

GCSE

French

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1925**

Report on the Units

June 2006

1925/MS/R/06

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GCSE French 1925

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2351/01/02 – Listening

General Comments

The 5 minute reading time had clearly been put to good use by candidates who are obviously well coached by their teachers to check the required language of response, the meaning of separate question words, the nature of the example and so on. This was a particularly pleasing aspect of performance in the examination.

This year's French Listening examination was generally very well answered by candidates at both Tiers. At Foundation Tier marks were very high, with many candidates scoring over 40 marks out of 50. This can be accounted for in part by the drop in entry of those candidates who in the past may have obtained the lower grades, Modern Languages no longer being a compulsory subject at Key Stage 4. One particular exercise on Section 1 carrying 10 marks was generally found to be very easy, a fact which contributed to the high marks. Although Section 2 was found more demanding, most Foundation Tier candidates managed to score relatively well on all four exercises. At Higher Tier, candidates found little difficulty with Section 2 and scored very well. Section 3, however, was found demanding, particularly in the last three exercises and total marks were not usually as high as at Foundation Tier. It should be added, however, that there were many excellent performances producing very high marks.

Examiners mentioned that candidates' handwriting was in some cases very untidy. Candidates must be reminded of the need in particular to write individual letters clearly in the letter-selection exercises and to make it quite clear, if they change their mind, which answer they wish to have marked. The superimposition of one letter on another, making the intended answer unclear, will lead to the withholding of the mark. Rubrics were generally well understood at each Tier and, except on the final two exercises of Section 3, candidates generally attempted all questions.

Section 1

The opening exercise is always designed to be a gentle introduction to the examination providing individual items of simple vocabulary. Candidates generally scored very well, usually gaining the full 5 marks. There were occasional errors on Q.2, where the bus was selected for *à pied* or on Q.5 where some selected the fish for *du poulet*.

The second exercise, however, did not prove so easy. Despite the fact that marks were generally as high on the Tier as a whole, it was on this exercise (testing comprehension of fruit and vegetable vocabulary) that errors were most often made. There was confusion between *cerises* and *champignons* (Q.7); *raisin* (Q.8) also caused some problems; there was the expected confusion between *pommes* (Q.6) and *pommes de terre* (Q.10).

Exercise 3 was, however, better answered, most candidates being confident in the vocabulary of forms of transport. On Q.11 the motorcycle was sometimes selected for *la bicyclette* and on Q.15 the car was sometimes picked for *l'autocar*.

As mentioned in the introductory remarks, Exercise 4, testing the vocabulary of holiday destinations and activities, was extremely well answered, the majority of candidates scoring the full 10 marks. Where there was error, it tended to be on Q.19 where letter O was chosen instead of L. There were virtually no scores of fewer than 8 out of 10 and no candidates confused letters for the destination with those for the activity.

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The final exercise on the section was a little more demanding. Most selected the correct age on Q.21 and the match between *faire du cheval* and *l'équitation* (Q.22) was well perceived. Some made errors in selecting the jobs of Dominique's parents at Q. 23 and 24 but it was only the last question which caused widespread difficulties; the majority of candidates selected *malade*, apparently failing to make the connection between *quatre-vingt-dix ans* and *vieux*.

Section 2

Higher Tier candidates scored very well on this section, usually gaining at least 17 out of the 20 marks, and very often the full 20. The performance of Foundation Tier candidates was also pleasing, as the majority scored at least half marks and good numbers scored up to 15. On this section, gist comprehension is tested and candidates are required to demonstrate comprehension of phrases, opinions and tense differences rather than individual items of vocabulary.

Exercise 1 required answers in English. It was pleasing to note that very few candidates at either Tier answered in French.

Errors were fairly frequent in rendering the meeting time of *trois heures et demie* (Q.1) where either 13 was offered or candidates failed to hear the whole time and simply wrote "3 pm". *Bibliothèque* (Q.2) was generally known (even though the English spelling was rarely known!) although some offered "computer room" or "video shop". Most successfully rendered *un pantalon noir* (Q.3) although some Foundation Tier candidates expressed the colour as "white". On Q.4 *aller au cinéma* was correct in nearly all cases, but many errors were made in rendering *promenade* as "go on the promenade", "go along the pier" and the like.

Exercise 2 was of the gist comprehension type which normally features at this stage of the paper. It was pleasing to see how well many candidates performed on this exercise, though Foundation Tier candidates tended to struggle, particularly on Q.8 and on Q.9, where it was necessary to listen carefully to the whole stimulus before being able to decide that the answer was *n'a pas de préférence*. Candidates should be reminded of the importance in exercises of this type of listening carefully to the stimulus both times before selecting an answer.

The third exercise (career aspirations) was well answered by candidates at both tiers. There was occasional error on Q.10 (G selected instead of F), some had problems equating the text for Q.12 with work in a kitchen, and Q.14 (the airport) was often answered with D (the post office).

In Exercise 4, candidates were required to match pictures with episodes in the day of the unfortunate Luc. This exercise was very well done indeed by Higher Tier candidates (many scoring full marks) but those at Foundation Tier struggled somewhat. G and F were the most often correctly selected but, on Q.17, E was often selected instead of D (presumably the former looking more like a *catastrophe* than the latter) and many Foundation Tier candidates chose E instead of G at Q.15.

Section 3

On the opening two exercises, carrying 15 marks, candidates generally answered well. The other three exercises, however, which also carried 15 marks, proved considerably more difficult and high marks here were rare.

Exercise 1 tested a familiar topic (pastimes) in fairly dense and complex language. This was well answered, though candidates generally found difficulty in matching *les romans policiers* with *lecture* (Q.2) and *leur envoyant des petits mots* with *écrire des lettres* (Q.3). Some candidates left a blank on one of the three required answers on Q.3, perhaps misunderstanding the rubric which pointed out that some questions required two answers and some required three.

The text on Exercise 2 about the life of Charles Aznavour was not easy but candidates generally answered well, scoring on average 5 to 7 of the 8 marks available. The most difficult questions proved to be 7, 8 and 11. On Q.8 *épousé* was often heard as *reposé* and it was only the very best candidates who managed to match *porter secours* with *aider* on Q.11.

The nature of Exercise 3, in which candidates are required to replace the deleted word with the word actually heard, is now well established and understood. However, candidates generally found this quite difficult. Most were successful on Q.12 (*enfants*) and Q.14 (*crème solaire*) but many encountered problems in rendering *plusieurs* (Q.13) which was often simply written as *plus*. It should be noted that answers such as *plus d'une*, *plus une*, *beaucoup de*, or even *deux ou trois* were acceptable here as they conveyed the idea of *plusieurs* in this context. On Q.16 a verb was necessary, hence answers such as *piscine* were rejected whereas answers such as *sont dans la piscine* were acceptable. The negative in Q.15 (*Il ne faut pas...*) was frequently overlooked.

Exercise 4, where short answers in French were required, also caused problems to many candidates – indeed many scored no marks at all here and it was quite common for some answers not to be attempted. Candidates did not always appreciate that Simon was talking about two schools, the second one much better for him than the first (the title made it clear that he was referring to two schools). It should be explained to candidates that short (even one-word) answers are quite acceptable on exercises of this type. Many, however, struggled to understand exactly what Simon's problems were and how they were resolved in his second school. Questions 19 and 21 were the most often correct (the latter could simply be had by a positive word such as *bon*). Few were successful in rendering the concept that Simon was laughed at in his first school (Q.18) and many found it difficult to express Mme. Dufour's character (Q.20) where again a brief answer such as *sympa* was quite sufficient. Those candidates who tried to render *bon sens de l'humour* often gave an incorrect concept such as *bon sens d'amour*. This was probably the most difficult exercise on the paper.

On the final exercise, as always, questions and answers were in English. Very few candidates failed to observe this instruction. Marks were higher than on the previous exercise, but again many had problems in expressing the correct concepts. Thus on Q.22, many gave the correct concept of "fire" but there were many guesses such as "the case was lost" or "the case fell from an aircraft in flight". Q.23 led some candidates into expecting that a particular time was required; the word "exactly" was put into the question to show candidates that an exact rendering of *en début d'après-midi* was sought. Few managed to show understanding of the word *début*. Curiously, this single question was occasionally answered in French. On Q.24 good numbers showed understanding of *aucun*. Q.25 clearly asked "who *first* dealt with the incident?" *Une hôtesse de l'air* seemed not to be known or else candidates heard the more plausible answer of *pompiers* shortly after in the stimulus. On the final question, candidates had to give the idea of two (or a few) flights being delayed – many assumed that one single flight was affected or, on the other hand, that all flights were postponed.

2352/01 & 02 - Speaking (Externally Assessed)

Speaking – External Assessment

Examiners have commented this year on the high level of preparation they noticed in the candidates, who were encouraged to give of their best and to show what they knew and could do.

This year saw continuing good practice in many Centres where “nudging” candidates for elucidation (see page 9 of the Teachers’ Instructions) continued. These candidates were thus able to achieve full marks and it would be excellent to see this good practice extended to more Centres.

In the vast majority of Centres, teachers adhered to the written prompts in the Teachers’ Booklet. In some Centres, teachers re-phrased these prompts to make the task more accessible - in these cases the full two marks could not be awarded (the prompts being mandatory in substance).

In both the Discussion section and the General Conversation section, examiners reported a good variety of questioning technique, starting with more “closed” questioning and extending the candidate by asking progressively more “open” questions. The main pitfall to avoid is to use the same bank of questions so slavishly that the candidates know in advance which question they will be asked next.

Centres are reminded that the quality of recording is extremely important in the marking of the candidates. Teacher/Examiners should take care when selecting the equipment used to record the Speaking Tests. The candidate should be nearer to the microphone than the teacher/examiner, whose confident voice will naturally carry.

Cassettes and mark sheets were securely packaged and were usually sent to the external examiner in the order of recording. This was invaluable to the examiner, who was able to identify candidates and teaching groups quickly and efficiently.

Section 1 Role Plays

External examiners thought that the cards were balanced, but that each had its own area of difficulty. Centres are reminded that it is permissible to “nudge for elucidation” if the candidate’s pronunciation is poor enough to be at risk of losing the mark.

In card 1, many candidates combined the first two tasks, which is perfectly acceptable. Teacher/examiners do not have to prompt the response to the second task if the candidate has already communicated it correctly. Indeed this could have the effect of putting the candidate off the rest of the role-play. In the final two tasks, the pronunciation of *chocolat* was poor and *Combien?* was not known by a surprising number of candidates.

The second card had its own area of difficulty. The first two tasks were well executed and produced few problems. The next task of asking for a campsite proved to be difficult for a significant number of candidates, but the final task was completed well by the vast majority of candidates.

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The issue in card three was one of pronunciation. The first task saw some anglicised pronunciation of *ticket/billet* but the next task was usually competently handled. There was some confusion over the number in task 3, many candidates opting for *six ans*. It was here that some skilful nudging by the teacher allowed the candidate to score full marks. The final task proved to be accessible to the majority of candidates.

The issue in card four was again one of pronunciation. There was some anglicised pronunciation of *cantine* in task 3, which was a shame as it was only one of the three suggestions offered on this card. The first two tasks were competently handled by the majority of candidates, but *Combien?* proved again to be too difficult for some.

The pronunciation of *eau* or *jus* proved to be a hurdle to some candidates in card five, but the sort of sandwich proved to be very accessible in task 3. The final task of asking the cost was again competently handled by the majority.

The first task on card six was well communicated. Candidates then struggled with the pronunciation of *grammes* in task two but recovered with an appropriate flavour in task three. The final task was accessible.

In card seven the candidates, surprisingly, found the pronunciation of *vélo* a challenge but were able to express a period of time accurately. There was confusion between *seize* and *six* in task three, with many candidates resisting the “nudges” of their teacher/examiner.

In card eight the majority were able to ask for a vegetable but some candidates struggled with the pronunciation of *grammes*. The third task on this card was perceived to be the most difficult, with a significant number of candidates unable to communicate correctly the concept of “that’s all”.

Section 2 Role Plays

External examiners thought that the cards were balanced and fair, although each brought its own difficulty.

In card 1, there was some confusion over the concept of housework but some skilful nudging enabled many candidates to score at least one mark. In the final two tasks, candidates often scored only one of the two marks. In task three either *mes* or *les* was required, but many candidates omitted the concept. In the final task, candidates were often able to say *Je voudrais* but were then unable to communicate the infinitive form of the verb.

In card 2, some candidates omitted the verb in either task one or task two and hence could not be awarded the full marks. The vast majority of candidates were able to communicate the concept of *hier* in task three but task four proved to be difficult. Many candidates gave the means of paying rather than the price. Again some skilful nudging here meant that candidates could be awarded at least one mark.

The first task in card 3 produced a whole range of correct interpretations and it was extremely pleasing to hear candidates expressing symptoms so accurately. The next two tasks were handled well but the final task proved to be difficult for a significant number of candidates.

In card 3, the first two tasks were handled well, although a surprising number of candidates left out either the article in the first task or the verb in the second. The vast majority communicated the answer to the unprepared question in task 3 and in task four the main issue was the pronunciation of *passepport*.

The first task on this card was accessible for the majority of candidates but there was some anglicised pronunciation of *problème*. The less able candidates found identifying the problem with the car extremely difficult. In the final task, the pronunciation of *carte de crédit* proved to be a problem for some.

The first task on card 6 caused few problems and the majority of candidates communicated this concept extremely well. In the second task, some candidates omitted the “school” element from the task or the teacher/examiner asked them the next question before the candidate had a chance to finish. Task three was handled well but in task four, *acheter* was sometimes omitted.

In card 7 there was sometimes an anglicised pronunciation of *menu* but it was in tasks 2 and 4 where candidates were unable to score full marks due to faulty pronunciation. The vast majority of candidates communicated the vegetables required accurately.

The first task on card 8 proved to be challenging, with many candidates omitting the notion of *Normalement / D'habitude*. In the next task, pronunciation proved to be a problem for a minority but the third task was usually competently handled. A significant number of candidates combined tasks three and four, without realising that they had unwittingly answered the unprepared question.

Section 3 Role Plays

There were many excellent accounts given by candidates this year, with the majority well practised in the use of the perfect tense. The good practice of treating this section of the exam as a role-play has continued, with few monologues. It needs to be emphasised that without occasional intervention from teacher/examiners, the candidate cannot score the very top mark in the assessment grid. It was extremely encouraging to hear more correct formation of reflexive verbs than in previous years.

It was also encouraging to hear candidates giving reasons and justifications without having to be prompted by the teacher/examiner.

Card 1 proved to be extremely accessible to the majority of candidates. They found the notion of *bloc sanitaire* difficult to communicate, but meals and shopping did not seem to present any difficulties. The next concept, *charger la voiture* also caused some candidates some difficulty. The final three boxes contained familiar concepts and candidates moved through these three boxes with confidence.

The second card again proved to be accessible, and where candidates followed the headings of each section, there were some excellent accounts. In the second section, candidates stumbled over the concept of *enregistrer les valises* but communicated the remainder of the first two sections well. In the third section, *trouver les sièges* proved to be a hurdle, but the remainder of the card gave rise to some excellent accounts.

In card 3 candidates built their confidence quickly with the account of the journey to the school, but getting on the coach proved to be more difficult. Candidates felt confident in the third section and gave their impressions and reasons. There was some confusion over *rencontrer la famille* in the fourth section, but the final section proved to be very accessible and candidates gave some very good accounts. It was also particularly pleasing to hear some good renditions of *admirer le paysage* in the fourth section.

Card 4 may have looked less accessible but candidates who used this card produced some excellent accounts. The first three sections were competently handled, though in the final two sections, the concepts of *courir après le voleur* and *recevoir une récompense*, proved to be the most difficult for candidates to communicate.

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The suggestions on card 5 produced some excellent accounts, and the only area of difficulty appeared to be *charger la voiture* in the first section. The accounts were excellent, with imaginative detail added by many candidates. In the final section on this card, candidates often struggled with *mettre* but at the end were comfortable with eating out in a restaurant.

The majority of the vocabulary in card 6 was familiar to candidates, and there were some very good accounts of the day. The arrival of the postman caused some problems for some candidates at the end of section one, as did *recevoir* at the beginning of section two. The remainder of the card was extremely well handled, with the exception of *des amis anglais aussi* which caused problems for some. It was pleasing to hear the correct use of reflexives on this card.

The situation on card 7 was handled extremely well, with some very good accounts of the narrative. Some candidates found *attendre le patron* challenging, although many were able to add some detail to the account. In the next section candidates found *remplir* difficult but the remaining two sections of this card proved to be very accessible.

The final card produced some excellent accounts of the short visit to France, with candidates adding imaginative detail to the activities in the first three sections. The two concepts they found difficult were *s'arrêter* and *minuit*, both in the second section of the card.

Presentation

There is clear evidence of excellent practice in the majority of Centres. It is clear that candidates have chosen a topic that they **want** to speak about and that they have taken the time to research and learn their topic.

There was again clear evidence of the correct use of the cue card; this aide-mémoire allowed some weaker candidates to score a respectable mark. Where candidates rushed through their presentation, the pronunciation and intonation suffered. Teacher/examiners should not hesitate to slow the candidate down if it is obvious that the candidates' performance is suffering in their haste to deliver the presentation.

The candidates should be encouraged in this section to express opinions and then to justify those opinions – using a wide variety of linguistic structures for both opinion and justification -- to gain the higher marks. This explains why it was very rare to hear accounts which warranted a mark of 4 this year,.

Discussion and General Conversation

The discussion of the candidate's presentation should last for approximately two minutes (Teachers' Booklet page 5). In some Centres the discussion consisted of one question and it is difficult to imagine how this could possibly last for two minutes. As teacher/examiners would know the chosen topic in advance, six or seven questions could have been prepared before the speaking test.

Please remember that the two topics for General Conversation must be chosen from among the four in the box in the Teachers' Booklet. Centres are also reminded that it is their responsibility to write the title of the Presentation and each topic on the working mark sheet.

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The good practice of starting with “closed” questioning and progressing to “open ended” questioning was obvious in the majority of Centres. Candidates were able to use a variety of tenses. Foundation Tier candidates, in particular, impressed by their ability to manipulate tenses. Apart from the Present Tense, the Perfect was the most well known, with the Future always proving to be less accessible.

Teacher/examiners should not fall into the trap of using exactly the same questions in exactly the same order with all their candidates.

2353 - Reading

General Comments

The examination of French Reading proved to be a fair test for candidates at both Tiers. This year candidates for the Higher Tier paper outnumbered those at Foundation. The papers contained the familiar range of topics, text styles and test types that are the regular features of this test. The vocabulary that candidates are expected to know is determined by the defined content lists of words and structures published as part of the specification.

Candidates at both Tiers appeared to have had ample time to complete the papers. On some scripts elaborate graffiti was evidence that not all candidates were able to use their time wisely to check and possibly improve their responses. It is not advisable for candidates to add any comments or "illustrations" to their answer papers.

Candidates appeared in most cases to have been well prepared for the examination, though examiners felt that this year once again a number had been inappropriately entered for the Higher Tier. There were similarly some candidates entered at Foundation who clearly would have been able to complete the Higher Tier paper successfully.

The majority of scripts were clearly and legibly presented. Some candidates, however, penalised themselves by filling in boxes carelessly or by over-writing one letter with another. Examiners make every effort to decipher poor handwriting and to judge correctly a candidate's intentions but ambiguous responses cannot be credited.

A minority of candidates left some questions unanswered. An attempt should always be made to offer an answer since it gives the chance of a mark being awarded.

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5.

These opening questions followed the established format by requiring the identification of discrete items of vocabulary. This selection proved to be quite straightforward and high scores on this exercise were common.

In question 5 *SORTIE* was occasionally not known.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-8

This topic is usually well handled and the food vocabulary tested in this exercise was very well known, though there was occasional confusion between *raisin* and *cerises*.

Exercise 3 Questions 9-13

Most candidates found this task quite easy.

Exercise 4 Questions 14-19

This exercise was generally accessible to the majority of candidates. Of all the vocabulary *pompier* was the one word to cause some difficulty.

Exercise 5 Questions 20-24

Knowledge of this topic was varied, though many scored 4 or 5 marks here. There was sometimes confusion between *vaisselle* and *lave la voiture*.

Exercise 6 Question 25

The majority of candidates scored 2 of the 3 marks here. 'A' was a common wrong answer, no doubt chosen by mis-matching *car* and *voiture*.

The rubric was very clear. Consequently only a very few candidates ticked too many boxes, thereby reducing their possible score.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

This opening exercise was quite challenging for candidates at both tiers. There was confusion between Luc and Céline. Luc was commonly selected instead of Céline for Q5. There was possibly a reluctance to use a name more than once, in spite of the clear rubric which stated that this was permissible.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Full marks were rare on this exercise, even among the Higher Tier scripts. Although the level of language used was relatively straightforward, each question required careful reading of the text and the gapped sentences. Some candidates seemed to make hasty decisions.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

This was found quite easy by Higher Tier candidates who frequently scored full marks. Foundation candidates usually scored at least 2 marks. Q13 was the most difficult.

Exercise 4 Questions 16-19

Many weaker candidates gave up at this point and offered no answers. Some others chose to try to answer from their general knowledge rather than the content of the text.

Q16. Candidates could score the mark here, either by focussing on the text *Le conducteur doit être reposé* or the idea of *après une journée de travail*. This did not prevent some candidates offering such illogical answers as "At one o'clock" or "An hour after they arrive". Some candidates misinterpreted *journée* as "journey" and *travail* as "travel".

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Q17 Many scored 1 mark for the idea of the cost of motorways but the idea of “lots of stopping places” was more elusive. The mark scheme allowed for a variety of ways of expressing this idea.

Q18 This was the easiest question, possibly because of the cognates *approche* and *destination*. Examiners were tolerant of poor English spelling.

Q19 Many answers ignored the text and referred to speed cameras or police. *Temps* was sometimes misunderstood as “time” rather than “weather”.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 1-6

Candidates did reasonably well on this opening exercise, and examiners were very tolerant of poorly spelt French, which nevertheless conveyed comprehension. Candidates should be advised to avoid lengthy answers which risk containing invalidating additions. The best answers were brief and accurate. Candidates are advised to read each question carefully and then supply only the information needed to answer it, sometimes a single word of French being sufficient. (e.g. Q1, Q2)

Ill-chosen “lifts” from the text which do not indicate comprehension, were not rewarded. (E.g Q3 *Qu'un grand foulard*.)

The two multiple-choice questions were demanding, in particular Q7 which was not commonly correct.

Exercise 2 Questions 8-16

This exercise was generally well done and there were frequent full scores. Q16 was the most demanding.

Exercise 3 Questions 17-25

As expected this was a discriminating exercise and it was pleasing to see so many candidates responding to the challenge and scoring well.

Exercise 4 Questions 26-30

This exercise was incorrectly headed as exercise 5 on the question paper. This error is regretted but fortunately very few people noticed it, and examiners were pleased to note that they could find not evidence of it having affected on the performance of candidates. This final exercise was challenging, requiring very careful reading.

Q26 The most popular answer here was “October”. Was this because *Pâques* was unknown or because it was assumed that a month was required? Or did candidates simply seize upon the only month in the text without studying the text more closely? Some showed a general lack of understanding by answering “At Easter in October”.

Q27 The French *éviter les rues étroites* was generally unknown.

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Q28, Q29 There was a lot of guesswork evident in answers offered here.

Q30 Many answers were invalidated by misunderstanding *histoires* as “history”.

2354 - Writing

Introduction

There was general agreement amongst members of the examining team that the papers were appropriate and accessible to the full range of candidates.

The decreased entry at Foundation Tier reflected both the greater interest in Coursework for students of lower ability and the continuing decline in take up of the language.

In centres where the policy of Languages for All remains in force, the full ability range was evident; though some weak students seemed to have genuine difficulty trying to remember some simple language, whereas others appeared deliberately to 'spoil' their papers.

Examiners commented that the majority of candidates were entered at the tier appropriate to their ability. However some remarked that certain candidates had suffered from the apparent policy of some centres to enter candidates only at Higher Tier regardless of whether this would maximise their opportunity of gaining a grade commensurate with their ability. Some low scoring Higher Tier candidates would undoubtedly have achieved a better grade had they attempted the more structured questions in the Foundation Tier paper.

Section 1

Question 1

It is not possible to achieve a grade on this question alone, however it does provide students of modest ability with the chance to build a good score. The pattern of assessment is very familiar and the majority of candidates were able to establish a platform for success.

In line with previous years, most used the pictures as the basis for their answers. Those who were not able to recall the words suggested by the illustrations gained marks for any item which might reasonably be found in a teenager's bedroom; food and drink however were not credited. Provided that the word offered was at least phonetically correct or had only one letter out of place a mark was given. Common errors included the repetition of the example, English spellings e.g. lamp, chair. There were recognisable but disappointing attempts at *ordinateur*, *fleur* and *livre* was very commonly *libre* which could not be rewarded as it has another meaning in French.

Question 2

The format of this question has been modified slightly so as to be in keeping with that used in other GCSE Modern Foreign Languages. Candidates are however familiar with the idea and performed quite well.

In each of the first blanks a verb form was required, in each of the second, a noun. Any verb or noun which fairly reflected the idea in the picture was rewarded, whether it fitted lexically or not. Correctly spelt words gained a bonus mark. Some candidates needlessly lost marks as they used the same word twice or repeated the example of *collège*, *école* by contrast gained a mark. English words or anglicised spellings failed to gain marks, e.g. *lesson*, *class*, *canteen*, *gym*, *studie*.

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Among the many acceptable answers were :

Task 1 *fais, étudie, travaille, ai, vais ; laboratoire, labo, salle, classe*

Task 2 *mange, déjeune, rencontre, parle ; cantine, café, restaurant, cafétéria*

Task 3 *joue, pratique ; centre de sport, gymnase, salle de sport, E.P.S*

Question 3

One consequence of the decline in the lower end of the entry is that the candidates appeared overall to be more successful in handling the format of this question, which invited them to use full sentences. There were some who left gaps and others who used note form or even wrote single word answers, but proportionately more were able to respond in connected language. Some students did not read the individual tasks closely enough and therefore lost marks e.g. Task 4 invited them to say 'when' and 5 invited them to say 'where' ; answers offering a place in Task 4 and an activity in Task 5 gained no reward.

Candidates who restrict their responses to note form cannot expect to gain more than 4 marks for Quality of Language.

Task 1 Most were able to identify a sport of choice and give a simple expression of approval. Those who clearly stated *je n'aime pas le sport* were rewarded also.

Task 2 Marks were quite easily gained here but examiners reported the poor use of prepositions with nouns e.g. *à chez moi, dans à ma chambre*.

Task 3 As many types of music share words with English, this was a fairly straightforward item. Disappointingly, many used the English word "music" and others lost out by merely quoting band names.

Task 4 Although 'where' answers were quite common, many successfully used a time phrase : *à sept heures, le soir, après le collège, le samedi*.

Task 5 A variety of likely destinations were offered : *à la piscine, en ville, chez mes copains*. Once again there was a degree of clumsiness in the use of the preposition. Activities which did not also identify a destination were not considered worthy of reward.

Task 6 Many gained marks but spelling of certain words e.g. *vaisselle, courses* was often very approximate.

The rubric invited candidates to respond in an e-mail. The use of this convention does not mean that candidates should try to adapt written French in the way that they might English in similar circumstances. Examiners can only reward reasonable attempts at correct use of the target language.

Section 2

The team of examiners felt that the two questions offered a fair choice. There seemed to be a marginal preference for Question 1.

A comparatively small number of the overall entry at Foundation Tier made no or only a minimal attempt at this question.

Higher Tier candidates commonly achieved full marks, providing themselves with an excellent platform for overall success, but as has been mentioned in the past, many still misjudge the marks and potential grades which can be achieved in this section; an outstanding performance is still only worth Grade C. Teachers of able students need to advise them to confine their responses to the simple detail required, emphasising the importance of past, present and future tenses and the expression of a simple opinion. Only 100 words are required and it is quite often possible for students to complete their answers in fewer words. Examiners once again reported excessively long, elaborate answers, rich in linguistic features which the mark scheme here does not greatly reward; this was especially disappointing for students who had then insufficient time to complete Section 3 or who had exhausted their repertoire.

There were a number of comments about poor presentation, paragraphing etc. Candidates trained to focus on each task, in a simple short paragraph consistently performed better.

Question 1

Task 1 It was reported that some students wrote nearly 100 words on this task alone. A simple reference to any of the suggestions was adequate for Communication marks to be awarded. Despite the range and extent of detail, students demonstrated a poor control of key grammatical elements e.g. confusion of *avoir* and *être* : *elle a sympa, il est les yeux bleus*. There was little attempt to use adjectives correctly, they were wrongly placed and lacked agreement e.g. *les bleus yeux, les cheveux noir*. Even gifted Higher Tier candidates were prone to offer *il a les chevaux marron*. There appears to be no successful strategy for ensuring that candidates correctly write the word *cheveux*.

Task 2 There continue to be numerous malformations of the perfect tense, missing accents, infinitives for past participles; happily for the students, some of these forms are phonetically acceptable, thus allowing them to gain a mark for Communication. Most were able to meet the minimum requirement for reward here. The lack of awareness of the geography of France was once again much in evidence but not penalised.

Task 3 The expression of an opinion is a standard element of questions at this level. There were few problems and many offered both likes and dislikes; in the case of the latter these frequently referred to the old clichés about *escargots* and *grenouilles*.

Task 4 The requirement to refer to a future time frame is well documented. For Communication, marks may be gained for a present tense verb used in conjunction with a future time phrase e.g. *l'été prochain ma copine vient en Angleterre*. For Quality of Language, a verbal structure indicating futurity is required, Therefore candidates offering only some structure such as the former will find their mark limited to a maximum of 4 out of 6. It is vital therefore that teachers guide their candidates to providing an appropriate response to the future task e.g. *l'été prochain ma copine va venir / viendra en Angleterre*. Unexpectedly this task proved to be a considerable challenge for many students, even those at Higher Tier, who could not correctly conjugate a future tense verb in the third person; as a result this question proved to be marginally more difficult than Question 2.

A good proportion succeeded in gaining Quality of Language marks by making some additional comment which revealed correct future tense usage e.g. *ce sera super, je vais aller en ville avec elle*.

Question 2

Task 1 In comparison with Question 1, responses here were much more precise. A simple description of the area of residence was all that was required and that was what most gave e.g. *ma grand-mère habite dans un petit village dans le sud-ouest de l'Angleterre*.

Task 2 Most answers here picked up on the suggestions offered and most could formulate at least one of the relevant verbs correctly in the past tense. Students did struggle with spelling. As before *vaisselle* was not successfully written and *courses* was commonly rendered as *cours*.

Task 3 This provided some interesting personal comments, *j'aime la cuisine de ma grand-mère ; ma grand-mère me donne de l'argent ; je n'aime pas aller chez ma grand-mère, mais c'est mon devoir*. Some did not quite respond to the spirit of the task, preferring to complain or to pass compliment on the area she lives in.

Task 4 As this required a first person verb form, it was much more successfully handled than the equivalent task in Question 1. *Je vais aller voir ... ; je vais visiter ...* featured frequently.

Section 3

As with Section 2, there did not appear to be any overwhelming preference for either question. Examiners were quite critical of the great length of many answers; the recommended response is approximately 150 words. When answers run to twice that amount and reveal a lack of organisation and discipline, the outcomes are often less successful.

It was frequently reported that students were not skilled in their control of tense; there were frequent unjustified and indiscriminate changes of tense, from past to present in Task 1, from future to conditional in Task 4.

Some examiners again suggested that there was an excessive use of idioms, some of which were colloquial and not always appropriate to examination answers e.g. *j'avais la gueule de bois ; il faisait un temps de cochon*. Occasionally an excessive use of idiom masked a lack of relevance and a general lack of security of control of tenses and structure.

The two questions offered the by now traditional pattern, requiring in the last two tasks opinions and justifications and some degree of speculation. This year, the questions were quite straightforward in format, especially in the first two tasks of each question. Thus, the opportunity exists for the candidates to display their linguistic competence. Many rose to the challenge, finding ways to enliven their accounts with a variety of structure and idiom; by contrast, there were numerous candidates who responded with rambling and repetitive descriptions, largely composed of simple sentences. Some such answers used up 150 words on the initial task alone.

Question 1

Task 1 Skilful candidates made the most of this simple task using complex structures such as *j'y habite depuis trois ans ; c'est une région où on peut ...* Such candidates often found some adjectives other than *intéressant, ennuyeux* to describe their area, e.g. *pittoresque, industrielle, agricole*.

Task 2 It was hoped that candidates would make a direct link between the first task and this one, identifying some cultural, historical destination. Sadly very many resorted to mundane outings with friends to discos, pizza parlours, football/rugby matches. If the past tense was correctly used, than reward was made, whatever the outing. However, those who saw this as an

opportunity to describe a visit to some far flung exotic destination had clearly misunderstood what was required and forfeited the marks.

Task 3 It is here that students must use the full power of their linguistic knowledge if they are to move up the scale. There was again a tendency towards the simplistic, both in terms of content and language. It is vital that students explain their reasons, preferably using structures other than *parce que / car*. Responses which had the most impact were those which made comparisons e.g. *il y a plus à faire qu'à la campagne ; la vie est plus calme que la vie à Londres*. There were frequent valid references to pollution e.g. *la campagne est moins polluée que la ville*.

Task 4 There was a noticeable lack of security in dealing consistently with an appropriate tense, future and conditional were used rather indiscriminately. Most were able to make some simple statement about where they would choose to live in the future, the explanation was often unclear or not stated. However, some successfully used structures using *quand, si, avant de ..., après avoir ...*. Candidates wishing to live abroad sometimes had difficulty with quite easy prepositional uses e.g. *à l'Italie ; dans à France*, they often put definite articles before place names e.g. *à la Barcelona ; à le Amsterdam*. In such cases verbs were frequently mangled e.g. *je voudrais habiterais ; j'irais travaillerai*.

Question 2

Task 1 Examiners reported a frequent misreading of the question; there were many excessively long descriptions of early morning domestic details prior to setting off for school and in some instances, there was no direct reference to school routine. Such answers went unrewarded. Of course some students are boarders, these wisely made their pre-school routine relevant by using a structure such as *comme je suis interne ...*

Task 2 To some extent this element was more successfully negotiated than the equivalent task in Question 1. Although there were many references to school sports events, there were also many details about foreign visits, exchanges, theatre and museum visits.

Task 3 This provided students with opportunity to pass comment on their school. It was particularly disappointing to note how little attention was given to the clues in the paper; despite having *équipements* on the adjacent page, *équipments* was quite common, as was *facilités*. Even *uniform* was much in evidence, often described as *unconfortable / uncomfortable*. Also on the negative side, comments were frequently focused on the lack of modern technology, *il n'y a pas assez d'ordinateurs*. There were many well made points, a large proportion of which were complimentary, *les profs sont sympa*.

Task 4 *Je pense que mon école est déjà idéale* was not an uncommon sentiment. As with Question 1, those who were most successful were those who could keep control of tense; the understanding of the sequence of tense use in *si* clauses is not as assured as one might expect. *Si je pouvais améliorer quelque chose à mon école je changerais l'uniforme parce que ce n'est pas pratique*. This is a good example of the quality of writing found at the top end of the scale. Lower down, the justifications tended to be more trite and the language less controlled : *mon école idéale sera dans le ville et pres de le beaucoup de magasins, j'adore magasins*.

One examiner commented that some candidates had little idea of how to structure their answer; too many seem to launch into their response with no obvious plan, the result is often rambling and incoherent. Although this may be true of the lower end of the range, there was much excellent writing, which had a feeling of spontaneity and fluency. For more to reach such a standard, teachers should focus their students on the importance of quality rather than quantity, of secure use of verb forms and variety of structure.

2355/01 - Speaking (Internally Assessed)

Speaking – External Assessment

General Comments

As in 2005, Moderators were positive about the quality of the work heard and the way the Speaking Test had been administered in Centres. Candidates had generally been well prepared for the tests and teachers had usually prepared their own rôles well and gave their candidates plenty of opportunities to show what they knew and could do. Moderators commented on the general standard of the conduct of the tests as being very pleasing in the vast majority of the tests and acknowledged that the professional conduct of the tests is, as ever, a crucial factor in helping candidates to achieve of their best. Teachers are evidently now very familiar with the marking scheme and they frequently adjust their questioning techniques to make the candidates work for the marks.

It is, however, a little disappointing to report that the incidence of clerical errors increased this year. Centres are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that all working totals are recorded and transcribed correctly onto the MS1 form. Please also remember to indicate the different teaching groups on this form.

The compilation of samples was very good this year. Centres usually submitted a well chosen and representative sample from the stipulated range and tried to ensure that as many of the conducting teachers as possible figured on these samples. Many Centres did send in edited samples with candidates in rank order which is extremely helpful to Moderators. They also appreciated the inclusion of a covering letter listing the appropriate candidate names and numbers as an extra check. It is also helpful when Centres separate the “sample” working mark sheets from the other mark sheets. Please remember to complete all mark sheets with care. There were several incidences of incomplete mark sheets which included a failure to complete candidate numbers and names.

A handful of Centres did not complete topic titles for the Presentation and General Conversation topics. It is important that all details on these sheets are completed and that the conducting teacher signs the sheet. Please remember also to label all cassettes carefully.

The Moderators commented on the good quality of recordings received from Centres.

As last year, the standard of internal moderation was generally satisfactory and in some cases was very professional. New Centres are reminded that they may standardise marking prior to the examination by using the teacher booklet or they may wish to cross-moderate after the examination and adjust marks if necessary across the different teaching groups prior to submission.

The marking scheme was usually well understood in Centres and the layout of the booklet which gives guidance and suggestions was found to be useful. It was noticeable however this year that some Centres did not query candidates when their meaning was unclear, nor did some Centres query dubious/anglicised pronunciation. If the pronunciation is anglicised, a mark of 1 is appropriate, not 2. Centres should also remember that for Section 2 rôle plays, where tasks which require a verb or one in which a candidate chooses to use a verb, the time frame must be correct for a mark of 2 to be awarded. Candidates usually coped well with the unexpected task and are listening well to the cue prior to their task.

Report on the Units Taken in June 2006

As last year, some Centres were generous in their application of the marking scheme in the Presentation Section. It has to be emphasised that routine expression of opinions and justifications – using a variety of linguistic structures -- is the key to gaining the highest marks. Factually correct and very accurate presentations do not necessarily fulfil the marking criteria in the scheme. The Quality of Language mark is still applied somewhat harshly in some Centres but overall this was better applied than last year.

Timings in Centres were good. There were very few cases of overlong examining.

As in 2005, the range of performance heard by Moderators was a full one, especially at Higher Tier with some extremely good performances at the top of the range. There were far more entries at the Higher Tier and very few cases of inappropriate entry. Generally, Centres assessed their candidates fairly and many Centres had only small adjustments (or none) to bring them into line with the agreed standard.

Comments on Individual Questions

As in 2005, Moderators commented that the candidate performance was equal across the role play cards and that each card was accessible, all having easier and harder tasks.

Section 1

On **Card One**, Tasks 1 and 2 were often combined: this practice is acceptable. *Chocolat* was often mispronounced.

On **Card Two**, candidates found Task 1 difficult, as “information” was not well known. Pronunciation on Task 3 was poor.

On **Card Three**, the pronunciation of *billet/ticket* was poor and frequently candidates could not give their age correctly. **16** is not well known!

On **Card Four**, candidates sometimes found it difficult to say at what time school started.

On **Card Five**, *jus d'orange* was frequently rendered as *juice d'orange*. Surprisingly, some teachers accepted this as a mark of 2.

On **Card Six**, the pronunciation on task 2 was poor and candidates did not always know how to say that “that is all.”

On **Card Seven**, pronunciation on Task 1 was often poor and yet again, **16** was not well known.

On **Card Eight**, “that is all” was not well known.

All other tasks were usually handled well by candidates.

Section 2

The cards were found to be accessible and were, as last year, equally balanced in terms of the areas of difficulty on each card.

On **Card One**, Task 2 often resulted in the omission of a verb which limited the mark to 1. Pronunciation of *hier* was also poor.

Report on the Units Taken in June 2006

On **Card Two**, *vaisselle* was poorly pronounced. Very few candidates were able to offer jobs/chores other than the suggested ones. On Task 3 the article was required for a mark of 2. This was sometimes left out by candidates but mistakenly awarded by teachers.

On **Card Three**, there were fewer cases of candidates using *pour* in response to *Depuis combien de temps?* On the last task, only a few candidates were successful in rendering the notion of not taking aspirin. Many relied on the use of the verb *manger*.

On **Card Four**, the pronunciation of *euro* and *eau minérale* was poor.

On **Card Five**, the omission of a verb on Task 2 prevented candidates from scoring a mark of 2. On Task 3 most were able to say when they had lost the item but few could render where they had lost the item. Some candidates were not familiar with car vocabulary such as *le moteur* and *le pneu*. On Task 3, most were able to say when they had lost the item but few could render the concept of “ago” with time.

On **Card Six**, the pronunciation of *problème* was very anglicised. On Task 2 some candidates were not familiar with car vocabulary such as *le pneu*, *le moteur*. On Task 3 the concept of “ago” with time was not well done. Some candidates gave poor pronunciation on *crédit*.

On **Card Seven**, Tasks 1 and 2 were sometimes combined which was quite acceptable, but, on Task 4 they could not always include the concept of “to buy.”

On **Card Eight**, most candidates coped well with *je fais les devoirs* but *normalement* was often not included on Task 1. The pronunciation of *deux* was also a problem for some Foundation candidates.

Tasks not mentioned above were generally well done by candidates.

Section 3

Generally, the cards were judged to be accessible and at an appropriate and equally balanced level of difficulty. Each card had its own more difficult tasks as well as its easier ones. There were fewer cases of monologues and generally this section was well conducted in Centres. Across the cards, the sections featuring daily routine, eating, drinking, free time, and travel were well done. Moderators commented that there were some fluid and able performances on this role play and that generally, candidates had been well prepared for this part of the test. Many were able to express opinions and justify them well and could add extra interesting detail. The ablest performances featured an impressive ability to use a variety of structures and a good range of vocabulary.

Areas of difficulty were as below:

Card 1 *Se laver dans le bloc sanitaire* and *charger la voiture*. *Se promener* was less well dealt with than *faire une promenade*.

Card 2 *Enregistrer* was not well known and there were several *singes* instead of *sièges*!

Card 3 The past participle of *voir* caused problems to weaker candidates. *Rencontrer la famille* was also found generally to be a trickier idea to render.

Card 4 *Voir* and *courir* were not well conjugated and some were not familiar with *récompense*.

Card 5 *Charger* was again not well known and the past participle of *mettre* caused problems.

Card 6 *Recevoir des cadeaux* and *rencontrer* caused problems.

Card 7 *Attendre le patron* and *remplir les rayons* were generally not done well.

Card 8 Some candidates could not conjugate *s'arrêter* correctly and did not realise that they had boarded the boat at midnight. Again, *sièges* caused problems.

Presentation

As last year, there were some excellent presentations on an interesting range of topics. It was pleasing to hear only a small number of Centres in which large numbers of candidates had prepared the same topic title. It is against the spirit of the Specification for all the candidates in a group to prepare the same topic. As last year, the best performances were those in which a range of opinions and justifications featured and which had a clear structure. Many candidates had clearly worked hard on their topic and spoke with confidence, and this enabled them to go into the conversation section of the examination with increased confidence.

Discussion and General Conversation

The conduct of this section of the examination was very professional. Centres usually followed up the Presentation Section with a good range of questions which were at an appropriate level of difficulty. Nearly all Centres were well aware of the need to ask questions which could elicit a range of tenses and opinions. The candidature was, as mentioned above, an able one. The Moderators were impressed by the way in which candidates often spoke in a spontaneous manner and the way in which they could respond to the unexpected questions. The best performances, as ever, whether at Foundation or Higher Tier, resulted from conversations in which the Examiner listened to the candidate and followed up leads or allowed the more able to develop their train of thought without letting them deliver a pre-rehearsed monologue. In certain Centres the genuine interaction between candidate and Examiner resulted in some enjoyable listening! Timings were well observed and candidates were given the chance to score well in the Quality of Language section of the examination. As last year, such performances showed how hard both candidates and teachers had worked prior to the examination.

2356 – Writing Coursework

Introduction

The full details and conditions applying to Writing Coursework are set out in the Coursework Guidance section (*Appendix E*) of the current Specification, and all teachers should naturally expect to make themselves fully conversant with these regulations and with all aspects of the criteria. Furthermore, it is recommended that the requirements and marking criteria are also made clear to candidates, so that a good understanding of what is required of them and how to interpret their own progress may help towards increased motivation.

Assessment

The following points are a reminder of the mandatory requirements of the current Specification:

- A candidate's submission must be drawn from **3 different Contexts** (and therefore not sub-Contexts). The five *Contexts* offered in total, with their *sub-Contexts*, are listed in *Appendix A* of the Specification (p.27) and are subsequently glossed in considerable detail (pp.42 - 48). It will be realised that this differentiation of *Contexts* is designed to lead candidates to explore different fields of vocabulary and phrasing and to offer greater potential for different task related structures. Implicit here is therefore also the prompt to sample more widely from within the *Defined Content* for the language.
- Each candidate's submission must include a minimum of **one** item completed under *Controlled Conditions*. Teachers are urged to 'over-insure' where candidate attendance is known to be poor.
- A candidate may have recourse to **a dictionary only** when writing under *Controlled Conditions*. *Controlled* items may under no circumstances be word-processed.
- A candidate must cover successfully all 3 principal tenses or time frames - present, past and future - within the overall submission. Other wise they may not score a *Communication* mark of more than 6 for *any* of the three pieces submitted.
- **Length:** the directives here are generous, but teachers are reminded that particularly short items within a short overall word count may not be entitled to the full range of **Communication** marks. This reflects the standard length recommendations for the different grade levels. (*Ref: Appendix E, para. 5.2, and the Notes following the Communication mark scheme, para. 6.*). Thus: -
 - an item of **less than 140 words** within an overall word count of less than 400 words may not score more than **7** marks for Communication.
 - an item of **less than 90 words** within an overall word count of less than 250 words may not score more than **5** for Communication.
 - an item of **less than 40 words** within an overall word count of less than 100 words may not score more than **3** for Communication.

Quality of Language marks are not as such similarly reduced, but the outcome is likely to be self-penalising within both mark-schemes.

Administration

Centres are required to submit a 'Centre Authentication Statement' (form CCS160) **signed by all teachers** involved in the assessments. *Candidate* Authentication Statements need not be submitted, *but* they should be retained at Centres until the publication of results, in case of query. However, candidates are required to verify for the Moderator the authenticity of their own work by signing the individual Coursework Coversheet as indicated.

Centres need not wait for the 15th May Coursework deadline to submit marks to the Moderator. Early receipt should in fact help to speed up the return of the request for samples.

Centres with fewer than 11 candidates should send all their candidates' work, with the authorised list of marks as soon as possible, and without waiting for a request.

Addition of marks and their transcription should be very carefully checked, to reduce the time-consuming administrative procedures for errors.

Treasury-tagged work is greatly preferred by Moderators, this being much easier to work with. However, each candidate's work should be properly collated.

Task details, with clear assigning to different teachers where appropriate, should be included with the samples. Without these it is not possible for the Moderator to consider this element of the *Communication* mark, except to some extent eventually – but clearly rather unsatisfactorily – by comparison with other candidates' items.

Candidates' work should show accurate word counts and all relevant sources should be listed.

Centres are reminded that candidates' work should not be annotated in any way.

Internal moderation is a crucial part of the process. Centres must ensure that it is carried out rigorously and regularly as discrepancies within teaching groups may result in the centre being asked to re-assess the work of all their candidates.

Whilst it is understood that candidates may perform less well under pressure and their mark for their controlled piece may be inferior to their independent pieces, a discrepancy of 10 marks or more should always be investigated and an explanation given on the candidate's coversheet.

General Comments

Whilst Coursework still remains a popular option with Centres, there was a small drop in the candidature, especially at the lower grade range. Many Centres seem much more accurate in the assessment of their candidates and their marks fell comfortably within the tolerance margin set for the component. The standard of the work submitted was very similar to last year and it was evident that many candidates had taken a great deal of care over the completion of their portfolio of work.

Application of marking criteria

- **Communication**

It was pleasing to see that the majority of Centres are now routinely setting sub-tasks. However, some Centres are still penalising their candidates because of the lack of challenge offered in the sub-tasks they set. Tasks such as *Qu'est-ce que tu fais/tu as fait/tu vas faire ... ?* do not encourage candidates to express and justify opinions, ideas and points of view which are expected in the top three mark-bands. More able candidates need to be set tasks which

encourage them to compare and contrast, give advantages and disadvantages and consider problems and solutions. These would help them describe their feelings and reactions rather than just narrate events.

It was disappointing to see that some Centres are still setting tasks which allowed their candidates to copy or substitute words from model answers. Tasks such as *lettres de plainte, de réservation, de demande d'emploi* which are found in course books and revision guides result in essays which lack originality in ideas and use of language.

Candidates should also be encouraged to communicate in longer sequences, giving detailed descriptions. Sentences such as *J'ai aimé/détesté ... car/parce que c'était intéressant/ennuyeux*. do not fulfil the criterion.

Centres are also reminded that "longer sequences" does not mean longer essays and candidates who write well over the recommended word count of 150 should be advised, at the first draft stage, to reduce the number of words they have used. Lengthy essays tend to be repetitive, irrelevant and with a greater incidence of technical errors.

When awarding 8, 9 or 10 for communication Centres should take all the descriptors for that mark-band into consideration, as isolating one descriptor in detriment of the others results in the incorrect mark-band being chosen.

- **Quality of Language**

There were many pleasing pieces of work at all levels. Candidates were given ample opportunity to show what they knew and could do and many performed very well within their grade range. Many C-D candidates coped very well with expressing simple opinions and using verbs in the past, present and future.

In the upper range there were some excellent pieces of work as candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the language and their essays contained a wide variety of vocabulary, structures, idioms and clause types.

However, some Centres are still awarding marks in between 17 and 20 to pieces which are accurate but lack complexity of language. Candidates who fail to use longer sequences of language with a (wide) range of clause types, especially subordinate clauses, limit the marks they can be awarded. It is also important that candidates use variety and range when using complex language and avoid repetition of the same structure or clause type, *qui s'appelle* and *selon*.

Essays which contain mainly *et, mais, car, parce que* do not fulfil the criterion of "longer sequences of language" and should not be awarded marks in the top three bands. To access these, candidates need to use a variety of subordinate conjunctions (*que, quand, où, ce qui, ce que*) and verbal structures (*avant de, après*+ perfect infinitive, *en* + present participle).

They should also try to use tenses beyond perfect, present and future, aiming to include examples of verbs in the imperfect, pluperfect and conditional.

In conclusion, a piece which is accurate but lacks detailed descriptions, complexity of language and longer sequences cannot be awarded marks in the top three bands for either communication or quality of language.

Some Centres had to have their top marks reduced as they had erred on the side of generosity when assessing their candidates' work.

Conclusion

Coursework is not an easy option as it requires a lot of work and commitment from the teachers and candidates involved. Judging by the great number of pleasing submissions, candidates seem to gain a sense of achievement by being more directly responsible for their work and it was very pleasing to note the increased competence they developed over the three pieces of work.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education
French (1925)
June 2006 Assessment Series**

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	u
2351/01	Raw	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	40	32	25	18	11	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2351/02	Raw	50	43	38	29	20	15	12	N/A	N/A	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	N/A	N/A	0
2352/01	Raw	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	27	21	15	9	3	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2352/02	Raw	50	40	34	29	25	17	13	N/A	N/A	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	N/A	N/A	0
2353/01	Raw	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	35	29	23	17	11	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2353/02	Raw	50	40	34	27	20	15	12	N/A	N/A	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	N/A	N/A	0
2354/01	Raw	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	38	31	24	18	12	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2354/02	Raw	50	44	37	27	17	11	8	N/A	N/A	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	N/A	N/A	0
2355/01	Raw	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	27	21	15	9	3	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2355/02	Raw	50	40	34	29	25	17	13	N/A	N/A	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	N/A	N/A	0
2356	Raw	90	82	76	67	58	47	36	26	16	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1925	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	Total No. of Cands
1925	11.4	27.6	48.1	73.4	90.3	97.1	99.3	99.9	100.0	39311

39311 candidates were entered for aggregation this series.

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;
www.ocr.org.uk/OCR/WebSite/docroot/understand/ums.jsp

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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