes* and *gens*.

FRENCH

Paper 9779/02
Reading and Listening

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- focus only on the required information and communicate it precisely in their answers
- pay particular attention to conveying the required information to the examiner in unambiguous language.

General comments

The full range of performance was seen. Once again this year, candidates' performance in the Listening exercises was often a little stronger than in the Reading exercises; however, many candidates performed equally well in both parts of the examination. In general, candidates took care to ensure that their responses directly answered the questions set, and to provide clear, concise answers. At the lower end of the ability range, candidates sometimes struggled to identify the pertinent information and also to express themselves clearly.

Part 1: Reading

Texte à lire 1

Many candidates achieved good marks in this exercise. Only a minority of candidates answered all the questions correctly, but scores of 7-9 were frequently seen. At the lower end of the ability range, some candidates had a tendency to copy out sections of the passage without tailoring their responses to the specific questions asked.

Question 1

The vast majority of candidates understood that what threatens the traditional press is the large number of news sources available.

Question 2

The relevant information to answer this question was that newspapers seek to innovate and to surprise on a daily basis. To score the mark, candidates needed to provide at least one of these two actions. Most candidates gave both. A very small number of candidates simply copied out the phrase *de se réinventer et étonner chaque jour*. This could not be credited as it does not target the question set.

Question 3

Most candidates gave the correct answer that what makes life difficult for newspapers is the speed with which news is available.

Question 4

Stronger candidates recognised that it was the French press that was the subject of the question and responded accordingly: the French press does not strive after sensationalism in the manner of the American press but rather adopts a negative/pessimistic stance giving prominence to bad news. In weaker answers,

phrases such as *vendent leurs infos domestiques* and *présentées comme une litanie de lamentations* were copied out without demonstrating comprehension.

Question 5

Candidates needed to identify two of the four elements mentioned. The shortest answers were usually the most successful, for example: *Le Canard Enchaîné* is more objective, it is shorter, it has no advertising and it contains more drawings than photographs. Some candidates copied out the phrase *et présente plus de 30 dessins pour une seule photo*. This was not considered to demonstrate comprehension of how the *Canard* is different from other newspapers.

Question 6

This was the least well done question of the exercise. Instead of targeting the question, many answers supplied information about the fact that *Le Canard* is politically independent and indiscriminately targets politicians from the left and the right. There was also a measure of confusion between *ego* and *égoïste*.

Question 7

Most candidates understood that the emotion aroused was fear; some thought that it was anger or amusement.

Texte à lire 2

Candidates' marks were usually similar to those scored in the previous exercise. Once again, the best answers were usually the most concise ones. In some cases, candidates' answers were longer than necessary. Longer answers sometimes included incorrect information which contradicted and invalidated the correct information given in the rest of the response.

Question 8

Most candidates understood that France and Africa no longer understand one another. A number of candidates did not score the second mark available for the question: quite a few thought that the second conclusion drawn by the ambassadors is that France and Africa are tired of one another. Over-literal translations of *perd pied* (e.g. is losing its foot/footing) were not credited.

Question 9

Some answers offered just one half of the criticism, notably that France intervenes too much in Africa; others took the ambassador's comment on the criticism (*Quoi qu'on fasse, on a tort*) to be the answer.

Question 10

Most candidates understood the passage's assertion that the French have overlooked the effects of globalisation on Africa. A number of candidates had more difficulty with the phrase *sont désormais courtisés par tous les pays émergents*.

Question 11

Most candidates answered this question correctly. Weaker candidates sometimes showed misunderstanding here, for example with the answer *because of the reduction of the aid to old soldiers*.

Question 12

Most candidates answered this question correctly. A small number of weaker candidates did not understand *n'a plus les moyens de* and gave answers such as *France no longer has the high levels of ambition in Africa*.

Question 13

Most candidates understood the point that Chinese aid is much more visible and obvious than French aid. The most common incorrect answer given here was that there is *more* Chinese aid than French aid. This could not be credited as it is not what we are told in the text.

Question 14

(i) Candidates had more difficulty with this part of the question than with the second part. Some candidates gave as their answer that half of Nigeria's and South Africa's trade was done with France; other suggestions were too vague to receive credit, e.g. *There is most French interest in these countries*.

(ii) *anglophone* was understood by the vast majority of candidates.

Texte à lire 3

Question 15

The strongest candidates dealt competently with the lexical items contained in the passage. Their translations were consistently accurate from a grammatical point of view. The majority of translations demonstrated at least a fair level of accuracy; many candidates had difficulty with irregular verbs and prepositional usage. At the lower end of the ability range, candidates struggled with vocabulary and there were frequent grammatical errors.

Items of lexis that candidates found most difficult were *acquaintances*, *policy*, *exports*, *criticised*, *support* and *from now on*. Candidates are reminded that the previous passage provides support for some of the vocabulary needed to complete the exercise: both *acquaintances* (along with its gender) and *from now on* could be found in the passage.

Many candidates had difficulty with the use of the imperfect to render *...than analysts thought possible* and the conditional use of *devoir* to render the English *should*. In a number of scripts, concordances were an area of weakness e.g. *la politique français*, *la compétition chinois*, *leur intérêts*, *le gouvernement française* and *cette région important*. Other items that some candidates struggled with were *it is difficult to understand why*, *on which China depends* and *it is criticised for not giving*. Quite a few candidates had difficulty rendering *enough*: *assez aide*, *beaucoup de souhait(sic)*, *assez beaucoup de soutiens*, *le soutien suffit*, *sufficient de soutien* and *autant soutien* were seen in a number of scripts.

Texte à écouter 1

The full range of performance was seen, and there were a number of very strong performances.

Question 16

Most candidates had understood that Stéphane was kidnapped by the Taliban. Just a relatively small number had not fully understood the phrase which they heard, notably *ces types armés de kalachnikovs m'ont arrêté*. Incorrect answers given by a few candidates included, for example, *les kalachnikovs étaient enlevé par les talibans*.

Question 17

Most candidates scored the mark. Correct spelling of the word *hygiène* was not insisted on but answers in which *d'hygiène* was given as one word, e.g. *le manque digienne* could not be credited.

Question 18

Almost all candidates gave the correct information.

Question 19

Most candidates gained both marks. In a handful of scripts, *souris* was not recognisable (e.g. *soeri*) and there were also a few problems rendering the other elements, e.g. *investé* and *on est touffe*.

Question 20

Candidates experienced more difficulty here, *ses choix passés* being given correctly by about half of the candidature. The answer *ce qui s'est passé* appeared in a number of scripts.

Question 21

The vast majority of candidates demonstrated clear comprehension of the fact that the Taliban were seeking an exchange of prisoners.

Question 22

Most attempts to transcribe *nous ont serré la main* were successful. However, some versions were not sufficiently clear to be credited, e.g. *il l'encerrait ses mains*, and occasionally comprehension was not clearly demonstrated of the fact that they were not simply shaking hands among themselves, e.g. *ils serraient les mains*. Most candidates either attempted a direct transcription of *Nous espérons que vous ne nous en voulez pas* or transposed the phrase into the third person. Quite a few were successful but, equally, there were a number of versions that could not be deemed to qualify for the mark, e.g. *ils ont espéré que les journalistes ne les ont voulu pas trop*, *nous espérons que vous ne nous on voulait pas trop*.

Question 23

A good number of candidates gave the correct answer that, despite all he has been through, Stéphane does not rule out the possibility of returning to Afghanistan one day.

Texte à écouter 2

Question 24

Most candidates had understood what the company *Mers et Voyages* specialises in. *Boat trips*, which figured as the answer in a number of scripts, was not sufficiently precise to score the mark. A few candidates wrote *cruises* or *travelling in the hold of boats with the cargo*, and these answers could not be credited.

Question 25

In general, this question was answered very well. *24 days* figured in a very small number of scripts and the *en moyenne* was sometimes omitted.

Question 26

To score the mark here, candidates needed to pick out the information contained in one of two sentences: *Nous conseillons à nos clients de ne pas perturber l'équipage dans son travail* or *L'important est de se tenir à l'écart et de faire preuve de discrétion*. The single word *discreet* sufficed. Just a handful of candidates gave answers that could not be credited, e.g. *one who does not take much luggage*.

Question 27

The vast majority of candidates correctly gave at least one of the two pieces of information and many gave both, notably that passengers share the gym and meals with the crew and that there are no big restaurants or casino.

Question 28

Here candidates needed to supply 2 out of 3 details heard, notably *to meet people*, *to escape from the world* and *to be alone to reflect*. Most secured at least 1 of the 2 points available and, again, many secured both. A recurrent mistake was to truncate the third piece of information heard, viz. *une manière de se retrouver seul face à soi-même et à sa conscience* and simply to write *to find oneself* or even *to refind oneself*.

Question 29

There were few problems here. Just a handful of weaker candidates relied on guesswork and gave such answers as *sunbathing*.

Question 30

Most candidates demonstrated comprehension of the fact that many passengers want to prolong their stay in a particular place in order to get a better insight into the local culture. The other piece of information heard,

les bateaux restent rarement à quai plus de 24 heures, was sometimes distorted, e.g. *ships rarely stay at a port for more than an hour*.

Texte à écouter 3

In general, performance on the summary exercise was good. Many candidates achieved high marks here: quite a few scored at least 9/10. However, a significant number of candidates did not adhere to the word limit prescribed in the rubric. In the interests of fairness, excess words were not allowed and, as a result, the candidates in question could not be credited for the points made after the limit of 100 words had been reached.

In stronger performances, candidates took care to write in clear English, avoiding transliteration; in weaker scripts, the following transliterations were frequently seen: *un professionnel de la communication sur papier* – a professional of communication on paper, *faire preuve de diplomatie* – to prove diplomacy, *un rapport de stage* – a stage report, *une lettre de motivation* – a letter of motivation.

A number of candidates responded in note-form: in some cases, notes were too brief to communicate the required information with clarity. Whilst candidates are permitted to complete the task in note-form, it is important to ensure that information is clear and sufficiently detailed to express the point intended.

FRENCH

Paper 9779/03
Writing and Usage

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part I, choose a title on which they have something to say and for which they have command of appropriate structures and lexis
- in Part I, plan their essay to produce well-structured and persuasive arguments
- in Part I, write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument
- in Part II, read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence(s)
- in Parts I and II, carefully proofread their responses.

General Comments

On the whole, candidates' answers were relevant to the essay questions. It was clear that topics had been well studied, appropriate vocabulary learned and genuine balanced opinions formed. There were some very good essays at the upper end which showed maturity of thought as well as idiomatic and accurate language usage. These essays were characterised by a high level of accuracy and a wide range of vocabulary and structures as well as a clear and well-reasoned argument. There were also a number of candidates who struggled to convey their ideas due to less secure linguistic knowledge. In responses at the lower end of the range, the argument was often unclear and rather thin; expression tended to be clumsy, with some reliance on anglicisms and hispanisms.

This year there were some very long essays in excess of 600 words. In some cases this was counterproductive for candidates as it meant that more language errors accrued and arguments became repetitive and rambling.

Common errors in the essay section involved:

- incorrect genders of common words such as *public, crime, pays, manque, crise, problème, mode de vie, service, effet, compte*
- confusion of *ou* and *où*
- misspellings such as *personnellement, agressif, néanmois, environnement, renouvelable, traditionnel, gouvernement, constatation, alcol, croissance*
- numerous accent errors such as *société, menace, existé, créés* (past participle), *achété, technologie*, and random accents on words such as *interventions* and *expression*
- anglicisms such as *actuellement (en fait), espace (place), change (changement), stage (étape), définitivement, à l'autre main, par faisant qch*
- use of *mieux* for *meilleur*, *mal* for *mauvais*, *bien* for *bon*
- problems with discriminating between the forms of *leur* and *leurs* such as *leur enfants, leurs donner*
- phonetic spellings as in *car* for *quand*, *ce* for *c'est*, *ses* for *ces* and vice versa
- problems with the formation of reflexive verbs, particularly *se rendre compte* in *nous* form

- paragraphs starting with inappropriate link words such as *aussi*, *ensuite*, *alors*
- over-use of the word *chose/choses* and *cela*
- incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Comments on Specific Questions

Part I: Discursive Essay

Overall, candidates appeared to have understood the major implications of the questions set. Most candidates were able to offer some genuine personal insights into the topics.

In general, candidates need to consider carefully their opening paragraph as it is this which sets the tone and parameters of the argument. A definition of the terms involved in the question also helps to set the essay off in the right direction. It is, however, important that candidates do not make extravagant claims in their introduction which they cannot then fulfil.

Many candidates planned their work effectively. There were a few instances of candidates listing a number of pre-learned phrases to incorporate into their essays, and the resulting essays tended not to read well, as candidates' own ideas were often expressed in very much less accurate and sophisticated language. In some essays, there was unnecessary over-use of the subjunctive, leading to forced and clumsy expressions where a simpler structure would have been more appropriate.

Question 1

- (a) **La croissance incessante de la population mondiale est le plus grand défi pour la planète. Discutez de cette affirmation.**

This was the most popular question. A wide range of answers were given, and in general candidates had plenty to say on the topic. Most tried to ensure their responses targeted the specific question asked, and were able to reach a conclusion on the issue. Some candidates were of the opinion that growth in the world population was indeed the greatest challenge, while others felt that more important challenges are posed by, for example, global warming, the apathy of the developed world, shortage of energy sources and the inequalities in the world. Many candidates, having discussed the other challenges, then tied them to the size of the population saying it was one of the major factors underlying all these other challenges. Candidates mentioned the amount of waste produced in the world and the dangers to the environment of deforestation to build houses or to create areas for crop production. It was also felt that more people would mean fewer jobs to go round, more poverty and inequality and thus more violence and crime. Some candidates quoted Malthus's views on population and felt that eventually population growth would be balanced out by wars and famines. Many candidates mentioned China's one child policy as a way forward; others felt that this was a serious infringement of human rights. It was also felt that there was a discrepancy between the developed and developing worlds. Overall, essays were interesting and insightful.

- (b) **On dit qu'Internet a eu un effet dévastateur sur les relations interpersonnelles et professionnelles. Êtes-vous d'accord?**

This was the second most popular question. Candidates were invited to discuss the effect of the Internet on relationships both personal and professional. The answers mostly demonstrated the view that the Internet is good in some ways but harmful in others. Most candidates came to the conclusion that with all its faults we could not now imagine a world without the Internet. Some candidates discussed the positives and negatives of the Internet without making sufficient reference to the terms in the question. The argument needed to be clearly focused on the impact of the Internet on relationships and how our relationships might be changing as a result of our dependence on the computer screen and smartphone. It was generally felt that the positive impact was seen in the ability to keep in touch with friends and family overseas. Candidates also wrote about Internet dating, and about the advantages of the Internet for the business world. Some of the disadvantages mentioned included the loss of face to face contact; the implications of not being able to see body language and facial expression; the loss of privacy with personal details visible on social media sites; cyber-bullying. There were also some interesting views on the creation of a kind of virtual persona which was out of step with one's real personality. There were some very good essays; those that were more general in nature and described rather than analysed did less well.

(c) La caractéristique la plus importante chez un individu, c'est une attitude positive. Partagez-vous ce point de vue?

Fewer candidates chose to answer this question. Those who attempted this question were clear that a positive outlook was an important factor in being liked and making a success of life. Positive people are doers who make things happen and take others along with them. They felt that optimism was a characteristic that would allow society to move forward rather than stagnating. They saw that it is essential to see the positives when difficult situations are encountered and that a positive viewpoint enables groups of people to work together in times of crisis. Many pointed out that it is not always possible to be positive and that other characteristics might be equally important such as kindness, altruism, empathy and generosity. Overall, candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the parameters of the question, and made a very personal response.

(d) Selon vous, la violence urbaine est-elle le produit de la pauvreté ou bien de la criminalité?

This was a popular question and there were marks across the whole range. Candidates made reference particularly to the *émeutes* in Paris and the riots and looting in London. There were some very sophisticated answers which showed the links between poverty and criminality and violence. Candidates had many opinions on the subject and some drew on first-hand knowledge. Many felt that poverty was the main factor in urban violence linked to poor living conditions, lack of education and a sense of injustice and inequality. Some felt that young men were the main offenders and this was because they were bored, had no outlet for their physical powers and spent too long playing violent video games like Grand Theft Auto, which make violence seem ordinary. Racial and religious tension, gangs and drugs were also considered as factors. Some wrote about how frustration with the forces of order and with police procedures such as stop and search is leading to willingness to participate in violent uprisings. Consideration was also given in some essays to views that there is a lack of a moral code among certain groups and they actually like violence and are criminals. Most candidates handled the subject well, balancing the possible causes of violence and coming to a reasoned conclusion. Less strong responses tended to make black and white statements, for example, that unemployment leads to criminality and violence.

**(e) « Nous n'avons plus de choix ; les compagnies publicitaires dirigent tous nos achats.»
Qu'en pensez-vous?**

Fewer candidates attempted this question about the power of advertising in the modern world and the extent to which we have a free and unbiased choice of what to buy. Those who attempted it gave a balanced response suggesting that although advertising is omnipresent in all forms of media and therefore unavoidable, we still have a modicum of control over what we purchase. They described successful advertising campaigns which had increased sales of products such as the iPhone and McDonalds meals, but noted that for most products, people saw advertising and then measured products against each other to get the best deal or the best product for their specific needs. Candidates felt that in the end the choice belonged to the consumer.

Part II: Usage

Exercise 1

This exercise was generally well understood by candidates with most achieving between 3 and 5 marks. The discriminating question was **Question 6**. Incorrect answers included:

Se levons
Nous levons
Se levant
S'est levant
S'étant lever
Nous levants

Exercise 2

This exercise tested a range of grammatical points. Few candidates achieved full marks but most achieved 3 or 4 out of 5. The following incorrect answers were seen:

Question 7 – *dans lequel, de qu', ou*

Question 8 – *les idées qui étaient, les idées qui sont, ses idées étaient*

Question 9 – *n'a que payé, n'a payé pour seulement, n'a payes qu'*

Question 10 – *a été réuni, ont été réunir, étaient tous réuni*

Question 11 – *s'inquiètent, s'inquiéter, l'inquiètent, l'inquiétait*

Exercise 3

Candidates of all abilities achieved good marks on this exercise, showing that they had understood both the content and grammatical structure of the passage. **Questions 17, 20 and 29** were some of the clearer discriminators although incorrect answers were spread across the whole piece.

FRENCH

Paper 9779/04
Topics and Texts

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- read the question with care and think about what they are asked to do
- plan their answer and organise their material with close attention to the question
- take care to include analysis and argument, and avoid simply retelling the story.

General comments

Overall, candidates performed well in this examination and there were some outstanding essays.

In **Part I**, most candidates struck an effective balance in the discussion of two texts/films. Most answers engaged well with the terms of the questions, and the best answers made impressive use of detailed knowledge of the texts/films as supporting evidence for their argument. There was a tendency for weaker responses to be driven by narrative rather than argument. A few candidates wrote on all three texts, which tended to weaken the effectiveness of their argument.

In general, candidates seemed comfortable writing extensively in the target language. The quality of language ranged from satisfactory to very good, and quite sophisticated vocabulary and syntax were often used. The handling of verbs was mostly secure, and there was a tendency to use the present tense. In some scripts, use of a wider range of vocabulary and more complex sentence patterns would have raised the level of performance. With regard to accuracy of language, the most frequent area of weakness was the use of object pronouns (usually *lui* for *le* or *la*, or vice versa).

The strongest answers in **Part II** showed an excellent ability to organise material in direct reference to the terms of the question. They also showed great command of detail of the texts studied and made thoughtful and convincing arguments. Most candidates structured their work well, taking care to define the terms of the question and providing a clear introduction and conclusion.

Performance in the discursive questions was generally consistent and a number of candidates showed excellent analytical ability. Less strong responses sometimes adopted a one-sided approach rather than weighing up alternative arguments; this tendency was seen most frequently in answers on *L'Étranger*.

The majority of candidates who attempted the commentary questions seemed well prepared for the requirements of this type of question. Stronger answers were able to make convincing cases by close analysis of the text. They would then go on to widen the perspective to show how such elements were evident elsewhere in the work, or to show how such a theme or character developed. A few candidates made use of the line numbers to facilitate detailed discussion.

In weaker performances, candidates sometimes seemed less familiar with the requirements of the commentary exercise and used the passage as a springboard for a wider, more general essay which did not target the question fully. There were also instances of weaker candidates taking a more basic narrative approach to the passage rather than analysing it.

Part I: Cultural Topics

Question 1A

Answers to this question were generally thoughtful and well argued, and candidates were well-equipped to discuss the presentation of childhood in these works. A small number of candidates entirely agreed with the

affirmation: they gave examples of the presentation of the happiness of childhood without considering any evidence to the contrary. Quite a few answers disagreed strongly with the title and concentrated on pointing out all the problems and difficulties, such as guilt, shame and jealousy, which cast shadows in characters' childhood. There was a marked tendency to focus on the male protagonists. The bulk of material centred on what Momo and Phil had in common. Fewer candidates exploited opportunities to discuss differences between them.

Answers on *Le Blé en herbe* were generally sound, but tended to focus on Phil's physical relationship with Mme Dalleray and his friendship with and feelings towards Vinca. Stronger answers examined both teenagers' reaction to Mme Dalleray, especially the emotional turmoil and degrees of self-awareness. Answers on the film were generally convincing, though quite a few considered individual episodes in Thomas's childhood without demonstrating awareness of the film's narrative structure, its moving between adult and child viewpoints and the effect on the audience. Discussions on *La Vie devant soi* tended to dwell on Momo's life in a socially deprived area and the challenges he faced in looking after Mme Rosa. The argument that Momo was no longer happy after Mme Rosa died did not seem to take into account his previous struggles or the sense of humour with which he approached things. Examples of his 'cheerful' innocence and ignorance in the text were underdeveloped. Good answers gave a balanced judgement on moments of innocence (e.g. Arthur, Super), set against the considerable moral and economic challenges of Belleville.

Question 1B

This was a popular question. Answers were generally clearly argued, and analysis was ably supported by close reference to the source material. Whilst most answers considered the different adults and their roles, some candidates chose to interpret the question by the development of characters from children or adolescents into adulthood. For *Le Blé en herbe*, good answers discussed both the parents, *les Ombres*, and Mme Dalleray. All candidates were happy to look at the emotional and psychological effect of Phil's relationship with Mme Dalleray, but only the more perceptive ones considered his relationship with his parents and the importance of it for the text. The film produced some thoughtful analysis of Thomas's development and self-analysis before and after his father's death, and telling references (such as his reaction to his father going to work, or the leitmotif of the song 'Boum') were included in good answers. Similarly there were good points made about the old people's home and the inmates' effect on Thomas. Less well handled was the relationship between Thomas and the adult Kant, especially the significance of Evelyne. Very few answers considered the role of Thomas's mother. Discussion of *La Vie devant soi* was generally well handled. Pride of place was given to Mme Rosa, and how the relationship between her and Momo is one of mutual dependency. Stronger answers gave proper consideration to a number of the other adults (M. Hamil, Dr Katz, Nadine, le Mahout, even Momo's father) and how their interaction with Momo is important. Only the best answers commented that the adults are not well drawn psychological portraits, but are opportunities for Momo to interact with and to reflect on adult life, and are exploited as a source of humour.

Question 2A

This was a popular question, and the majority of candidates chose to compare the two films. In a number of answers, it was argued that the two films gave diametrically opposed views of teachers, the School of Petite Feuille being drawn entirely negatively and Marin's pedagogy being wholly positive. More perceptive answers pointed to a more complex picture, pointing out, for example, that Petite Feuille was only one (admittedly authoritarian) influence in Antoine's development, and were able to call on effective illustration of points. The quality of discussion of *Entre les murs* was often linked to the range of references to the film. Good answers considered not only what went on inside the classroom (work ethic, candidates' attitudes, discipline) but also incidents in the staff room and the disciplinary committee, in order to build up a complex picture. There was some promising treatment of Pennac, but references to the text were limited.

Question 2B

Here, too, the majority of candidates chose to compare the two films. Answers ranged from a completely negative assessment of candidates' experiences in the films to a more nuanced analysis pointing out elements of a more positive interpretation, especially the case in *Entre les murs*. Some candidates argued for a completely pessimistic reading of *Les 400 coups* and an entirely uplifting message in *Entre les murs*, contrasting the authoritarian classes of 1959 with the more open and inclusive approach to teaching in 2008. The knowledge of the films was usually good, and well-argued answers tended to include a broad range of references beyond the standard descriptions of Souleymane's treatment and the punishments handed out by Petite Feuille. It is perhaps not surprising that most answers discussed the question from the candidates'

point of view. Some answers made a useful distinction between the years in which the films were made and also considered the different environments, ethnic make up and expectations by School and families. Candidates generally engaged well with the discussion, and many demonstrated very good analytical vocabulary to make their case.

Question 3A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 3B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 4A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 4B

There was a tendency for candidates to write general essays on 'Identity', often offering explanations about the *Bildungsroman* genre, with illustrations from the text and film, but which were not well tailored to the question. In some cases, clearly relevant material was sandwiched between general introductions and conclusions about identity. Candidates showed good knowledge of the works, though what was understood by 'identité' was not always made clear in their answers. There was some confusion, for example, between the concept of identity and the emptiness of the private life of characters.

Question 5A

All responses to this question were based on the two plays. Candidates showed a good knowledge of the texts and also showed some knowledge of the intellectual background which informed the action. Essays tended to be well balanced, indicating ways in which 'les révolutionnaires évoquent le respect' and '...le mépris' in turn. Candidates often came to a successful conclusion that one or the other of these was dominant. Many candidates discussed and compared the actions and motivation of Hoederer, Hugo and Kaliayev with varying degrees of narration and analysis. Better discussion was often generated with references to the role and function of additional characters in the plays.

Question 5B

Many candidates chose to answer this question. Responses tended either to be full and persuasive, or to grasp only some of the implications. Some candidates focused exclusively on the word *justifiée*, confining themselves to justifying elements or evaluating (un)just characters. Some pointed out diversity in the motivations of, for example, Dora. Candidates held a range of opinions as to whether Slick and Georges' joining the party to escape hunger was *une motivation justifiée*. Others considered whether types of motivation could be justified, either by people, or intrinsically by what they were. There was some understanding of the intellectual background of the plays, and quite a few answers considered existentialism; however, only the stronger essays considered the concept of *mauvaise foi* effectively by relating it to different characters. Occasionally candidates showed increasing awareness of the fuller implications of the question as their essays progressed. Excellent answers responded to the *jusqu'à quel point* aspect of the question from the outset: they placed the revolutionaries' motivations on a spectrum and explained the extent to which the motivation was justified to one side and not to the other.

Part II: Literary Texts

Question 6A

Candidates found fertile ground in the rhyming couplets to make a good number of pertinent observations about the form and content of the material. At the higher end of the range, answers demonstrated seasoned commentary skills and a thorough knowledge of Racinian language technique. Overall, candidates were able to conduct mature discussions of the passage, commanding sophisticated literary vocabulary including 'prolepsis' and 'peripeteia'. The word 'ultimatum' in the question was sometimes overlooked by candidates, even in the more sophisticated responses.

Question 6B

Most candidates began with a detailed explanation of Aristotle's unities. Most answers were illustrated with a variety of references to the text. In a few responses, candidates made no specific references to the play apart from naming one or two characters.

Question 6C

Candidates demonstrated knowledge of primary and secondary literature (principally *Odette de Mourgues*); however, not all were able to apply their knowledge so successfully to the question. In weaker responses, 'Exalted status' tended to be limited to 'royal lineage' where perhaps more could have been made of 'noble character' and the 'moral framework'. Some answers depicted Andromaque's vulnerability as of a different sort from others, even a 'more exalted' type. Some candidates placed disproportionate emphasis on vulnerability, alongside exemplification of other themes such as 'love'. Stronger answers made more of the *contrast* between characters' exalted status and their vulnerability.

Question 7A

Candidates who answered this question showed a good knowledge of the play and were able to place it accurately in context and point to the function and role of the three characters. Most candidates engaged effectively with the task and analysed the passage, giving precise references in their analysis. However, a few candidates approached the task as a general essay on the points developed in the passage, rather than as a commentary exercise. Most candidates demonstrated an understanding of the subject being harpooned and the comic predictability of the piece. The strongest answers also mentioned notions of comic inflexibility and incongruity. More perceptive answers also analysed how the comic effects are achieved and how the caricatured characters ensure that pathos is avoided. Only a few responses explored the comedy of language with regard to Philaminte's exaggerated disapproval of Chrysale's attitudes and his disregard for refinement.

Question 7B

In general, candidates showed a sound awareness of the comic situation presented in the play, and pointed to the obsessive nature of the *femmes savantes* in their delusional fantasy world. Whilst a number of answers contained a more catch-all approach to comedy and comic techniques, many answers kept the subject in view and showed thorough knowledge of the characters. Good answers were able to explore the background to Molière's play, drawing attention to the difference between the genuine *précieuses* and those who have a distorted and unrealistic view of education.

Question 7C

Responses to this question showed a good grasp of the play, and candidates were able to draw on plenty of material to illustrate predictability. A number of answers simply listed examples of where predictable things took place, whereas better answers examined how predictability could contribute to the comedy of the play. There was analysis of the interaction of different types of character (e.g. Philaminte and Chrysale). Much was made of the domineering personality of the one and the weakness of the other. Fewer essays dealt effectively with their comically obsessive and diametrically opposed preoccupations. A number of candidates recounted the dismissal of Martine and the argument over Henriette's marriage, but only the best answers focused on the comic contrast between Chrysale's confidence before the event and his predictable collapse in his wife's presence. There was awareness of the comedy of language as part of the characters' armoury. Again, the comedy over Martine's language howler eclipsed Philaminte's exaggerated disapproval of Chrysale's attitudes and his disregard for refinement. Few essays went beyond these points to mention notions of comic inflexibility, predictability and incongruity; this would have raised the evaluative content of their analysis.

Question 8A

This commentary exercise was very well handled by candidates. Answers showed a very good grasp of the themes and language of the poem, and analysis was often thoughtfully developed with appropriate reference to the broader context of the collection. The standard of analysis and engagement was high. Sophisticated vocabulary enabled candidates to discuss the poem concisely, using precise terms such as 'metapoetry' and 'the nature topos', quoting individual words and whole phrases to make a large number of relevant points, e.g. lines 3-4 the anaphora of 'par delà'; line 5 the enjambement of 'mon esprit'. Themes such as creative inspiration and the world of surrounding gloom were covered with confidence. Candidates identified the upwards motion from the beginning and the 'lexical field of flight' (aile, alouettes, cieux). Good answers

worked their way through the extract systematically, and anchored their points with pertinent illustrations from the passage.

Question 8B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 8C

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 9A

Responses showed a good understanding of the context. Candidates who attempted this exercise were generally aware of the nature of the task and were able to make useful observations about Charles, Homais and Emma. Good answers were able to analyse the significance of the decisions and actions of Charles and Homais, and show that these added to the general picture of futility, incomprehension and incompetence which has been painted in the novel. Only the strongest answers showed an awareness of the author's irony or treatment of his characters.

Question 9B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 9C

Answers showed a sound understanding of the implications of the question. The strongest answers were well structured and reached a clear conclusion supported by relevant evidence. In weaker answers, episodes seemed to be selected from the novel in a random order; there was also a tendency to take a narrative approach. The best answers referred to incidents in order to demonstrate their significance with regard to the question. They were able to show that Flaubert's intolerance of mediocrity and stupidity in provincial bourgeois society was echoed in the presentation of characters such as Charles, Homais, Rodolphe and Lheureux. Many answers suggested that the treatment of Emma was similarly irremediably negative.

Question 10A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 10B

The question elicited a range of responses, all of which showed a satisfactory or good knowledge of the text and of the *fête étrange* in particular. Less convincing answers steered a narrative path through the episode; others fixed more analytically on elements of dream and reality, though not always succeeding in providing firm textual evidence for their assertions. It would have been helpful in a number of answers to identify which elements specifically contribute to the evocation of the dream-like atmosphere and how reality combines or connects with them. Many candidates referred thoughtfully to the roles of Frantz and Yvonne; an example such as Meaulnes's silk waistcoat was often mentioned, but the link between its appearance in the *fête* and then in School was not always fully developed. Only very good answers considered the author's intention behind this blurred distinction.

Question 10C

Candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the text in their answers. Most sought to show how Meaulnes's assessment of Frantz was a source of admiration, and many pointed, for example, to the wild Romantic figure with a *bandeau* and the pact of friendship. There was also pertinent discussion of the different relationships with Valentine. A number of responses ended at this point. Stronger answers went on to flesh out a fuller picture of Frantz, especially his selfishness and over-indulgence, and were able to contrast Seurel's assessment of Frantz with that of Meaulnes.

Question 11A

Whilst a number of candidates analysed the passage systematically as required, there were also some instances of candidates using the extract as the starting point for a general essay. Most candidates were

able to situate the passage in context, though there were some misinterpretations of the opening line. The roles of Robert and Hubert were dealt with adequately; the reference to Isa often led to quite a broad discussion of her role in the novel rather than keeping a focused analysis of her words in context. The references to Marie and Ardoin were picked up successfully by most, though only very good answers were able to relate these to the self-questioning and nascent spiritual awakening of Louis. In the strongest responses, candidates related the characters mentioned to the thoughts and judgement of Louis, in particular the sense of hypocrisy, associated with Hubert's *geste pieux*, and significance of the *modiste*. Some very good commentaries also considered the narrative style of the extract.

Question 11B

There were some impressive answers to this question. Those candidates who chose to write about the importance of communication were able to refer to episodes which influenced Louis's development and attitudes: all considered the impact of Rodolphe and of preconceived attitudes and misunderstanding of Isa and the wider family. Good answers also included analysis of Louis's youth, and some mentioned the irony of his choice of profession, given the high importance of communication for a barrister. Perceptive answers also showed awareness of the novel's form, Louis's self-confessed need for dialogue and the expression of remorse for a life largely wasted. Some candidates approached the question in a generalised way, thus neglecting to 'discuss the significance of Louis's comment with regard to his own life'.

Question 11C

There was a broad range of responses to this question. Whilst it was competently handled by many, there were some candidates who did not pin down adequately what hypocrisy is, or who interpreted hypocrisy as any negative feeling by a character. Candidates were on the whole able to illustrate discussion with good examples of religious hypocrisy in the novel, with Isa and the middle class singled out for consideration. Good answers were able to take into account Louis's judgment of events and people and show that the theme of hypocrisy is refracted through his vision to enable him to feel that he is, if not superior, at least *le moins mauvais*.

Question 12A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 12B

There were solid answers to this question. All candidates showed good knowledge of the different teachers and could write about the role and treatment of them in the family. Very good answers did not simply enumerate the different characters and consider the social and moral attitudes of M and Mme Rezeau, but went on to explore what role they played as a whole in the narrative.

Question 12C

Answers to this question were of a good or very good standard, were cogently argued and well-illustrated. Candidates were thorough in analysing Mme Rezeau's attitudes and behaviour, cataloguing her desire to dominate, control and punish. The essays also considered Brasse-Bouillon's increasing emotional dependency on his mother in terms of his obsession with outwitting her and taking vengeful action. Many were perceptive in recognising that Brasse-Bouillon did regard her combative ability with a sense of admiration, especially after the attempted drowning incident. The best answers also took account of the effect of this obsession on his psychological development, and successfully indicated that the quotation's significance is borne out not only in the narrative but also in the long-term damage it did to the adolescent boy.

Question 13A

Candidates attempting the commentary exercise showed a good understanding of the major themes of the book and were able to put the passage into context. Some answers tended to narrate the content of the passage and offer limited analysis. Stronger answers analysed the passage in detail and effectively brought out the contrast between the examining magistrate's expectations and Meursault's lack of conformity to societal 'norms'. Very good answers were also able to comment on the style of the passage.

Question 13B

Answers portrayed effectively Meursault's indifference in part one of the text, though some candidates' analysis stopped here. Candidates pointed to the lack of signs of emotional engagement both with regard to his mother's death and to his relationship with Marie. Only a few candidates observed that there was no evidence that Meursault never loved his mother, nor that he was entirely devoid of feelings. Most answers went on to examine his attitude to imprisonment and trial and the seeming distance between him and events. Many examined the effect on the reader of Meursault's indifference and lethargy, quite a few concluding with agreement with the quotation in the question. There were good answers which wholeheartedly rejected the suggestion in the question that the reader is left indifferent, offering various explanations for which the reader retains interest. The reader's lack of indifference to Meursault and to his indifference, and the evolution and limitations of that indifference, were covered. Good answers considered the narrative style and its role in evoking 'indifference'. More perceptive answers also gave consideration to the negative feelings Camus wished to evoke about the conventions of society and those who regard their contravention as immoral or criminal.

Question 13C

Candidates were able to draw on good knowledge of the text and analyse the various witnesses in the trial. There were a few candidates who interpreted the question as the role of witnesses in any trial, and gave limited consideration to the way in which the witnesses are orchestrated in this text. Whilst a number of answers tended to the descriptive, many were perceptive in considering that the witnesses for the prosecution build up a picture of an insensitive man, a *monstre moral*, which plays as important a role in the text as the circumstances of the shooting. Good answers went on to consider the witnesses for the defence who turn out to be unimpressive for the court. Only a few scripts acknowledged that the way in which the character's unconventional behaviour and attitudes are perceived as a threat to society could be read as an indictment of that society, rather than of Meursault.