

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCSE

GCSE French Short Course (3226)

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Summer 2007

Publications Code UG019142

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3226/1F Foundation Listening

The questions which require the recognition of single lexical items (Q1-5), or short phrases (Q6-10), 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. The vocabulary in Q6-10 was less well known and Q6 *Je vais au bord de la mer* was the least well known. Q9 *J'aime aller dans les grandes villes* and Q7 *J'aime aller à la montagne* were also less well known.

Q11 required candidates to understand paraphrasing and was well done 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.

Performance on the multiple choice questions (Q12-13) was better than last year and many candidates did well on these questions, although there is still a tendency in this question type for weaker candidates to tick the answer containing the first word/s they hear in the relevant part of the extract. Q12a and Q13b were the most accessible and Q13a the hardest. In Q13a there was evidence that candidates ticked the first word they heard, on hearing *Les restaurants étaient un peu chers donc à midi nous avons mangé des sandwiches sur la plage*, many incorrectly ticked answer (i) *(ils) sont allés au restaurant*. Even in question 13 (b) there were many candidates who on hearing *J'ai dépensé 70 € en tout, 25 € en cadeaux pour ma famille et 45 € pour le car*, immediately ticked answer (i) 70€ instead of the correct answer 45 € (iii). Q12 c and Q12 b also proved difficult. In all these questions many candidates failed to listen to the whole and ticked answers based on random key words/ times, often the first one heard.

Q 14-15 required answers in English and as always proved a good discriminator. Generally the questions were accessible for the majority of candidates.

In Q14 many candidates scored two of the available 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 Q15 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 the questions with answers such as *they deliver to your door/ you don't have to go out* in Q14 and *there is a risk of identity theft/ fraud, they might send the wrong thing, you might be out when they deliver* in Q15

There were few rubric infringements although unfortunately there were still some candidates who answered 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

3226/1H Higher Listening

In Q1 many candidates scored full marks, giving them a confident start to the paper. Weaker candidates generally experienced the same problems as Foundation level candidates. 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.

Performance on the multiple choice questions (Q3-4) was better than last year and many candidates did well on these questions, although there is still a tendency in this question type for weaker candidates to tick the answer containing the first word/s they hear in the relevant part of the extract. Q3a and Q4b were the most accessible and Q4a the hardest. In Q4a there was evidence that candidates ticked the first word they heard, on hearing *Les restaurants étaient un peu chers donc à midi nous avons mangé des sandwiches sur la plage*, many incorrectly ticked answer (i) *(ils) sont allés au restaurant*. Even in question 4b there were many candidates who on hearing *J'ai dépensé 70 € en tout, 25 € en cadeaux pour ma famille et 45 € pour le car*, immediately ticked answer (i) 70€ instead of the correct answer 45 € (iii). Q3 c and Q3 b also proved difficult. In all these questions many candidates failed to listen to the whole and ticked answers based on random key words/times, often the first one heard.

Question 5 required the recognition of opinions and was well done particularly by the better candidates. Parts (ii), (iv) and (v) were the most accessible and part (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 .

Question 2 required answers in French . 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*,, thus creating a different meaning from the one intended.

As always the questions requiring answers in English were a good discriminator. There were some good 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 characterised by the following . Firstly mishearing of words/ lazy listening eg in Q6a *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 Q6a 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 Q6 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 Q7 *sourire* was often interpreted as *souris* with answers such as *watch out for mice*. Secondly latching on to key words and building answers around them eg in Q6 b *le chômage* gave rise to answers such as *at least she's not unemployed, there is a lot of unemployment*. Finally 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 Q6 *gets good tips, works with her friends, the people are nice, she likes her boss*, Q7 *how to carry things, how to use the coffee machine*. *To have a positive attitude* was the most common correct answer. (Q7)

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.

3226/2F AND 2H - Foundation and Higher Speaking

Examiners' Report

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 confident with the format of the examination and there was an even performance across the majority of rôle-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 A3, *horaire and dépliant* were not widely known. In A6, lots of *gummis* and *magasins* were bought and *journal* and *taille-crayon* rarely heard. There are 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.

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 ?* was 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. 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.

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. *Je dois arriver quand ? 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 rôle-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 *Solution?* and *Attendre longtemps?*, and a significant number of candidates failed to read the rubric at the top of the card, particularly in C1, 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 role-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 *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 by a more than thorough preparation of the topic in many centres, where an increasing number 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.

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 only produced short responses. These questions are at times non-sequitur and therefore often confused candidates who were unable to follow the thread of the conversation. 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

The conversation is marked globally 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 rest of the topic. These candidates could not be awarded high marks. Similarly it is unacceptable for a candidate to produce a presentation with no follow-up questions on other aspects of the topic as this does not satisfy the requirements of the examination which requires in the assessment criteria for the candidate to respond to questions.

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.

- 2-3 minutes Foundation Level conversation
- 4-5 minutes Higher Level conversation

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

The higher levels of the assessment criteria require a wide range of structure and vocabulary both in terms of the questions and responses. High marks cannot be scored when a candidate is offered simple questions; a series of closed questions or simply respond in simple terms to alternatives offered by the teacher-examiner.

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 and candidates can only access the higher mark bands if they are asked a wide range of question types.

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 topic 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

Full marks cannot be awarded 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.

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 criteria needed to access the higher mark bands were not achieved.

In the conversation section 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 cannot gain high marks. Similarly, 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.

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 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.
- Centres should ensure that they follow the correct rôle-play sequence for 3226 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 would like to thank teacher-examiners for their efforts this year.

3226/3F - 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 (v) where candidates scored full or almost full marks. Candidates seemed to have difficulty however with parts (iii) and (iv) presumably through a lack of knowledge of vocabulary. Q3 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 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 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 was a question type which has appeared very often in past papers, was not as successful 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 choosing the correct word. Part (i) was attempted the most successfully, but the other parts seemed to be the result of much guesswork.

The English question 5 however, was attempted with much more success. Most candidates scored full marks in part (a) and part (d) was also quite successfully attempted. However a lack of knowledge of vocabulary, close reading and clear English expression seemed to account for the less successful answers in the other parts.

3226/3H - Higher Reading and Responding

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. Q4 which was a question type which has appeared very often in past papers, was not as successful 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 chose the correct word. Part (i) was attempted the most successfully, but the other parts seemed to be the result of much guesswork.

Q2 tested candidates' ability to read a sentence and summarise its subject matter. This was quite well attempted on the whole especially part (v). However, part (iv) was not done very well at all.

Q3 required candidates to make inferences from the text about Margot and Camille's personalities. This proved to be rather difficult with the majority of candidates not scoring full marks due mostly to a lack of close reading and a snatching of random parts of the text.

Q5, the English question was a very good discriminator. It 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". 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.

3226 French Paper 4C - Written Coursework

As in the past, it was pleasing to see 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
- 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
- Home town - description, history, opinions - or from an outsider's point of view

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:

- Tasks which were on the Full Course topic area list but not on the Short Course list
- Lists; labelling of pictures - for candidates who could do more than this
- Tasks which relied too much on the use of writing frames
- Interviews - these did not allow candidates to use linking
- Titles covering two or more topic areas
- CV and letter of application

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 two units of work from two 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: 200-250 words overall for grades G-D, and 350-400 words overall for grades C-A*. The two units of work should be of roughly equal length.

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	25	18	15	12	10	8	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	25	18	15	12	10	7	5	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	25	16	13	10	8	6	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	25	18	15	12	9	6	4	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	40	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	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	<40

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