



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**French**

**46552F/H**

**(Specification 4655)**

**Unit 2: Reading**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General comments

Most students heeded the repeated advice to write clearly and within the spaces provided on the question paper, but the use of other than black ink and extensive obliterations caused problems for on-screen marking. Teachers should benefit from points made in reviewing performance in Higher Tier Question 9 in particular.

## Foundation Tier

### Question 1

This was a comfortable opening question, as anticipated. Only Question 1(d) caused the occasional problem with 79% of students scoring the mark.

### Question 2

The majority of students gained all three marks for Question 2(a), indicating a good knowledge of ‘pets’ vocabulary and the ability to extract information from an extended text. In Question 2(b), about a third of students opted wrongly for answer C.

### Question 3

Many students did not score here through not reading the texts thoroughly enough. Questions 3(a) and 3(c) both referred in some way to singing/singer. Students, who failed to pick up the singular *ma chanteuse préférée* chose answer C instead of H for Question 3(a), then reversed the choice for Question 3(c).

### Question 4

Surprisingly, these questions, targeted at the lower grades, caused a lot of problems, due entirely to weak knowledge of vocabulary for jobs and countries. Very few students gained all six marks. Some answers were difficult to fathom, although it was conceivable in Question 4(b) to follow how *en plein air* gave rise to answers such as ‘pilot’ rather than ‘farmer’.

### Question 5

All three parts were well answered, though a significant number (25%) did not know that vegetarians would not eat *saucisse*.

### Question 6

Only Question 6(a) was answered convincingly. This first overlap question contained more challenging vocabulary such as *le mieux*, *ça coûte cher*, *j’ai peur de* which caused problems for many students. Indeed, more than half of the students thought there were no disadvantages in Question 6(d).

### Question 7

This overlap question about signs and notices proved demanding overall. In Questions 7(a) and 7(b) this was due to weak knowledge of vocabulary (*pêche*, *pelouse*) which led to guesswork. The inclusion of *marcher* in Question 7(b) caused many students to select response B, ‘in a market’. Questions 7(c), 7(d) and 7(e) were based on longer texts requiring answers in English, and were all poorly answered, largely due to gaps in vocabulary knowledge rather than the increased length of the texts. In Question 7(c), too many chose a wrong place for the smoking ban. In Question 7(d) an astonishing number wrote ‘3 hours’

indicating that they did not know *en semaine*. Far too many wrote '8 o'clock to 10 o'clock – 3 hours', which could not be credited. Question 7(e) was the most difficult mark to score on the paper, with neither *donnons* nor *ne...plus* well known. Only 5% of students scored this mark. Consequently students tended to superimpose their own experiences, for instance about recycling, or bringing your own bags, the latter at least implied, but not stated.

### Question 8

An overlap question targeted at grade C, this proved challenging at Foundation Tier, though more than half of the students answered Questions 8(c) and 8(d) correctly. In Question 8(a) the clues were *courent devant les vaches* and *ça m'inquiète*, with no indication of danger in the other texts. Question 8(b) was very poorly done with only 20% of students scoring the mark, possibly because students failed to read the negative 'not' in the question. Many chose response A (for Aïcha), despite reference to *un gros repas*. The correct answer A was the least popular in Question 8(e), presumably because references were made to clothing in all the texts but *on s'habille bien, le mieux possible* was not understood.

### Higher Tier

Overlap Questions 2, 4 and 5 were, as expected, answered more frequently correctly than at Foundation Tier, but with the same areas of difficulty.

### Question 1

This question provided extra marks at grades C and D, and was a good discriminator, probably because of its focus on grammatical as well as lexical knowledge. Questions 1(a), 1(b) and 1(c) were well answered, but Question 1(d) proved difficult with only 46% scoring the mark because students linked *la nourriture italienne* with *la pizza*, taking no notice of, or not knowing the words *ni* and *les pâtes*.

### Question 3

Students were comfortable with the subject of fashion and answered Questions 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c) quite well. For Question 3(d) the majority thought the answer was P (for positive). Even if *des pulls à capuche* was not well known, it was the last thing mentioned and there were clues in the contrasting tenses and more pointedly in the use of *j'en ai marre de*.

### Question 6

Most students scored four of the six marks available. The exceptions tended to be Questions 6(b) and 6(e). Many chose answer P (for Pritti) in Question 6(b), not acknowledging *partage mes goûts* offered by Marie, and ignoring *ce n'est pas essentiel*, opined by Pritti. Many chose L (for Louis) in Question 6(e), probably focusing on the word *personnalité* and not looking elsewhere. At this level, it is unwise to think that identifying a single key word is sufficient to gain a mark.

### Question 7

Questions 7(b)–7(e) were well answered, given that they were targeted at the higher grades. Students showed good ability to understand an extended text, and to make deductions. Where marks were not scored it was usually because of misconstruing words, for example *les activités solitaires* taken as Jean-Paul playing cards, and *disent* becoming a justification for saying that his parents are 'distant'. The father's job, *homme d'affaires*, prompted answers about marital problems. In Question 7(e), many students confused *où* with *ou*,

leading to erroneous conclusions and underlining the importance of little words. Question 7(a) was poorly answered with only 27% scoring the mark. Clearly the notion of not being *doué pour les études* was not well known and there were too many general responses such as ‘it’s difficult’ or ‘school’s difficult’.

### Question 8

This question type usually causes far more problems than it did this year. 94% of students scored the mark in Question 8(b), 81% in Question 8(e) and the majority answered correctly Questions 8(a), 8(c) and 8(d). Students may well be at ease with the topic of environmental issues and may also have practised these questions more, as suggested in previous reports. It was gratifying to note far less guesswork than in the past.

### Question 9

Aimed at A\*, this question proved challenging. There are two major problems for students answering this sort of question. Firstly, they do not read widely enough within the text. Consequently they write the first thing they see and then cause themselves problems as further reading indicates another answer. The result is often obliterations and arrows all over the place. Students should start their answer at the beginning of the line and be concise. Secondly, they based their responses not on the text but on their own experience and absorbed information.

In Question 9(a), therefore, a common answer was that Hussain went to Africa to help out, dig wells, trace his roots and so on, without any reference to the information contained in the text. Less than half of the students recognised the idea of comparing lifestyles to the group’s own (*à la leur*). Question 9(b) and 9(c) caused some confusion. The information was all in the same paragraph. However, for Question 9(b), only positive answers could be credited, things that **impressed** Hussain. 44% of students scored two marks and 23% scored one mark. Many tried to make something positive from words they partially understood. They wrote ‘the Africans were civil or polite’, from *la guerre civile...*, ‘they were resourceful’ (*sans ressources*) or ‘domesticated’ (*sans domicile*), again showing the importance of a small word such as *sans*. For Question 9(c), examiners could credit determination, dignity or optimism as long as these ideas had not already been credited for Question 9(b). Where students did identify the right information, they lost the mark by adding a moderator, for example ‘few jobs’, ‘a lot were homeless’, lacking the precision required at this level. Question 9(d) resulted in some really long answers, unnecessarily so, since the idea that ‘the young people of Paris are more negative than them’ was all that was needed. 18% of students scored this mark, however, which is in line with performance expected at this grade. An amazing number of students wrote about life without the internet (*sans intérêt*), a good example of imposing their own ideas. Many did not understand *les HLM*, although this was not essential if Paris was mentioned (but not France – too imprecise).

It is hoped that the information contained in this report will help teachers in their preparation for this component and to prepare their students better.

### Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below

**UMS conversion calculator** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion).