General Certificate of Secondary Education

French 4655
Specification

46552   Reading

Report on the Examination

2011 examination - January series

Foundation Tier

General comments

Candidates coped well with a range of question types. As usual, the gap-fill task in Question 7, caused problems for those with limited knowledge of grammar, but questions requiring vocabulary knowledge were generally well handled. Due to the mechanics involved in online marking, teachers should encourage candidates to write within the spaces provided in the answer book. Where they choose to change an answer, for example a letter, they should not overwrite their answer. They should cross out their original answer and write their final answer alongside the box, not above it or below it.

Question 1

For most candidates this question provided the desired straightforward start to the paper, although significant numbers failed to construe *centre commercial* correctly. *Plage* and *marché* were also not known by a number of candidates.

Question 2

Candidates showed good knowledge of school subjects, with the exception of *E.P.S,* which some clearly wrongly guessed.

Question 3

The vast majority of candidates could match the prompts to clues in the short texts.

Question 4

Candidates coped well with this similar question type on social issues. Only Question 4(e) caused problems, with some candidates equating *Armand boit trop de vin* to either crime or divorce.

Question 5

Although close to three quarters of candidates scored on each mark, this question proved more challenging. As with Question 4, this was usually because of poor knowledge of basic vocabulary. For example, in Question 5(b), a good number chose answer C, referring to *samedi matin*, when the person was seeking evening work.

Question 6

Although at least 80% of candidate scored on parts (b), (c) and (e), many failed to score on the other two parts, again probably through not knowing key words such as *poubelles* and *arbres*.

Question 7

Parts (a) and (b) were quite well answered, but in each of the other parts about a quarter of candidates did not gain the mark, apart from 7(d) where 26% gained the mark. As usual with this question type, failure to score the mark can be put down to weak grammatical knowledge. In Question 7(d) for instance, answer C was most commonly chosen, despite the −*ent* verb ending which could not logically follow *je*. In Question 7(c), answer I was often chosen, as candidates did not realise that *noire* is a feminine adjective. Answer I was also the preferred choice for Question 7(e), perhaps because of the other colours in the sentence.

Question 8

Candidates had a lot more to read here, which some find off-putting. Many candidates scored two of the four marks available. Few identified letter G as a correct answer. Although the texts indicated that Didier has had his computer for longer, he makes little use of it compared to Aliyah, who also makes good use of her mobile phone.

Higher Tier

General comments

The vast majority of candidates were correctly entered. They accumulated good total marks from the overlap questions, and many built on this in subsequent questions. Grammatical knowledge was demonstrably stronger at this level, and many candidates showed the skills defined in the grade descriptors for Grade A. There were fewer questions than usual requiring answers in English in this paper, which made it more accessible.

Question 1

These items aimed at Grades C and D were all well answered.

Question 2

This overlap question was well answered. Many candidates scored full marks.

Question 3

Although this question was tackled more successfully at this tier, few candidates scored all four marks, with answer G still the one to cause most difficulty.

Question 4

This question discriminated particularly well, with a good range in the level of success. Parts (d) and (e) were well answered. Part (c) proved challenging. Examination of the wrong answers chosen by candidates establishes no pattern, and suggests that, as questions become more demanding, some candidates show a greater propensity towards guesswork.

Question 5

Most parts of this question were well answered. Only part (d) caused widespread problems, although the text clearly pointed to Annie. It seems likely that candidates answering wrongly were unfamiliar with *le rechauffement de la terre*.

Question 6

The overlap gap-fill question was quite well done at this tier, although the same three parts as in Foundation Tier caused a significant loss of marks. This question type is well established and can be targeted at most grades. Teachers are encouraged to create their own versions in order to sharpen awareness of functions in language.

Question 7

This question also discriminated very well. There were many correct answers, but parts (a) and (f) caused difficulties for candidates. The answer to Question 7(a) was the question mark for 'not in text'. This answer often causes problems, but it is difficult to find justification for other answers from the text. In 7(f), about three quarters of candidates decided that Laure did not find her work experience easy, despite *le travail n'était pas trop dur* and the later use of *seulement* with her duties. So often the inclusion of negatives or modifiers is overlooked. It is a good idea for teachers to make a list of such words to be practised.

Question 8

As the texts become longer, candidates persevere less well. There is a tendency in this sort of question to base an answer on the first piece of relevant information. Those candidates who read further are often well rewarded, especially where the correct answer is P/N. For example, in Question 8(b), many thought that André's opinion of teachers was positive, as his French teacher is *super*, failing to read on to find a negative comment about another teacher.

Question 9

This question provided the only five marks for answers in English. More than half scored one of the two marks for Question 9(a), usually correctly identifying that Vanessa no longer sees her old friends. Almost everything else appeared to be guesswork. At this A* level, candidates must be precise in their expression, they must not only find key words but also read around them, and be prepared to go back to find supporting details. There remains a substantial amount of crossing out, which can make marking difficult. Handwriting is often difficult to read. Examiners cannot credit what they cannot read. Candidates must be told to start their answer at the beginning of the line, and use the provided space as a guide to the required length of answers. Questions always follow the order of the text. The vast majority of candidates answered part 9(d) with information from earlier in the text, totally ignoring the final paragraph. Less than ten per cent of candidates scored the mark for Question 9(b) or Question 9(d), usually because of imprecision or through superimposing their own experience of reality shows. A very small number of candidates answered in French throughout the question, which was a rubric infringement and marks could not be awarded.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.