

Examiners' Report Summer 2009

GCSE

GCSE Applied French (2701/3701/3702)

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CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

Introduction

This first year of the live specification (following the pilot) saw an increase in entries across all units.

The following codes apply to papers :

- 5751 Applied Oral Communication in a specialist context
- 5752 Applied Written Communication in a specialist context
- 5753 Understanding Applied Oral Communication
- 5754 Understanding Applied Written Communication

Performance in the Oral was similar, and in the Writing better, than in previous years.

The Principal Examiner, Principal Moderator and Chair of Examiners compared papers and candidates' work from last year with the equivalent from the current year. Evidence indicates that the level of demand was comparable in the two years. Close comparison was also made between Applied French GCSE and qualifications 1226/3226 ('traditional' GCSE French). Again, very high levels of comparability were in evidence.

Centres provided candidates with a variety of tasks across the three specialist contexts and these were used by candidates to show capability within the spoken language in both the interactions and presentations.

5751/01 Interaction

Centres should ensure that they act upon information provided in the specification and by Edexcel throughout the year. All centres were required to provide 3 recordings for each candidate in the sample, plus those for the highest and lowest scoring candidates if not part of the original sample. One of these recordings should take place within the examination window notified to centres via the website and to examination officers.

The best tasks were as authentic as possible and allowed candidates to show spontaneity within the interaction. These were interactions that were not too prescriptive and allowed the candidate to use their own material in addition to that within the stimulus. This required skilful questioning by teacher-examiners as part of the interaction but also allowed the candidates to take the initiative and manipulate the language to make it their own. Candidates should be encouraged to master the framing of questions as a natural part of the interaction rather than just an afterthought. It is important for centres to realise that too similar interactions, questioning and a lack of unpredictable elements prevents candidates from reaching their potential and the higher mark bands.

Candidates, in less successful tasks, often had little or no opportunity to use a variety of tenses or structures. Weaker candidates were often very reliant on the vocabulary and structures of the teacher-examiner and produced little of their own language.

Centres should be aware of a list of points (see 'Administration' section below) that must be covered, as failure to do so will affect the successful completion of the task and therefore the marks of the candidate will be affected. Wording such as *you may wish to include* is recommended.

Successful stimulus material was fairly brief or a series of pictures. All three interactions should be of roughly equal length and relate to the same specialist context.

Too often, very similar work was seen across a whole centre including the questioning of the teacher-examiner and responses of the candidates. Centres are reminded that candidates are expected to be able to respond to unpredictable elements and to take the initiative in order to reach the higher mark bands. These should follow the responses of individual candidates rather than be the same for all.

Assessment

Centres were generous in their marking on the whole, but consistently so, overvaluing the performance of candidates in both communication and application of language. Too much credit was given to work that was over reliant on the stimulus and to work that was pedestrian or formulaic. Centres must take into account how a

candidate takes the initiative within the task rather than just respond to a series of questions or go through a list of tasks from the stimulus. Work that shows a real flair and a sophistication of ideas, opinions, structure and vocabulary is needed to reach the highest mark band for communication.

Centres must take into consideration the amount of ambiguity produced by poorly formed verbs, inaccurate tenses and repetition of structures and vocabulary when awarding marks for application of language. There needs to be evidence of subordination and a greater complexity of language to reach the 4 mark band.

Centres are reminded that tenses should be integral to the task rather than an afterthought, and candidates encouraged to take the initiative to ask questions during the interaction at appropriate points. Candidates score more highly where a variety of tenses and structures are used throughout the interaction rather than bunched at the end.

5751/02 Presentation and Follow-up questions

Most centres chose an appropriate topic related to the specialist context. Unfortunately, there were a number of centres where this was not the case and no marks could be credited for the Presentation element of the test. However this did not prevent them from gaining marks for the follow-up questions, application of language and accuracy sections which were marked as normal so as to give them maximum opportunity to score. Centres are reminded of the applied nature of the specification and simply choosing 'my holiday', for example, is not appropriate as a topic.

There were, however, some excellent topics chosen which truly kept to the applied nature describing amongst other titles, information about ferry and airlines, music festivals and tourism in general. Centres are also reminded that the topic chosen should not overlap with topics chosen for the written communication element. The new individual learner record sheets for both the oral and written communication require all titles to be written down and this should prevent any overlap.

There was again this year much evidence of rote learning of the presentation. This resulted in some poorly pronounced pieces of work with poor intonation and these candidates often did not seem to understand what they were saying.

Moderators are looking at how candidates are able to manipulate language to make it their own. Very similar work was seen across a whole centre, often when the presentation had been prepared about work experience, a local leisure topic or something similar. The delivery where this was the case was often less confident as the candidate did not have ownership of the work.

Centres should be aware that candidates are only allowed to take into the examination room notes which consist of no more than 30 words and which fit on to an A5 piece of paper. They may be in the form of bullet points or spider diagrams or illustrative material providing the word count is adhered to.

The follow-up questions and answers should be relevant to the specialist context rather than a general question and answer exercise. It should be as natural a dialogue as possible, building on the responses of the candidate rather than just a list

of questions that all candidates are required to answer. The most successful questioning picked up on points made during the presentation before becoming more general within the specialist context.

All too often the questions were similar for all candidates. These questions should be appropriate to the ability of the candidate. More able candidates should be given the opportunity to offer a variety of tenses and a range of structures and vocabulary using more complex language in response to a variety of question forms.

Centres are reminded that they should adhere to the requirements of the specification in terms of timing. Candidates are able to score highly within the 1-2 minutes for each part of the presentation and follow-up questions, 2-4 minutes in total.

Assessment

Although the presentations were once again marked out of 30 in total, there was a change in the assessment criteria in 2008 and the marks awarded for each section. This was communicated to centres by email and via the Edexcel website: <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse-leg/lang/gcse-ap-french/Pages/default.aspx>. It is important that all centres are aware of the latest changes to procedures and these criteria. A significant number of centres overvalued the performance of candidates but consistently so and there was evidence of internal standardisation at the majority of centres. Too much credit was given to presentations that were pedestrian without a highly confident delivery and these usually lacked any form of intonation appropriate to the higher mark bands.

Centres are reminded that in order to access the higher mark bands for communication in the follow-up questions candidates are expected to show real flair and a sophistication of ideas, opinions, structure and vocabulary, responding to a variety of question types.

For Application of Language, centres must take into consideration the amount of ambiguity produced by poorly formed verbs, inaccurate tenses and repetition of structures and vocabulary. Tenses used as an afterthought, rather than integral to the piece, are unlikely to gain the candidate high marks. It is also essential that the candidate is able to offer a variety of forms of subordination appropriate to the task.

For accuracy, in order to reach the higher mark bands more complex language needs to be used rather than just the absence of error. It should be noted that most verbs will need to be correct in order to reach the top two mark bands. Centres should also be aware that poor pronunciation will also be a bar to higher marks as it contributes to errors.

Application of Language and Accuracy are marked globally across the presentation and follow-up questions and answers. If a candidate is unable to respond to the same level across both, these marks will be affected.

Administration

Although most centres complied, a significant number did not follow the requirements that were sent to centres, are in the specification and also posted on the website. This invariably delayed the moderation process.

Centres are reminded that the interactions and presentations may have different candidates requested for moderation and are asked to take note of this. Similarly, the work of the highest- and lowest- marked candidates must be included in the sample sent to moderators even if not selected by Edexcel. No other candidates' work should be sent to moderators.

All stimulus materials must be sent with the recordings. Failure to do so will result in delays to the moderation.

All materials must be packed carefully to ensure that they are not damaged in the post.

It is most helpful if performances are recorded on CD but if not, that each candidate is recorded on separate cassettes with the interactions on one side and presentations on the other.

All cassette or CD inserts and boxes should have the candidates' names and numbers in order to help the moderation process.

Deadlines for receipt by moderators should be adhered to in order to ensure that results can be issued in August. Failure to do so may result in final results being delayed.

Invariably comments such as these highlight the complications that sometimes occur in the moderation process. However moderators wish to thank the centres who carried out the requirements of the specification successfully.

A checklist is included below to help centres.

- Deadlines for the submission of coursework to Moderators and marks entered on the Edexcel Online website should be adhered to. Failure to do so may result to a delay in the issue of results to centres
- The EDI forms must be completed and signed by teachers to authenticate the work produced by candidates. Unauthenticated work cannot be moderated and will score 0
- The latest version of record forms, available on the Edexcel website (<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse-leg/lang/gcse-ap-french/Pages/default.aspx>), should be used
- Only the work requested for the sample needs to be sent to the moderator. The sample should include the work of the highest- and lowest-marked candidates, even if not requested
- The record sheets should include the centre number, candidate number and be signed by the teacher and the candidate where appropriate
- The record sheets should contain accurate titles of the pieces of work undertaken
- Addition of marks should be carefully checked
- Candidates' work should not be annotated in any way
- The sample should be arranged in candidate number order

- All pieces of paper should include centre number and candidate name and number
- Work should ideally be presented in a plastic wallet or similar
- Stimulus and reference material should be submitted - not references to pages in a textbook or electronic stimuli
- When moderators request additional information or samples, these should be provided promptly
- When sending coursework through the post, centres should ensure that the full amount of postage is paid
- Work should be securely packaged using polybags to ensure safety of materials in the post
- Cassettes and CDs should be wrapped in bubble wrap or similar to avoid breakage
- When moderators point out anomalies and inaccuracies on CF1 forms, it is the responsibility of centres to inform Edexcel about any changed marks.

There was a pleasing cross-section of coursework tasks across the three specialist contexts and candidates were provided with imaginative stimuli in most centres enabling them to show capability within the written language.

Some centres used stimuli provided in the coursework guide and adapted them to suit their own candidates; others used their own stimuli. In either case centres are to be congratulated on the quality of the stimuli given.

Tasks

Tasks which were more successful allowed candidates to demonstrate linking, opinion and logical argument. These included an opportunity to use a variety of tenses, structures and vocabulary in each unit of work. Weaker candidates were able to write simple sentences and paragraphs without too much adherence to stimulus material.

There should be a wide variety of tasks available and candidates encouraged to produce different styles of writing.

Tasks should not be too prescriptive and a large list of bullet points to be covered is not helpful to candidates. Wording such as *You may wish to include some of the following points* is more appropriate.

Successful tasks included:

- Use of minimal stimulus, these were often a series of bullet points
- A region or specific town - description, history, opinions, reasons for visiting etc.
- A review of a film for more able candidates
- Creative and imaginative pieces of work
- Accounts of a work experience placement
- Account / review of a visit for a magazine

Tasks which were less successful did not encourage candidates to use more than one tense. Language was repetitive, with excessive reliance on the stimulus, and there was little standardisation of task choice within the centre.

Less successful tasks included:

- Fully prescriptive English stimulus
- Lists; labelling of pictures - for candidates who could do more than this
- Pieces with identified paragraphs which often prohibited linking
- Model letters - particularly letters of complaint or booking accommodation - these often produced little original language and restricted marks
- PowerPoint presentations- where there is repetition of structure and verbs
- CVs and letters of application - where little original language was used

Successful stimulus material was brief, often in the form of title plus a few bullet points. An increasing number of centres used past exam papers (Specification 1226 Paper 4) appropriate to the specialist context.

Some centres appeared unsure of the difference between stimulus and reference materials. The latter might include textbook pages or grammar worksheets, which help candidates with a particular piece of vocabulary or with a more complex structure. They become a problem when candidates copy whole chunks of language from them - and sometimes very similar work was seen across a whole centre. Moderators are looking to see how individual candidates manipulate the language to make it their own. A copy of all reference material must be submitted with the work.

It is quite possible to obtain good marks for work, which meets the specification demands: 350 - 700 words across the three pieces. The three should be of roughly equal length, including the pieces written under controlled conditions, and they should all relate to the same specialist context. It was pleasing to report that there were far fewer over-long pieces this year and centres are congratulated on their efforts concerning this.

Feedback should only be given in the form of general comments; the use of form CFS1, found on page 116 of the Specification, is designed for this purpose. There were a number of cases where candidates' first drafts were corrected by teachers. Drafts should be clearly identified and should be included with the sample. Moderators are instructed to ignore final drafts in those cases where first drafts have been marked with specific corrections. There should be no ticks or annotation on work submitted, first or final draft, and centres should not put marks on anything other than the CF1 frontsheet. A number of these this year were missing information and centres are asked to check all documentation thoroughly to ensure that all information, including accurate word counts and additions, is accurate.

An increasing number of candidates are using ICT when completing their coursework. They are however urged to check spellings carefully, especially accents, as accents missing do affect the accuracy of the final piece. There were a significant number of occasions when there was inconsistency in the production of ICT assisted work and the first draft which had been hand-written. Centres are however reminded that font size is important when producing brochures etc and they must be able to be read.

The use of Internet translation devices is not permitted, and centres must not authenticate work produced in this way. In general, moderators were impressed this year in standards of word-processed work.

Assessment

Centres are reminded that the assessment criteria changed in 2008 and although this was highlighted to centres, a number still marked to the old criteria which held up the moderation process despite this being the second year of the new criteria. Centres are encouraged to make sure they are aware of, and using, the latest forms by checking the Edexcel web site for documents made available to centres online (<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse-leg/lang/gcse-ap-french/Pages/default.aspx>).

Internal standardisation was usually successful. However centres are reminded that if internal standardisation is not rigorous, this may have the consequence of affecting the marks of all candidates within the centre.

The three marking grids provided in the specification were well used, although on many occasions too much credit was given to work copied from a stimulus, to pedestrian or formulaic work, and to work that was too short to meet the criteria. Centres must take into account both the length and type of task when awarding a mark for Communication and Content. Here too, the use of linking needs to be considered, and the extent to which the candidate expresses a logical argument. There was a tendency to award 9/10 when some logical argument was produced. However centres should be aware that only work that shows real flair and sophistication of ideas, opinions, structures and vocabulary can gain the highest communication marks.

Centres must give consideration to the amount of ambiguity produced by poorly formed verbs and repetition of structure, verbs and vocabulary when awarding marks under the heading of Knowledge and Application of Language. Tenses used as an afterthought, rather than being integral to the piece, are unlikely to help the candidate gain high marks here and in order to gain more than 3 marks there needs to be a wider range of vocabulary and structures, including subordinate clauses and pronouns, and description and opinion appropriate to the task.

In the Accuracy grid, centres are reminded that the majority of verb forms have to be correct in order to achieve three or more marks. The correct use of accents, for example on past participles, is crucial. Similarly there is an expectation of the use of more complex language, not simply the absence of error to gain four marks or more for Accuracy.

Administration

Although most centres were extremely helpful in following the requirements for the coursework that were in the Coursework Guide and in the Specification. There were various specific problems, and centres are asked to ensure that the following takes place:

- Deadlines for the submission of coursework to Moderators and marks entered on the Edexcel Online website should be adhered to. Failure to do so may result to a delay in the issue of results to centres
- The latest version of form CF1 (coursework front sheet) should be used
- Only the work requested for the sample needs to be sent to the moderator
- This should include the highest and lowest marks within the centre even if not in the original sample
- The record sheet should include the centre number, candidate number and be signed by the teacher and the candidate. Unauthenticated work cannot be moderated
- It should contain an accurate word count and titles of the pieces of work undertaken
- It should include the title of the oral presentation
- Addition of marks should be carefully checked
- Candidates' work should not be annotated in any way
- The sample should be arranged in candidate number order
- Work in the folder should be in the same order as on the front sheet
- There should be no loose pages - especially ones without a name
- All pieces of paper should include centre number and candidate name and number

- Work is ideally presented in a plastic wallet or similar. Paper clips should not be used
- Stimulus and reference material should be submitted - not references to pages in a textbook or electronic stimuli
- When moderators request additional information or folders, these should be provided promptly
- When sending coursework through the post, centres should ensure that the full amount of postage is paid
- Work should be securely packaged using polybags to ensure safety of materials in the post
- When moderators point out anomalies and inaccuracies on CF1 forms, it is the responsibility of centres to inform Edexcel about any changed marks.

Candidates generally performed well across the paper and there were some very good performances. Candidates were well prepared for the various test types. However, difficulty increases for weaker candidates when they have to listen to the whole extract, rather than identify single lexical items, and where they have a greater number of choices. The questions that were intended to discriminate did so.

Those items which did require the recognition of single lexical items or short phrases (Q1 *À l'avenir*, Q2 *En Ville*) were well done. In Q1 school subjects are well known, but *informatique* and *dessin* were less well known by the weakest candidates. In Q2, parts (c) *Je voudrais deux allers-retours pour Paris. C'est pour le train de 10h.* and (e) *Avez-vous un plan de la ville et une liste des monuments*, proved the most difficult for the weakest candidates.

Q3 *A Complaint at a Hotel* was in English and required candidates to tick 5 from 10 boxes. This question was well done and candidates seem well able to cope with this particular test type. Part 3 (a) proved difficult for weaker candidates who failed to link *J'ai réservé une chambre avec quatre lits et on a une chambre avec trois lits* with *There are not enough beds in the room.*

Q4 *Pour Louer une Voiture* proved difficult for weaker candidates who tend to tick an answer based on the first word they recognise without listening to the sentence as a whole. Distinguishing between *2/10/12 jours* (part bi) was difficult for weaker candidates, the same is also true of *15* and *16 juin /juillet* in part (c). Better candidates, however, performed well on this question.

Weaker candidates found the questions targeted at grades C and above demanding (Q5-8).

Q5 *Mes Intérêts* required careful listening to the whole and a recognition of tenses and the use of the negative. Again the performance of weaker candidates was characterised by ticking the answer containing the first word they recognised, e.g. upon hearing *Avant je nageais beaucoup mais maintenant je n'aime pas ça*, they incorrectly ticked answer K, on hearing *Quand j'étais petite j'adorais les jeux-vidéo mais ça ne m'intéresse plus* they incorrectly ticked answer F.

Q6 proved challenging with only the better candidates recognising familiar vocabulary in an unfamiliar context and correctly linking them with the appropriate answers, eg successfully linking *On avait une chambre tout en haut de l'hôtel, on était trois dans la chambre donc il n'y avait pas beaucoup de place*, with *le logement*, (F). Candidates should be trained to listen for key vocabulary linked to the answers eg in part (iv) the words *nettoyais (les chambres)*, *(les femmes de) ménage*, *je travaillais (dans le café)* to match with *le travail* (A)

Better candidates coped well with Q7 *Working in a Travel Agents*. Weaker candidates were unable to distinguish between the different points of view and again chose their answers based on the recognition of single lexical items rather than listening to the whole, eg on hearing *Pour certains le prix n'est pas important* (Laurine) they incorrectly matched her with part (ii) *Price is the deciding factor.*

This is also true of Q8 (*On organise une conférence dans un hôtel*). Better candidates performed well but answers by some candidates suggested guesswork. However, this type of question with limited choices, was generally accessible to candidates, all of whom felt confident to attempt the question.

It is important that candidates know that they should listen to each question at least twice, and from question 3 onwards listen to the whole extract. There is some evidence that some candidates do not do this but choose their answers, incorrectly, based on an initial hearing.

Improved candidate performance can be achieved by:

- careful reading of the questions
- sound knowledge of core vocabulary
- listening to the whole rather than homing in on individual words
- attention to detail
- applying logic
- checking all answers

Candidates were well prepared for the various test types and generally performed well across the paper as a whole.

The vocabulary for Q1 *Au Snack*, was accessible and many candidates scored full marks. Part 1(c) *oeuf (mayonnaise)* was possibly the most difficult item.

Q2, *Une demande d'emploi* proved difficult for many candidates, possibly because they failed to either read or understand the rubric. Weaker candidates looked at the words rather than the meaning, linking for example, *travail préféré* with *travailleuse*. Candidates would appear to have not understood common items of vocabulary such as *quand/ passe-temps*, in the question, which are in the minimum core vocabulary.

Q3 *Day Trips Out*, was generally well done with many candidates being able to identify the key elements in the text. Again individual items of vocabulary were less well known such as *déjeuner* in part (iii). Some candidates failed to match *jeux/ (les tout) petits* with *activities for children* in part (iv)

In Q4, *Mon iPhone*, some candidates failed to recognize familiar vocabulary in an unfamiliar context eg *c'est très simple, toucher* in part (a) to match with *l'utilisation, informations/ordinateur* in part (b) with *l'accès à l'internet*.

Q5 was well done by candidates who were able to identify the key elements in the text which corresponded to the correct answers, only better candidates were able to link *beau temps en permanence (La Côte d'Azur)* with (b).

Q6-8 proved challenging for weaker candidates and only the better candidates were able to demonstrate the understanding required at this level.

Q6, *Mon Apprentissage* required candidates to choose five correct sentences from ten and required careful reading of the text. For this type of question candidates need to be able to match the information in the text with paraphrased statements eg to match *(les autres employés)... ne se fâchent jamais contre moi même quand je fais des erreurs* with (h) *Les autres employés au garage sont très patients avec lui*. Candidates need to read the text as a whole before starting to answer questions and to not just tick the first answer containing a word they recognise from the text eg ticking answer (a) *Ses parents sont toujours contre sa décision de quitter le collège* because they see the word *parents* on the third line of the text. They also need to be aware of the use of negation to identify correct answers or eliminate incorrect answers eg (d) *Il ne parle pas d'autres langues* when he says in the text, *j'étudie l'anglais*.

Q7 and Q8 were challenging for weaker candidates and were good discriminators with only the better candidates scoring the higher marks. However, as with the listening paper these types of question with limited choices, were generally accessible to candidates, all of whom felt confident to attempt the questions. Both questions required careful reading and involved paraphrasing. In Q7 *Banning Cars from Town Centres*, the better candidates were able to distinguish between the different points of view. Again the performance of weaker candidates was characterised by ticking choices based on the recognition of single lexical items rather than from reading the

text as a whole eg matching *je suis asthmatique* (Claire) with answer (iv) *Pollution in town centres makes me ill* even though what she actually says is *Mais personnellement je n'ai jamais souffert de la pollution même si je suis asthmatique*.

Q8 *Mes passe-temps* proved challenging The number of choices increased the difficulty of the task and only the better candidates understood enough of the detail to answer this question well. Candidates did have to infer and to discriminate carefully between the choices, as is appropriate at this level, and again the recognition of single lexical items led many candidates to incorrect choices.

Improved candidate performance can be achieved by:

- careful reading of the questions and texts
- sound knowledge of core vocabulary
- reading the whole sentence/text rather than homing in on individual words
- attention to detail
- applying logic
- checking all answers

General Guidance to Centres

- Centres should use the Sample Assessment Materials available, together with the on-screen tests that were used in June 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 as practise tests to familiarise candidates with the format of the test questions that will be used next year.
- Centres should ensure that they use the most up-to-date information from Edexcel and that administration procedures follow the latest - rather than earlier - guidelines issued in earlier versions of the Specification. Since the launch of the pilot qualification, for example, there have been changes to the assessment criteria for oral components and the written coursework component. Some forms have also been updated. These changes took place prior to the 2008 examination series. Centres should ensure that the correct forms and assessment criteria are being used. The most up-to-date documents can be found on the Edexcel website: <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse-leg/lang/gcse-ap-french/Pages/default.aspx>
- Centres should note that they are required to record three interactions for the oral 5701/01 component to send to Edexcel for moderation (see section 5751/01 for further details).
- Centres should note the comments of the Principal Moderator for the Oral and written coursework components re: over reliance on stimulus material, pedestrian and formulaic approaches when devising assessment materials.

Statistics

5751

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw boundary mark	60	53	46	39	32	26	21	16	11	0
Uniform boundary mark	90	81	72	63	54	45	36	27	18	0

5752

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw boundary mark	60	51	45	39	34	27	21	15	9	0
Uniform boundary mark	90	81	72	63	54	45	36	27	18	0

5753

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw boundary mark	40	36	31	26	22	19	16	13	10	0
Uniform boundary mark	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12	0

5754

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw boundary mark	40	34	29	24	20	16	13	10	7	0
Uniform boundary mark	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12	0

Please note that the above statistics apply only to the 2009 exams for both Listening and Reading.

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