



General Certificate of Secondary Education

French 4655

Specification

46552 Reading

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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General Comments

It was clear from the types of error made that many candidates were in Year 10 or even Year 9, as their knowledge of both vocabulary and grammar was not sufficiently developed to meet the demands of some questions. Nonetheless, the overall performance of candidates was pleasing. Teachers can effect further improvements by emphasising points made in this report, especially as to **how** candidates answer questions.

Foundation Tier

Question 1

This opening question caused more difficulties than anticipated. Most candidates made a good start on the first two items, although many were determined to include 'Happy Anniversary' at some point. Only a quarter of candidates gained the mark for Question 1(c) – *Bonne Année*, and Question 1(d) – *Bonne Chance* also caused a lot of problems. Candidates made guesses based on their own experience of greetings cards, with little justification from the French text, e.g. 'Congratulations', 'It's A Girl!' and 'Well Done'.

Question 2

This question was very well answered, with only 'baskets' causing a problem.

Question 3

This question caused few problems. Candidates know food vocabulary well.

Question 4

Here, although the food items were probably recognised, the types of shops were not as well known, so that many candidates who knew *bonbons* could not link this with *confiserie*. Question 4(d) was poorly answered, presumably because candidates did not know *timbres*.

Question 5

This question was well answered. Candidates are comfortable with the topic of leisure.

Question 6

This question required some basic knowledge of the concepts of singular and plural, masculine and feminine. Although it was considered sufficiently accessible to include in the Foundation Tier, the lack of these fundamental skills caused many problems, and led to clear guesswork. Only Question 6(b) was fairly well answered. It is essential that candidates write their answers clearly when only a letter is required. Capital letters should be used. If a candidate has a change of mind, he/she must cross out the original answer and write the new answer outside but alongside the box, not above or below it. Candidates who overwrite a letter are likely to produce a shape which cannot be credited.

Question 7

This question about school was generally well done. It should be noted that, in questions with three possible outcomes, all three will be used. In this case candidates often failed to use the P/N option, required in Question 7(c). It would appear that they respond to the first thing they read instead of reading further to check the accuracy of their response.

Question 8

This question was very well answered, apart from instances when key vocabulary was not known.

Higher Tier**Question 1**

This overlap question was very well answered.

Question 2

This more challenging gap fill question was a very good discriminator. Only Question 2(f) and Question 2(g) were answered correctly by more than half of the candidates. Elsewhere the need to distinguish between different types of word was not well met. The sentences were not difficult to understand, yet candidates' choice of word type was often difficult to fathom. Teachers must ensure that candidates practise this sort of question and that they are aware of the grammar section in the specification, often overlooked as the vocabulary list is prioritised.

Question 3

Candidates found this overlap question very easy.

Question 4

This overlap question caused few problems.

Question 5

This question on the environment was very well done. Almost every candidate scored on Question 5(d).

Question 6

This question was quite well done, with only Question 6(d) causing real problems. Here candidates clearly did not know *les soldes*, although this word has often been tested in past Foundation Tier papers. In a question offering six marks with a choice of three answers, candidates should not assume that each answer will be used equally. The only assumption they can make is that each option will be used at least once.

Question 7

As usual, in these later questions requiring answers in English, candidates ignored the fact that the space provided indicates the length of the expected answer. They often wrote lengthy responses in which correct information was negated by incorrect information. Obliterations added further to examiners' difficulties in reading answers and reduced the space available or led to arrowed answers appearing elsewhere on the paper. Teachers should emphasise the need to answer succinctly, to start the answer at the beginning of the line, not half way along, and to use black ink as required on the front page of the question paper.

Overall, these questions were poorly answered, often because candidates drew on their own experiences instead of reading the whole text for information and confirmation of their answers. In Question 7(a) the correct answer was that Emile was not clever enough at school, but many answers were too vague or simply spurious. In Question 7(b), examiners accepted the multiple

spellings of 'apprenticeship' because comprehension was not impaired, but the standard of spelling overall gave rise to concern. Few candidates scored a mark for Question 7(c), citing his marriage and his desire to travel (*travail*), as reasons for him making the right career choice, while many placed him at university instead of his friends.

Question 8

Questions about relationships are always plagued by the superimposition of candidates' own experience on the situation described in the French text. This leads to initial errors which then engender consequential misconceptions in subsequent questions. As a result Question 8(b) was very badly done because it followed erroneous responses in Question 8(a). It is important to tell candidates that, with very few exceptions, the questions follow the sequence of the text. In this case much of the information about Sidonie's family situation was mistakenly brought in to earlier questions. These questions are challenging, targeting A/A* grades, but candidates should be encouraged to persevere, because there are usually some more accessible marks to be found. For example in Question 8(d), marks were available for mentioning tensions in the house, not getting on with stepfather, and mother having re-married (but not re-married twice!), but candidates often failed to spot these facts and created their own scenarios.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.