

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCSE

GCSE French (1226)

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1226/1F - Foundation Listening

The questions which require the recognition of single lexical items (Q1-5, Q 19-23) or short phrases (Q6-10, Q13-17) were well done although individual items of vocabulary caused problems. Q1-5 were generally well done but Q2 (*informatique*), Q4 (*éducation physique*) and Q5 (*dessin*) caused some candidates problems. Q19, 22 and 23 were accessible to the majority of candidates but Q20 (*elle fait du théâtre*) and Q21 (*elle fait du patinage*) were less well done. The vocabulary in Q6-10 was less well known and Q6 *Je vais au bord de la mer* was the least well known. In Q13-17 *Nous habitons une grande maison à la campagne* in Q14 proved difficult for weaker candidates and in Q15 weaker candidates tended to confuse *chien* and *chat* and gave an incorrect answer.

The questions which were intended to discriminate did so and weaker candidates often found the overlap questions, targeted at grades D and C (Q11, Q12, Q18, Q24-5,) difficult. Q18 proved the most accessible with many candidates scoring full marks. Part (iv) proved the most difficult with weaker candidates unable to match *j'appelle mes amis ou je leur envoie des textos* with answer A *le téléphone portable*, the most common incorrect answer for this was B *le sport*. Part (v) *Je préfère les émissions informatives, les documentaires et les reportages* (answer G *la télévision*) was also less well done. Q12 proved more difficult, many candidates scored well on parts (i) and (iv), successfully matching *il y a beaucoup de variété et maintenant il y a plus de salades* with answer B *les menus* in part (i), and *Les restaurants sont ouverts de 8h à 20h* successfully with answer C *les heures d'ouverture* in part (iv). Parts (ii) and (iii) proved the most difficult and many candidates were unable to match *les serveurs sont toujours souriants, ils sont très serviables* with answer A *le personnel* in part (ii) and *on peut y manger en vitesse* with answer D *la rapidité* in part (iii). Part (v) proved difficult for some. These candidates failed to match *on peut y manger pour très peu* with answer G *le prix*.

Questions 24 and 25 required candidates to listen for gist and required the recognition of tenses and these proved challenging for all but the better candidates. Q25 proved the more accessible of the two questions with better candidates scoring 1 or 2 marks. In this type of question many candidates have a tendency to tick the answer containing the first word/s they hear in the relevant part of the extract. In Q24 in part (i) many candidates did not recognise the significance of the tenses in *Avant je faisais beaucoup de sport... mais maintenant je n'ai pas le temps*, many candidates ticked answer A *elle fait beaucoup de sport* without listening for the end of the sentence. In part (ii) weaker candidates failed to recognise the negative and use of tenses in *Avant je mangeais beaucoup de bonbons et de gâteaux, je les adore mais je ne mange plus de ça*, and again ticked the incorrect answer (b) *elle mange beaucoup de choses sucrées* when they heard the first part of the sentence. In part (c) many failed to link *j'ai perdu 5 kilos* with *elle est maintenant plus mince* in answer (b).

Q11 required answers in French and was relatively well done. Many candidates at this level can now successfully record the days of the week in accurate French. Part (ii) 7h45 was also well done. In part (iii) incorrect answers included 62, 72 and 60:10. There are still a number of candidates who attempt to write out times and numbers in full, whilst some can do this successfully, many cannot. Candidates are advised to give times and numbers in figures. In part (iv) many candidates successfully identified *un pique-nique* but only better candidates knew *un blouson*. Some candidates did not pick up the correct sound, hearing *plousson* (sic) or *plouseau* (sic). Common incorrect answers included *boisson* and *le voyage*. Some candidates gave answers based on imagination rather than what was heard with answers like *argent*. Whilst in these questions marks are awarded for communication and candidates did score marks with incorrect spellings, it should be noted that poor spelling can lead to information not being communicated particularly where inaccurate spelling creates a new word in either English or French. Unfortunately there are still some candidates who answered in the wrong language for which no marks are awarded.

Q26-27 and Q28-29 required answers in English and as always proved a good discriminator. All candidates scored marks across the two questions with Q26-27 proving more accessible for the majority of candidates. In Q26 many candidates scored two or full marks, *it's easy, it's quick/fast* proving relatively easy answers. Some candidates, however, gave the same answer twice i.e. *it's quick* (on line one) *it's fast* (on line two). Not all candidates recognised *il y a beaucoup de choix*. The mention of *magasins* in *tout est moins cher que dans les magasins* led to some errors. Some candidates confused *magasin* with *magazine* and gave incorrect answers such as *you can read a magazine* or *you get a free magazine*. Other candidates identified the key word *magasin* and built incorrect answers around it such as the common answer, *you don't have to go to the shops*. In part Q27 the majority of candidates understood *il faut payer par carte de crédit* but weaker candidates failed to understand *je dois demander la permission à mes parents*. Again the performance of weaker candidates was characterised by snatched listening i.e. the recognition of a key word plus some imagination leading to incorrect answers such as *your parent don't like it*. Some candidates used their knowledge of internet shopping to answer these questions with answers such as they deliver to your door/ you don't have to go out in part (a) and there is a risk of identity theft/ fraud, they might send the wrong thing, you might be out when they deliver in Q27

Q28-29 proved more demanding and many candidates did not know the key vocabulary for TV programmes. Whilst part (a) was generally well done, many candidates did not recognise *les dessins animés* and gave incorrect answers such as *animal programmes, art programmes*. In part (b) there was again evidence of snatched listening and also writing down the first word heard, in response to the question "what kind of programme programme do they not like? (*ils aiment assez les documentaires mais ils n'aiment pas les feuilletons*), the most common incorrect answer was *documentaries*. Only the very best candidates were able to give the correct answer to Q28 (c). Many did not understand "*les garçons et aussi les filles aiment les émissions de sport*" and wrote incorrect answers such as *boys like sport more/ boys and girls do sport/ girls don't like sport*. Candidates scored well in Q29 (a) successfully recognising *trois heures*. There are still some candidates who confuse 3 and 13. Whilst many candidates scored well in part (b), a significant number didn't recognize the structure, *préférer à* in *ils préfèrent leur téléphone portable à la télévision* and gave answers such as *they prefer using their 'phone and watching TV*.

There were few rubric infringements although unfortunately there are still some candidates who answer in the wrong language for which no credit is given. There were also candidates who answered in pencil; candidates should be told to write in pen, preferably black.

The performance of better candidates as always was characterised by:

- careful reading of the questions
- listening to the whole rather than homing in on individual words
- identifying cognates and familiar words in unfamiliar contexts
- attention to detail
- applying logic
- reading over their answers

1226/1H - Higher Listening

Candidates generally found the paper accessible and many candidates scored well across the paper as a whole and there were some excellent performances. The questions that were intended to discriminate did so but the majority of candidates understood enough, and felt confident enough, to attempt the whole paper and there were fewer blank answers. There was evidence of some good listening skills, many candidates had used the five minutes reading time well (underlining key words in the title, rubric and questions, annotating questions) generally using the time well to anticipate what they were about to hear. There were, however, quite a few candidates who were unable to cope with the demands of the higher paper and for whom the experience must have been demoralising, these candidates would have possibly benefited from taking the Foundation rather than the Higher paper. The performance of weaker candidates was characterised by lack of attention to detail, poor reading of the questions, snatched listening based on the identification of single words rather than listening to the extract as a whole, mishearing and imagination.

Quite a few candidates do have problems distinguishing between sounds eg in Q2 *blouson* became frequently *boisson*, *pluseau* (sic), *plouson* (sic), in Q6 *classe* was heard instead of *place*, in Q9 *jeunes* for *gens* and in Q10 *s'ennuie* became *sandwich*.

The performance on the overlap questions (Q1, Q2, Q4-5 and Q8) was generally better than at Foundation level. In Q1 many candidates scored full marks, giving them a confident start to the paper. Q2 required one word answers in French and was generally very well done. Many candidates at this level can now successfully record the days of the week in accurate French. Part (ii) 7h45 was also well done. In part (iii) incorrect answers included 62, 72 and 60:10. There are still a number of candidates who attempt to write out times and numbers in full, whilst some can do this successfully many cannot. Candidates are advised to give times and numbers in figures. In part (iv) many candidates successfully identify *un pique-nique* but the word *blouson* was not known by all candidates. Some candidates did not pick up the correct sound, hearing *plouson* (sic) or *plouseau* (sic). Common incorrect answers included *boisson* or *le voyage*. Q8 was generally well done but weaker candidates had the same problems as candidates at Foundation level. Q4-5 proved demanding for many candidates, they required candidates to listen for gist and required the recognition of tenses. There is a tendency with this question type for candidates to tick the answer containing the first word/s they hear in the relevant part of the extract. Q5 proved the more accessible of the two questions with more candidates scoring 1 or 2 marks. In Q4 in part (a) many candidates did not recognize the significance of the tenses in *Avant je faisais beaucoup de sport... mais maintenant je n'ai pas le temps*, many candidates ticked answer A *elle fait beaucoup de sport* without listening for the end of the sentence. In part (b) weaker candidates failed to recognise the negative and use of tense in *Avant je mangeais beaucoup de bonbons et de gâteaux, je les adore mais je ne mange plus de ça*, and again ticked the incorrect answer (b) *elle mange beaucoup de choses sucrées* when they heard the first part of the sentence. Part (c) was generally well done by candidates who successfully linked *j'ai perdu 5 kilos* with *elle est maintenant plus mince* in answer (b).

Q3 required candidates to paraphrase and proved difficult for some candidates. Part (ii) proved the most accessible, (linking *il faut faire plus d'efforts pour recycler et pour économiser de l'énergie* with answer C *l'environnement*). Parts (iv) and (v) proved the hardest with only the better candidates linking, *Il y a tellement de problèmes en ce moment que je me demande comment sera le monde d'ici 30 ans* in part (iv) with answer E, *l'avenir* and *Certains en prennent pour être comme leurs amis, d'autres sont curieux et recherchent de nouvelles expériences* in part (v) with answer D *les drogues*. Question 7 required the recognition of opinions and was well done particularly by the better candidates. Parts (iv) and (v) were the most accessible and parts (vi) and (i) proved the most difficult. In part (i) many candidates failed to link *Il y a des gens qui abusent du système* with *Certains en profitent pour vendre des objets à des prix élevés, ça c'est honteux* in the extract and in part (vi) *On peut vendre des objets dans d'autres pays* with *On est mis en contact avec des gens partout dans le monde* in the extract.

Questions 6 and 9 also required answers in French. Q6 was the more accessible and better candidates scored full marks on this question. In part (a) the verb *réduire* was not well known but many candidates were able to use *moins* effectively to express the same idea. Few candidates recognised *on peut se détendre*. Some candidates do not read the questions carefully or if they do, do not always answer the questions set, a common incorrect answer for part (a) (Avantages des transports en commun) was *les gens sont égoïstes*, a direct transcription. Candidates should be aware that at this level direct transcription doesn't necessarily answer the question. Some candidates gave answers which contradicted what was said eg in part (a) *c'est moins stressant dans la voiture*, was a common incorrect answer, which could either have been misunderstanding or an inability to express the answer in unambiguous French. In part (b) many candidates successfully recognised *des retards* for one correct answer. However, for the second mark, many misheard *classe* for *places* and gave incorrect answers such as *il n'y a pas de classe*.

Although answers in French are marked for communication, examiners did comment on poor spelling, lack of awareness of syntax and the inability of candidates to record their answers unambiguously or even write what they mean eg in part (a) *moins* was often incorrectly rendered as *mois*, *parler aux filles* in Q9 was rendered as *parler des filles*, thus creating different meanings from the ones intended.

Q9 was targeted at A* and proved daunting for all but the best candidates. This was a new question type and obviously threw some candidates. There was evidence that candidates had understood the question but gave answers which did not fit eg reasons why he was *un élève sérieux* included *il n'aime pas le collège, il déteste les devoirs, il joue au foot, il bavarde avec ses amis*. Again this would support the idea that some candidates attempt to write down what they hear rather than answer the question set. Many candidates failed to score on this question often for inappropriate answers which did not fit the question. The mishearing of *jeunes* for *gens* and *filis* for *filles* in part (a) led to some candidates not being awarded marks. Whilst answers in French are marked for communication it must be noted that inaccuracy can lead to a breakdown in communication and to the message not being conveyed unambiguously especially when new words in French are created.

As always the questions requiring answers in English were a good discriminator. There were some excellent performances from the better candidates but only the better candidates were able to supply the detail and accuracy required at this level. Although candidates generally understood the gist of the extracts, lack of attention to detail often cost candidates marks. The performance of weaker candidates was characterized by the following. Firstly mishearing of words/ lazy listening eg in Q10a, *on ne s'ennuie jamais* was heard by many as *sandwich*, which gave rise to incorrect answers such as *she likes the sandwiches/ she gets free sandwiches*. Also in Q10a, a common incorrect answer was *it's near the cinema* - a possible mishearing of *mémoire*, another common incorrect answer was *it's close to her mum*, possibly another mishearing of *mémoire*. In part (b) of Q10b the word *professionnel* (from *c'est un domaine professionnel*) was interpreted as *professeur* and led to incorrect answers such as, *lots of teachers go there*. In Q12b *sourire* was often interpreted as *souris* with answer such as *watch out for mice*. Secondly latching on to key words and then putting them together incorrectly in one answer eg in Q11 *il n'est pas rare de faire des journées de 10 heures et de finir tard le soir* became incorrectly *she finishes (or starts) at 10 o'clock*, in the same question *Il est difficile de voir des amis* became *it is difficult to make friends*. Thirdly lack of vocabulary, the word *journée* was often translated as *journey*, by weaker candidates, giving rise to incorrect answers such as *the journey is too long*. Finally latching on to key words and building answers around them eg in Q10b *le chômage* gave rise to answers such as *at least she's not unemployed, there is a lot of unemployment* and also pure invention, many candidates failed to recognise familiar vocabulary in an unfamiliar context and wrote answers based on expectation rather than what was actually said eg. in Q10 *gets good tips, works with her friends, the people are nice, she likes her boss*, Q11 *difficult customers* Q12 *how to carry things, how to use the coffee machine*. Q11 was the most accessible of the three questions and the majority of candidates gave the correct answer to Q12a.

There were few rubric infringements, but unfortunately for the questions requiring answers in French or English, there was a surprising number of candidates who answered in the wrong language, for which no marks are awarded. Some candidates answered sections of the same questions in different languages ie some parts in French some in English. There were also candidates who answered in pencil, candidates should be told to write in pen, preferably black.

As highlighted in previous years, the performance of the better candidates was characterised by:

- careful reading of the rubric
- listening to the whole rather than honing in on individual items of vocabulary
- attention to detail, giving full rather than partial answers
- expressing themselves clearly and unambiguously when writing in either English or French and relating their answers to facts in the extract
- applying logic
- reading over and correcting their answers.

1226/2F AND 2H - Foundation and Higher Speaking

Candidates generally built on good practice in the classroom to perform well in the speaking element of the examination. The vast majority of candidates were well prepared and Tuesday 21st, 3 – 4pm confident with the format of the examination and there was an even performance across the majority of role-plays and the conversation section.

Rôle-play A

There were a significant number of candidates who did not score full marks in this element of the examination and weaker candidates clearly found this element demanding although it was an appropriate entry for the majority of foundation level candidates. *Caisse* is still unknown by the majority of candidates, with a number of different pronunciations which affected communication, particularly *cassé* and many were also unable to ask where places were.

It is evident that candidates are more aware of items of food and drink, but many were unable to score well in other situations. Many found difficulty with items requested in A1, especially *boucles d'oreille* and A3, *horaire and dépliant* were not widely known. A5, *chou and chou fleur* were rarely heard and often badly pronounced. In A6, lots of *gummis* and *magasins* were bought but *journal* and *taille-crayon* rarely heard. There were many forms of *carte postale* that would be unrecognisable to a sympathetic native speaker. The pronunciation of *timbres* and *enveloppes* in A10 continue to cause problems despite their use over many series. In A11 candidates found difficulty with the items to be bought and there were many cases of *fleurs and rizz*.

Learning of the minimum core vocabulary is essential for these common items that are in everyday use in survival situations. Candidates must also be aware that simply using the English pronunciation for cognates does not gain credit.

Rôle-play B

The majority of candidates were able to experience some success in rôle-play B although there was significant number of candidates who were only able to answer the unpredictable questions as these often only needed a one word answer in response. The rôle-plays challenged Foundation Level candidates and provided Higher level candidates with an accessible beginning to their speaking examination.

Many candidates successfully answered the unpredictable questions. However *Où voulez-vous vous asseoir ?*, *quand ?*, *combien de temps ?* and *Comment y allez-vous /?* were poorly answered, even by a significant number of more able candidates at both levels. Indeed a significant number of candidates thought that *s'asseoir* was this evening.

A significant number of candidates offered items of vocabulary other than those indicated in the rôle-plays and centres are reminded that where there is oblique candidates must offer one of items as part of the message required. This was particularly the case in B6 or in B4 where candidates were required to say where they work or would like to work. Similarly, if more than one item is offered only the first will be marked, even if it is incorrect and the others correct.

In B2 and B6 a surprising number of candidates were unable to offer an appropriate day of the week and *samedi* was common for Sunday. The formation of the negative proved difficult for many candidates and many substituted *je n'aime pas....* for I don't eat ... which did not convey the message completely. There were difficulties for all but the most able with *je gagne ...* in B5 and many candidates offered *euros* as the currency which was incorrect. Although *J'ai perdu* has been used a number of times there are significant numbers who opted for *J'ai trouvé* or *J'ai oublié* neither of which are correct and there was widespread use of *caméra* which also could not be credited. In B11 there were clearly two tasks, to say what type of room you wanted in terms of the type of beds and how many people. Where candidates combined these responses many ignored the first task which could not then be credited.

Centres should be aware that marks cannot be gained if the message in a task is only partially conveyed and that it is rare that any of the tasks, other than an unpredictable question, can be fully communicated with a single verb or noun.

Although many candidates score highly, particularly those at Higher Level, candidates should be aware that tense errors affect the communication of a task and that poor tense usage will reduce the marks gained. There were a considerable number of candidates at both levels who used infinitive or imperfect forms for the present tense of *er* verbs.

Most candidates were able to attempt the four tasks although for a significant number the framing of questions and common question words are difficult and such tasks are often not clearly communicated. *Est-ce que je peux téléphoner chez moi ?*, *Qu'est-ce que c'est ta matière préférée ?* and *A quelle heure ferme le bureau ?* were particularly difficult for many candidates and few were able to master the use of obligation. However some more able candidates were able to get round this by alternative means. Task 4 continues to be a good discriminator within the rôle-plays but even more able candidates find increased difficulty if the question is earlier in the rôle plays.

Teacher examiners should also take care not to read the part of the candidate, as any subsequent response for this task cannot be credited. This often occurs in task 4 and was particularly evident in B7 where a significant number of teacher-examiners asked the question rather than the candidate. Equally, rephrasing of the unpredictable question is not allowed and any response where this is the case is unable to gain marks.

Rôle-play C

Many examiners reported that teacher-examiners and candidates appeared more at ease with the format of the role-play and that the candidates were able to engage more when they knew where the unpredictable questions were going to be asked.

However there was still a significant minority of centres where the teacher examiner's knowledge of the situation was less than adequate and consequently did not respond adequately to the candidate thus causing confusion. Where the teacher examiner is able to respond naturally to the candidate's responses, whatever they may be, candidates generally were more at ease and therefore able to score more highly.

Weaker candidates failed to understand some of the prompts on the cards, notably *Logement?*, *Supplément?*, *Solution?* *Attendre longtemps?*, *Repas* and *Salaire?*, and a significant number of candidates failed to read the rubric at the top of the card, particularly in C1 and C5, where candidates wanted a reservation rather than refer to the reservation that had already been made.

Some centres do not encourage candidates to expand the rôle-play and therefore prevent them from accessing the higher mark bands. It is not necessary to expand all the tasks but there are opportunities within the bullet points, and one of the unpredictable questions is more open-ended, in order for candidates to expand and show what they are capable of.

Some centres, however, turn the rôle-play into a mini conversation of up to five minutes. This rarely benefits the candidate, as there is often much irrelevance that cannot be credited as expansion and affects the communication of the points needed.

Centres are reminded that where there is a question mark within the tasks they are expected to ask a question. If a candidate produces a statement they are considered not to have conveyed the task successfully and often only the more able candidates were able to frame questions successfully.

The unpredictable questions continued to be a good discriminator and candidates were able on the whole to answer the more closed question.

Question words however are still a major problem for many candidates who either are not listening carefully or are unaware of the true meaning of them.

Comment? was often confused with *quand?* when dealing with transport or *combien?* when dealing with money. *Détails personnels*, whether as a bullet point or unpredictable question, is still often very superficially dealt with, often producing just a forename. A mobile telephone number and offering a passport were not seen as successfully completing the task nor was a description of the person or their family.

However there were many excellent rôle-plays. Candidates responded well to teacher examiners who used the prompts thoughtfully and where encouragement and careful responding to their replies enabled them to expand effectively.

Conversation

This year's examination was marked in a significant number of centres by over-thorough preparation of the first topic. Teacher-examiners are reminded that the specimen questions in the Handbook are merely suggestions. There were a large number of centres where the teacher-examiners only asked the candidates these questions. This penalised candidates who were unable to take the initiative and often only produced short responses. Teacher examiners should use the responses of the candidate to stimulate the next question.

Naturally the best conversations occurred when teacher-examiners listened to candidates' answers and progressed in a natural way rather than working through the questions in the handbook

An increasing number of centres asked an insufficient variety of questions throughout the centre and there was a significant minority of centres who asked the same questions to all candidates. Invariably candidates where this happens are unable to score highly during this element.

The conversation is marked globally over the two topics and in an increasing number of cases candidates who were able to speak well, in a variety of tenses during the pre-learnt, prepared section, were unable to offer responses to simple questions during the second topic. These candidates could not be awarded high marks.

There is an increasing number of candidates who offered a presentation or monologue for most if not all of the first topic. Centres are reminded that no presentation should last more than one minute and should be followed by questions on the relevant topic. Where there are no questions asked it is penalising the candidate as they are unable to satisfy the assessment criteria in terms of responding to a variety of question types.

Timing continues to be a concern in a minority of centres and centres are reminded that candidates cannot gain credit for responses outside the time limits given in the rubric. Candidates should be given the opportunity to use appropriate structures and language within the time allotted for this part of the examination.

- 4-5 minutes Foundation Level conversation
- 6-7 minutes Higher Level conversation

Similarly short conversations will prevent the candidates from demonstrating their ability.

The two topics should be given equal time. Candidates are disadvantaged if they are not allowed to show what they can do within the unprepared topic.

There were many centres who were able to help candidates fulfil their potential through skilful questioning, enabling the candidate to expand and use more complex language, eliciting a range of structures, tenses, opinions and descriptions. It should be noted that a series of closed questions whilst helping some candidates to offer a response will not score other than in the lower mark bands.

Although centres are able to introduce the conversation topics in French or English, in general the examination should be conducted in the target language and links to the various parts should be in French.

Marking

Where centres opted to mark their own candidates there was a significant number whose marks were out of tolerance and needed adjustment.

A number of centres awarded full marks when there was ambiguity in a candidate's response particularly in rôle play A. The pronunciation of *Caisse* was an example of this and *cassé / casser* was often credited and teacher-examiners ignored the difference between *il y a ...?* and *Où est ...?* which have different meanings, in both rôle play A and B.

In rôle-play B an incorrect tense often affected communication. Responses of a single word or verb did not convey the message or an unpredictable question was rephrased meant that the performance was often overvalued.

Some centres failed to appreciate that there are significant differences in the Assessment Criteria for Role plays A and B and candidates who were unable to successfully convey the necessary tasks in Role play B were often over marked.

In rôle-play C there was often insufficient expansion for higher marks to be awarded. Tense errors, responses without a verb, or the failure to ask questions when required, meant that marks were overvalued as communication needed to access the higher mark bands was not achieved.

In the conversation section centres have a tendency to overvalue the performance of foundation level candidates who appear to say quite a lot, but have mostly repeated much of what the teacher examiner has said through a series of closed questions and total reliance on the teacher-examiner. Similarly, at Higher level, teacher-examiners need to use more complex question forms in order to test candidates appropriately to access the higher mark bands using a variety of open-ended questions. Accuracy and Application of Language are dependent on the amount of and complexity of French conveyed by the candidate and it is unusual for a candidate who scores in the lower ranges in communication to score highly for in these sections as there is not the breadth of language required.

Standardisation

There is evidence of insufficient internal standardisation within a number of centres. There were a number of cases where one or more teacher examiners in a centre have been overly generous or inconsistent in its marking. Centres are encouraged to use previous year's examinations to help standardise their marking in preparation for the next series. A lack of internal standardisation may penalise individual candidates. However many centres standardise excellently and are to be congratulated on their efforts.

Administration

Many centres continue to provide an excellent service in this area. However some points to note are summarised below:

- Cassette boxes and tapes should be labelled meticulously. It is helpful to use the inlay in the Instructions for Conduct booklet. Each should be labelled with Specification Name and Number, Centre name and number, candidate name and number, level of entry, order of recording and name of teacher examiner.
- Cassettes should be numbered sequentially across the centre, not by individual teacher examiners.
- Cassettes should be rewound to the start of side A.
- Cassettes should be dispatched with the Optems or Attendance Register. The L3s should be in a different package.
- Candidates' performance should not be split between sides of the cassette or on two different cassettes.
- Foundation and Higher level candidates should be recorded on different cassettes.
- L3 mark sheets for each candidate should be arranged in candidate number order across the whole centre.
- The top (white copy) of the Optems for 2A centres should be sent to Edexcel. The second copy (yellow) should be sent to the Moderator and the third copy (green) should be retained by the centre.
- Centres should ensure that they follow the correct rôle-play sequence for 1226 French
- The conversation section has time limits to be observed.
- The microphone should favour the candidate rather than the teacher examiner. Centre should be aware that where automatic recording levels are achieved by some tape recorders candidate details and the beginning of the examination are at times inaudible.
- Parcels should be securely packaged for posting using protective bubble wrap or similar for the protection of the tapes.

Conclusion

Although reports on examinations invariably highlight difficulties, it must be stressed that the majority of teacher examiners prepare and carry out this element of the examination successfully.

Many candidates were well prepared for the examination and there was evidence of excellent examining technique.

Examiners and moderators would like to thank teacher-examiners for their efforts this year.

1226/3F - Foundation Reading and Responding

On the whole, this paper was very well attempted by the majority of candidates. In the questions testing more straightforward lexical items, Q1 was very well attempted, especially in parts (i), (ii) and (iv) where candidates scored full or almost full marks. Candidates seemed to have difficulty however with part (iii) and in particular (v) presumably through a lack of knowledge of vocabulary. Despite the familiar topic of leisure in Q2, the success rate in most of the parts was not very high. Candidates did not link *maillot de bain* in (i) with picture G. Similarly the link between *vêtements* in (iii) and the picture of the shop in F was not made. However, the other parts were more successfully attempted especially part (v). In Q7, picture C was the most successfully completed with parts A and D being less well done. However, candidates seemed to be unfamiliar with *ventre* as the answer to B. Q8 required a little closer reading than the other three questions and although the majority of candidates were able to link *enfants*, *lire écrire* in (i) and *voitures* and *vélos* in (iii) with the adverts C and B respectively, candidates seemed to have more difficulty with the other three parts especially parts (ii) and (v).

In the overlap questions targeted at C and D, Q3, the picture question, which is often quite accessible to many candidates, proved a little more difficult this year. Apart from part (iv) which was very well answered and parts (ii) and (iii) which were attempted reasonably well, parts (i) and (v) caused problems possibly due to the unfamiliar vocabulary. Q4 which required candidates to read a text more closely and recognise and link synonyms of food and drink and mealtime vocabulary seemed to confuse many candidates. Apart from part (d), answers to the other parts were not very successful at all. Q5, the multiple choice question, was done reasonably well on the whole especially part (iii). However, there were quite a few candidates who failed to read the text closely enough, snatched at key words in the text and therefore chose the wrong alternatives. Thus part (i) in particular was not done very well. Q6, which was a question type which has appeared very often in past papers, was not as successfully done this year. Candidates seemed to find it hard to read carefully and make links between what they had read in the stimulus and the sentences in the question, and therefore to choose the correct word. Part (i) was attempted the most successfully, but the other parts seemed to be the result of much guesswork.

The English questions however, were attempted with much more success. Most candidates scored full marks in Q9 part (a) and similarly in Q10 part (d). Candidates scored almost full marks in all parts of Q9 except (c) and similarly all parts of Q10 except (c). In the former, this was mainly due to a lack of good English expression or precision and in the latter a lack of knowledge of vocabulary.

1226/3H - Higher Reading and Responding

On the whole, this paper was very accessible with a fair number of candidates scoring reasonably well across most of the questions.

In the overlap questions targeted at C and D, Q1, the picture question, proved to be as in previous years, very accessible to many candidates with the majority scoring full or nearly full marks. Q2 which required candidates to read a text more closely and recognise and link synonyms of food and drink and mealtime vocabulary seemed to confuse many candidates. Apart from part (d), answers to the other parts were not very successfully done at all. Q6, the multiple choice question was done reasonably well on the whole especially part (iii) and (iv). Q7 which was a question type which has appeared very often in past papers, was not as successfully attempted this year. Candidates seemed to find it hard to read carefully and make links between what they had read in the stimulus and linking it to the sentences in the question and therefore to choose the correct word. Part (i) was attempted the most successfully, but the other parts seemed to be the result of much guesswork.

Q3 tested candidates' ability to read a sentence and summarise its subject matter. This was well attempted on the whole especially parts (i), (v) and (vi). However, parts (ii) and (iii) were less successful.

In Q4 Section A, candidates were very mindful of only choosing five correct answers which was very pleasing to see. The majority of candidates had obviously understood the passage well since many scored full marks with very few scoring fewer than 3. However, in Section B, where candidates were required to make inferences from the text, the average score was 2 out of 4. Most of these marks were awarded for providing the correct adjective in both parts of the question. In the first part of Section B, some candidates chose *bavarde* and gave the reason that she responded to the fans' letters. The few who chose *pessimiste* linked it with the failure of her early songs whilst those who chose *amusante* linked it to the fact that she had changed her hair colour. Some chose the adjective *sensible* and linked it to her desire to lose weight as a teenager. There were many cases of unfinished answers, for example, some candidates wrote in the first part that she answered letters, but omitted "to her fans" whilst others wrote that Larusso didn't listen to her own songs, but omitted that it was because she finds it embarrassing. In the second part, many candidates omitted the *que* in the phrase *elle ne se maquille (que) pour les photos et les émissions de télé*. Many gave the answer about respecting her fans as a reason in the second part. Indeed the answers to the second parts of this section were often transposed.

On the whole, Q5 was done very well with many candidates showing a thorough understanding of the text, topics covered (pocket money, housework and unemployment) and question type and thereby scoring full marks. There were very few answers left blank. Some very good candidates managed to manipulate the language rather than simply just lifting the French from the text. However, some candidates selected sections of text apparently at random. Some candidates gave the correct reason, but without the correct *oui/non*. Often, the reason for Nathalie was incorrect, many mentioning the fact that her parents found it easy to put money in her bank account or that Nathalie had her own bank card. In part (iii), quite a few candidates only mentioned that Jeanne was working, omitting to mention that the parents were unemployed. In part (iv), many candidates honed in on the idea of receiving a regular sum of money, but did not link it with the idea of being more responsible.

Q8, the English question was very well attempted by many candidates with some obviously very able ones scoring full marks by thoroughly understanding the text and expressing themselves well in English showing excellent and precise translation skills. A high volume of candidates however, left the page blank or made up answers after latching onto a few familiar words and based their answers on what they themselves would do personally when organising a party. Many were not specific enough in their answers. Sometimes, answers were too wordy, thereby including irrelevant information which negated their answers. Some candidates wrote their answers in the wrong columns and lost marks although their comprehension was good.

In the answer about holding the party in a large hall, the idea of hiring or renting was essential for the mark and many candidates omitted this, possibly not understanding the verb *louer*. Many candidates negated their answer by putting "town hall, marquee, somewhere big". Many marks were also lost for the reason: "you don't have to clean the house". Many misunderstood *une quarantaine* and wrote about quarantining guests. Quite a few candidates misunderstood *vide* resulting in the answer "hire a big wide hall".

The answer about arranging a themed party was done the most successfully, but some negated their answers by including references to "fancy dress" or mentioning invites or invitations in their answers. A very common answer was "invite people you get on with". Some mentioned only inviting the people you know and others interpreted *une soirée thématique* as a therapeutic or a therapy party.

Most candidates scored marks by giving the right advice about decorating the room, but some omitted "the room" and therefore gave "decorate yourself" as an answer. The reason given was usually accurate, but many only mentioned that you don't have to spend lots of money to enjoy yourself, but omitted the correct answer which was to save money.

The answer concerning putting up different coloured lights was well done on the whole except where candidates omitted the word coloured and many interpreted *ajouter* as adjust. The reason given was mostly correct. However, unfortunately, many candidates combined this and the previous answer to give: "decorate yourself with coloured lights"

The section on guests bringing CDs was done with a mixture of success. Many gave the correct advice and reason, but equally, there were quite a few non-specific answers such as "write down the names"; "make a list of the guests bringing CDs" rather than the idea of guests writing their names on the CDs. There was a surprisingly high volume of candidates who understood the text to mean "put invitations on the CD" and others honed in on *de préférence* and wrote about putting on CDs they preferred. The reason on the whole was correct except where candidates failed to transmit the idea of avoiding chaos and gave answers such as: "CDs will get mixed up" or "there will be chaos after the party" without including "otherwise" or "if not".

Many candidates found difficulty in expressing the answers concerning food and drink; many omitted drink or ignored or failed to understand the phrase *vous ne voulez pas embêter vos parents* and just gave the answer: "demand that your parents buy the food". Many candidates confused *boisson* with *poisson* and therefore wrote about eating fish as it was healthy.

A very common misunderstanding was that the advice being given was about revision possibly due to the word *examen* at the beginning of the text.

1226/4F and 4H - Writing

As last year, centres are to be congratulated on preparing their candidates for the requirements of this examination. Examiners noted how well candidates responded to stimulus material, and how resourceful they were. There were some areas of concern, but on the whole most candidates had the opportunity to achieve their potential on this paper.

Paper 4F Question 1

Candidates were asked to write ten items of vocabulary. Most were able to write five colours as well as five items of food. The pictures were given as suggestions, and many candidates found them useful. It was quite in order to choose items which were not illustrated, so long as they were plausible in the context. No marks were awarded for copying the stimulus. Candidates were expected to write just one response in each box. Common errors included misspelling a word in such a way that the meaning changed to something inappropriate: *poison* for *poisson*, and *jeune* for *jaune*, for example.

Paper 4F Question 2

This question required candidates to supply five nouns and five correct present tense verbs. Examiners noted a slight deterioration in performance since last year, and fewer candidates scored full marks for this question. Some centres had however prepared this question very well. The nouns were very accessible, and there were hardly any misinterpretations of the graphics. Candidates were not penalised for such misinterpretations. The verbs were much more variable. Some candidates had trouble with the irregular verbs *prendre* and *aller*; others wrote past participles; a few simply copied the infinitives. The form *montre* was often spelled with the *n* omitted. Centres are again recommended to give attention to this question in preparing for next year's paper.

Paper 4F Question 3

Candidates benefited from having the stimulus in English, and most attempted all three bullet points. The task was intended to be completed using the present tense only, but many candidates successfully used *je voudrais* to express their wishes. Many candidates' knowledge of tenses was such that a good deal of ambiguity was expressed. This caused problems when past tenses were inappropriately used. It was disappointing that a few candidates could not write an unambiguous sentence saying when their birthday is.

Paper 4F Question 4(a)/Paper 4H Question 1(a)

This question was not as popular as the alternative. Candidates generally responded fully and relevantly to the stimulus, although for some tenses were an issue. It was pleasing to see that candidates were expecting to express opinions, and most did so successfully, with many giving coherent reasons as well. A large number of Higher Tier candidates scored seventeen or more out of twenty, and more kept to the word limit this year. Exceeding it often led to inaccurate or irrelevant writing. The best candidates expressed a cohesive and logical argument very successfully, using more complex language fluently.

Paper 4F Question 4(b)/Paper 4H Question 1(b)

There were some very good responses to this question, and many achieved excellent marks while keeping to the word limit. Use of the bullet points ensured that most attempts were well-ordered and logically constructed. The best answers responded in roughly equal measure to all the bullet points, using three tenses, adjectives and more complex structures such as object pronouns, subordination and linking. Weaker candidates included irrelevant material, or else omitted points altogether. Candidates' linguistic resources were generally satisfactory, although misuse of tenses sometimes led to ambiguity. Other problems included expressions of time, such as *la semaine dernière* and *l'année prochaine* (despite these particular phrases being in the stimulus); and copying parts of the stimulus without manipulating the language at all.

Paper 4H Question 2(a)

Fewer candidates attempted this question than the alternative. The stimulus for this question caused very few problems. A small number of candidates appeared to think that *un accident* meant *un incident*, and produced irrelevant work. The title *Un petit accident* was regrettably interpreted by most candidates as one involving broken bones, blood and, in some cases, death. They were not penalised for this. Many candidates produced highly successful, coherent, well-linked pieces, developing them with opinions and reasons. Many candidates clearly liked the question, producing creative and imaginative responses. Some weaker candidates took the opportunity to include pre-learned material, not all of which was entirely relevant. It was encouraging to see that the vast majority of candidates kept to the word limit. Those few who did exceed it often penalised themselves by including irrelevant material or by increasing the incidence of error in their work. Some candidates had difficulty with the perfect tense and its agreements. Modal verbs such as *vouloir*, *pouvoir* and *devoir* were poorly manipulated. The past imperfect tense was used appropriately by a number of candidates, which was encouraging. Past infinitives and object pronouns were seldom encountered, although candidates in certain centres produced phrases using *après avoir/après être*; *ayant* with a past participle; *avant de* with an infinitive; *en* with a present participle; and the present subjunctive.

Paper 4H Question 2(b)

The best answers were coherent, well-linked pieces, with opinions and reasons. Some were also creative and confident. Candidates mostly praised trains and bikes; while condemning cars and planes, they explored how difficult it was going to be to do without the latter. Many used good, relevant vocabulary, including: *couche d'ozone*, *pistes cyclables*, *effet de serre*, *oxyde de carbone* and *gaspiller*. Weaker candidates' language was frequently over-ambitious and they did not really have the resources to tackle this question. They were unable to do more than list forms of transport and evaluate them in the simplest terms. The linguistic strengths and weaknesses described above were also evident in this question.

General points

- It was pleasing to see that most candidates observed the rubric for these papers. They kept to the word count recommendations and did not answer all the optional questions. Candidates who failed to observe the rubrics were given no advantage, and they may even have penalised themselves.
- If candidates want to write out a draft version of their work, they should do so on the blank pages of the answer booklet, and then write the best version in the correct place. The rough version should then be crossed out.
- The use of supplementary answer sheets should be avoided. It delays the marking process, and suggests to candidates that it is acceptable to write more than the word limits require.
- Some candidates answered both the options (a) and (b), thinking that the placing of a cross in the box at the top was sufficient to indicate which was their selected answer. They should always cross out the discarded response, so that examiners have no doubt as to what the candidate intends.
- Candidates should always write in ink not pencil.
- Candidates should be reminded of the importance of neat handwriting and good presentation in their answers.
- Candidates should not write in the margins or in the 'Leave blank' column.
- This year, a significant number of candidates were inappropriately entered for the Higher Tier of the examination, where they found Question 2 beyond their capabilities.

1226 French Paper 4C - Written Coursework

This year coursework was again much more popular than the examination. As in the past, it was pleasing to see that the vast majority of centres benefited from this choice, with candidates producing good work according to their potential, and teachers administering and assessing the work very successfully. Different entry patterns in the last few years have meant that there were very few low-scoring candidates.

Tasks

The best tasks allowed candidates to use a variety of tenses, structures and vocabulary in each unit of work. They demonstrated linking, opinion and logical argument. Weaker candidates were able to write simple sentences and paragraphs without too much adherence to stimulus material.

Examples of successful tasks this year included:

- Use of minimal stimulus, such as bullet points
- Differentiated tasks for candidates of different abilities
- Holidays, particularly ones where things went wrong
- A disastrous day
- School and future plans - but only when some variety was added, e.g. a description of a teacher or of a special day at school or of an ideal school
- A restaurant visit - again, especially when things went wrong
- Home town - description, history, opinions - or from an outsider's point of view
- A film or book review (but only the best candidates were successful here)
- Biography of a famous person or member of the family, with reasons given for the choice of subject
- Creative and imaginative pieces of work
- Current affairs and social issues
- Health (especially those who wrote from a particular viewpoint, e.g. that of an alcoholic or heavy smoker or a celebrity)
- The importance of friendship
- Agony aunt letters/replies

Poorer tasks did not encourage candidates to use more than one tense. Language was consequently repetitive, with excessive reliance on the stimulus, and there was little standardisation of task choice within the centre.

Examples of less successful tasks included:

- Lists; labelling of pictures - for candidates who could do more than this
- Tasks which relied too much on the use of writing frames
- School life and routine
- Work experience
- Descriptions of house or family
- The environment - for candidates without the resources to deal with this
- Interviews - these did not allow candidates to use linking
- Titles covering two or more topic areas
- Hotel booking letters - especially if just copied from a stimulus
- Hotel complaint letters - likewise
- CV and letter of application
- Healthy eating - for candidates without the resources to deal with this
- Je me présente - often very dull writing was produced here

Successful stimulus material was brief, often in the form of title plus bullet points. Some centres used past exam papers (Specification 1226 Paper 4) to good effect. Most stimulus material was in French, although moderators noted some in English. Often, centres chose safe and predictable topics, and only the better candidates were able to develop these quite unpromising titles into good pieces of work that fulfilled the criteria for higher marks. 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 only became a problem when candidates copied whole chunks of language from them - and sometimes the same copied work was seen across a whole centre. Moderators are looking to see how individual candidates manipulate the language to make it their own.

Candidates in a few centres were penalised because they had not been asked to fulfil the specification requirement of writing three units of work from three different topic areas. Where candidates had written two units from one topic area, only the better of the two marks was taken into consideration, and the other mark was discounted. Clearly this had a serious effect on the overall marks of such centres. As in previous years, the most common problem was setting both school and work experience (Education, training and employment) and holidays and home town (At home and abroad). Centres are reminded to check the specification carefully before setting tasks.

The excessive length of submissions was an issue in some centres. It is quite possible to obtain good marks for work which meets the specification demands: 250-350 words overall for grades G-D, and 500-600 words overall for grades C-A*. The three units of work should be of roughly equal length, including the one done under controlled conditions.

A few centres did not meet the requirements for controlled conditions, and they too were penalised by having the marks of one unit discounted. Controlled conditions work must be done in the classroom and under the supervision of a teacher. Stimulus material and a dictionary are allowed; reference materials, notes or first drafts of the work are not permitted. Candidates may prepare the work in advance and may wish to memorise parts of it; it is not however in the spirit of the examination to invite candidates to learn by heart pieces of French which they have not composed themselves, such as textbook pages.

Very few centres had arranged for candidates to draft their work. If candidates do make drafts of their work, these must not be corrected by the teacher. Feedback should only be given in the form of general comments; the use of form CFS1 is designed for this purpose. 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.

Candidates are encouraged to use ICT when composing their coursework. They are however urged to check spellings carefully, especially accents. The use of Internet translation devices is not permitted, and centres are asked not to authenticate work produced in this way. In general, moderators were again impressed this year by the improvement in standards of word-processed work. When not using ICT, candidates must ensure that their handwriting is legible.

Assessment

On the whole, this was very well done by centres. Some were slightly generous but consistently so. Internal standardisation was usually successful. The three marking grids provided in the specification were well used, although sometimes too much credit was given to work copied from a stimulus, to pedestrian or formulaic work, and to work which was too short to meet the criteria. It is necessary to take into consideration both the length and type of task when awarding a mark for Communication and Content. Here too use of linking needs to be considered, and the extent to which the candidate expresses a logical argument. Under the heading of Knowledge and Application of Language, consideration must be given to the amount of ambiguity produced by poorly formed verbs. Tenses used as an afterthought, rather than being integral to the piece, are unlikely to help the candidate gain high marks here. In the Accuracy grid, it should be noted that the majority of verb forms have to be correct in order to achieve three or more marks. Correct use of accents, for example on past participles, is crucial. To gain four marks or more for Accuracy implies use of more complex language, not simply the absence of error.

Administration

Most centres were extremely helpful in following the requirements of the Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination (the ICE booklet), which are issued well in advance of coursework deadlines. When centres failed to do this, it held up the moderation process and in some cases penalised candidates. There were various specific problems, and centres are asked to note the following:

- The sample should arrive on or before the deadline.
- The latest version of form CF1 (coursework front sheet) should be used.
- It should include the candidate number and be signed by the teacher and the candidate. Centres should note that unsigned work is rejected.
- It should contain an accurate word count and an indication of topic areas chosen.
- Addition of marks should be carefully checked and double-checked.
- Transfer of marks from CF1 to OPTEMS should also be carefully checked and double-checked.
- The OPTEMS form should be completed in full, without error, and should be signed on every page.
- The top copy of the OPTEMS should be sent to Edexcel, not to the moderator.
- If separated, OPTEMS pages should be placed in their correct order.
- Absent candidates should be marked X not zero.
- It is unhelpful to moderators if work is covered in ticks and other marks.
- The sample should be arranged in candidate number order.
- If a sample candidate is absent, then the work of the next candidate on the list should be included.
- The work of the candidates with the highest and lowest marks in the centre should be included.
- The work of a candidate awarded zero should always be included.
- Work in the folder should be in the same order as on the front sheet.
- There should be no loose pages - especially ones with no name on.
- Stimulus material should be submitted - not references to pages in a textbook, or the textbook itself.
- 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.
- When moderators point out anomalies and inaccuracies on CF1 and OPTEMS forms, it is the responsibility of centres to inform Edexcel about any changed marks.

Statistics

Paper 1F - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	34	29	24	20	16	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 1H - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	30	25	20	16	12	10	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 2F - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	27	22	18	14	10	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 2H - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	40	34	28	23	17	14	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 3F - Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	32	27	22	17	12	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 3H - Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	34	28	22	16	10	7	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 4F - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	30	26	23	20	17	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 4H - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	38	32	26	20	14	11	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 4C - Written Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	60	51	45	39	33	27	21	15	9	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0

Overall Subject Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Total Uniform Mark	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40	0

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