

Report on the Units

June 2007

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CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education

GCSE French 1925

REPORT ON THE UNITS

Unit	Content	Page
*	Introduction	1
2351	Listening	2
2352	Speaking (Externally Assessed)	6
2353	Reading	11
2354	Writing	14
2355	Speaking (Internally Assessed)	19
2356	Writing Coursework	24
*	Grade Thresholds	29

INTRODUCTION

Examiners were pleased to observe a full range of excellent performances by candidates at all levels and in all components of the examination again this year. This is testimony to the hard work of many teachers in preparing their students, supervising their coursework and conducting speaking tests. There were few very weak performances, no doubt because many weaker students have not continued their study of French to the end of Key Stage 4.

For the most part candidates and their centres chose the appropriate tier of entry in each skill, which enabled individuals to perform to the best of their ability.

Examiners noted this year an improvement in presentation and a reduction in the number of papers defaced by graffiti. This was encouraged by clear instructions on the question papers not to write on the blank pages.

There was also this year a warning on written papers that answers not written in the spaces provided would not be marked. In spite of this general instruction, candidates should be sure to make clear what they intend to convey. In Listening and Reading comprehension, for example, many exercises are completed by choosing and writing a letter. Candidates should be reminded that they should copy letters clearly in upper case and that any changes should be made unambiguously. If a replacement answer is given, it should be written as closely as possible to the answer space and the rejected answer should be clearly crossed out. Over-writing is never satisfactory.

The option of written coursework continues to be a very popular one with centres. To ensure maximum benefit to their candidates, centres must be aware of the requirements for this component. Centres are particularly reminded of the need to ensure an accurate order of merit and to avoid the tendency to leniency of marking. The detailed report on the coursework component should be regarded as essential reading for all centres involved in or contemplating taking on this option.

The remainder of this report consists of more detailed feed-back to centres on the individual components, as well as a statement of statistical results. The information offered is intended to benefit teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations.

LISTENING – 2351/01/02

General Comments

This year's listening comprehension examination was generally well attempted by candidates at both Foundation and Higher Tiers. Although there were perhaps fewer really high marks than last year, there were also very few low marks. Examiners felt that candidates had been entered for the correct tier. Virtually all candidates attempted all the questions. Rubrics were well understood, and candidates answered in the appropriate language. It was clear that Centres had given their candidates good advice on how to make use of the five minute reading time. Some of the exercises posed problems to some candidates, but the general standards across the papers were pleasing. There were fewer reports from examiners this year of poor presentation and illegible handwriting. At the same time, it is important to remind candidates of the need to make individual letters clear in those exercises answered in this way; they should be advised to use upper case letters, as printed on the paper, and to make any changes as clear as possible, even if it involves writing the final answer outside the answer box.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION 1

Exercise 1

This opening exercise is designed as a gentle introduction to the exam with brief items delivered at a steady pace. Candidates answered the five questions well, although there were occasional errors on Q2 (where the park was selected instead of the port) and on the time (*huit heures et demie*) on Q4.

Exercise 2

This exercise tested knowledge of the vocabulary of household pets. It was clear that some candidates had not revised this topic which was probably covered early on in their French studies and had perhaps not been revisited in KS4. Most successfully picked out *chien* (Q8) and *cheval* (Q9) but many had problems identifying *oiseau* (Q7) and *souris* (Q10). Centres should bear in mind that even vocabulary areas which are traditionally introduced in the early years of study nevertheless form part of the specification and should therefore be revised during the months leading up to the exam.

Exercise 3

Candidates generally answer well on tests of food and drink vocabulary, and indeed there were some good marks scored on this exercise. There were, however, a few items which were less well known and which denied some candidates the chance of scoring a really high mark. The six items on questions 11, 12 and 13 (*tomates, café, fromage, limonade, jambon* and *eau minérale*) were generally well identified, but the latter four (*crêpes, jus d'ananas* and *huîtres*) were, not surprisingly, found more difficult. So although candidates scored at least 7 out of the 10 marks, maximum scores were less evident than on similar exercises in previous years.

Exercise 4

This test of comprehension of buildings and places in and around town presented very few difficulties and was answered very well for the most part. The only item which occasionally caused error was *église* which was sometimes understood as castle or even market.

Exercise 5

The final exercise of the section aimed to raise the level of difficulty a little. Here candidates were required to match what they heard to the expression of the concept in different words (a key skill tested in both tiers).

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

Hence on Q21, *vélo* had to be matched to *bicyclette* and on Q25 *formidable* matched to *très bien*.

The time on Q22 (*huit heures moins le quart*) was not always correctly identified.

In Q24 many selected *mange dans la cantine* on hearing *je mange des sandwiches dans un café* and missed matching *je bavarde avec mes copains* to *parle avec ses amis*.

Matching of similar items such as these will provide very useful classroom preparation for candidates for this examination.

SECTION 2

Exercise 1

It was pleasing to note that all candidates answered in English as required. Candidates (even at Higher Tier) had problems with a few items on this exercise.

On Q1 the plural was required in rendering *des amis*; the singular “friend” was often given here, though some also misheard *au bord de la mer* and concluded that Amir had gone on holiday with his mother.

Many candidates successfully rendered *quinze jours* on Q2 but “5 days” was sometimes offered.

On Q3 *auberge de jeunesse* was not well known (although it was clear that some Centres had taught the word). On this question large numbers of candidates offered “hotel”, being misled by the interviewer’s question *Vous avez logé dans un hôtel?* and not waiting to hear Amir’s response *Ah non, c’est trop cher, ça!*

Guessing was common on Q4, a number of likely holiday activities being offered, but only small numbers correctly rendered *on s’est reposé*.

Nearly all candidates made the correct choice on Q5.

Exercise 2

Some Foundation Tier candidates encountered difficulties with this exercise, though those at Higher Tier generally scored full marks. Candidates matched the speakers’ description of their pastime with the appropriate picture.

Questions 6 and 7 were usually matched correctly, but the final two questions (reading and speaking foreign languages) were often imperfectly understood.

Exercise 3

A gist comprehension exercise of this type, in which candidates are required to consider each speaker’s opinion of a singer by selecting “likes”, “dislikes” or “no opinion”, usually features at this stage of the exam and is familiar to candidates. Tasks of this type are an integral part of the specification for listening and provide very useful practice to the learner. Here again, Higher Tier candidates performed well on the exercise, whereas Foundation Tier candidates found it a little difficult.

The most frequent error was on Q14, where *je ne peux pas dire si je l’aime ou pas* was frequently matched with *n’aime pas*.

Exercise 4

The final exercise made use of verbs in the future and conditional tenses, with young people talking about their plans for the future. No icons were used here, so candidates had to show comprehension of the written summaries. Again there was the expected difference in performance between Foundation and Higher candidates.

Questions 16 and 18 were usually answered correctly.

The vocabulary in Q17 (with *alpinisme*, *grimper* and *sommets*) was clearly not always understood.

SECTION 3

Exercise 1

This opening exercise on the final section proved quite challenging for candidates but still performance ranged from good to very good. This was again a gist comprehension exercise, using a fairly wide range of topics and vocabulary.

The best answered were Questions 1, 2, 3, and 7.

Question 4 (in which the speaker talked of previous unemployment followed by his success in securing a job) was probably the most difficult to match.

The lost property item (Q6) was not understood by all.

Exercise 2

In this exercise candidates were required to replace in French the deleted word with the word heard on the recording. This was found to be one of the most difficult exercises in this section. Teachers are reminded that the quality of French is not assessed on this exercise but that obviously the word written must be reasonably comprehensible to a French reader. If the word offered looked correct, or sounded correct when read as it would by a French person, it was rewarded.

Candidates found it difficult to give an acceptable rendering of *à l'est* on Q8, where *ouest* was often offered.

Q9 (*animal/animaux*) was given correctly by most candidates.

On Q10 there was a tendency for the opposite word to be given (hence *minimum* for *maximum*) whereas the answer was in fact *moyenne*. As one might expect, those candidates attempting to render this word sometimes had problems in spelling it in an acceptable way. Versions such as *moien*, *moyan* and *moyant* were acceptable whereas renderings such as *mouyen*, *moin en* and *moins* were not.

Any concept of persons was acceptable on Q11 (hence *gens*, *personnes*, *peuple* and even *population* even though the latter does not in fact match the article provided, were credited).

Q12 was poorly answered as candidates had difficulties in rendering the correct year. Only the most able candidates were able to conclude that *créole* is a language and gave a suitable answer. Here it should be noted that *parler*, *parle* and *français* were acceptable answers.

Exercise 3

In this exercise candidates heard brief extracts of news items and matched them to their content. There were few full scores here and some candidates found the exercise rather difficult, though Q.16, 18 and 19 were usually correct.

Q.14 was found the hardest, *championnat* perhaps being the only easily identifiable clue as to the nature of the extract.

The weather references in Q17 (*orages*, *chutes de grêle* and *rafales de vent*) were also difficult for some candidates to identify.

Exercise 4

This multiple-choice piece about preventing travel sickness was found a little easier and all candidates scored marks.

Questions 21 and 24 were generally well answered.

Q22, where the phrase *ne mangez ni trop, ni trop peu* was tested, was found difficult.

The final question, testing comprehension of the phrase *suivez ces conseils* was not often correctly matched to *écoutez bien le médecin*.

Exercise 5

This was an authentic news item delivered at a fairly authentic pace which candidates found very difficult indeed. Many failed to score any of the 5 marks available. Candidates generally attempted all the questions but their answers either lacked the necessary detail (hence “the morning” was not an acceptable rendering of *en fin de matinée* on Q26), lacked accuracy (few managed to render the number 75,000 correctly on Q27) or showed that key vocabulary was not known (such as *freiner brusquement* and *un couteau* on Q28 and *fermer à clef* on Q29). That

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

said, the performance of some excellent candidates on this exercise did serve to highlight those with advanced skills of listening comprehension.

SPEAKING – External Assessment – 2352/01/02

General Comments

This year the external examiners have commented on the excellent levels of preparation in the Centres they have listened to. The candidates and Teacher/Examiners were aware of the requirements of the Speaking Test, and both parties ensured that the candidates were given the opportunity to show what they knew. In many Centres, the good practice of “nudging” candidates for elucidation (see page 10 of the Teacher/Examiner Booklet) continued. Candidates were able to achieve full marks in this way and it would be excellent to see this practice extended to more Centres.

In Role Play 3, examiners reported that some Teacher/Examiners were continuing these role plays for much longer than the suggested three minutes. The longer these role-plays last, the more clearly disadvantaged the candidate, and some continued for five or six minutes.

In the vast majority of Centres, teachers adhered to the written prompts in the Teachers’ Booklet. Centres are reminded that re-phrasing these prompts to make the task more accessible means that the Candidate cannot earn the full two marks (the prompts being mandatory).

In the Presentation section, examiners also noted a tendency to allow the candidates to speak for more than one minute. It is extremely important that the candidate is allowed to speak for one minute (uninterrupted) to then allow time for the Discussion of the Presentation. Here, examiners reported a good variety of questioning technique, starting with more “closed” questioning and extending the candidate by asking progressively more “open” questions. There was less evidence this year of the undesirable practice of the same bank of questions being asked in the same order to each candidate.

Centres are reminded that the quality of recording is extremely important if Candidates are to gain the marks they deserve. The administration is also important, and the completion of the working mark sheets (see page 5 of the Teacher/Examiner Booklet) is a requirement which assists the external examiner in the marking of the candidates.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section 1 Role Plays

External examiners thought that the cards were balanced, each having its own area of difficulty. Centres are reminded that it is permissible to “nudge for elucidation” if the candidate’s pronunciation is so poor that it impedes understanding.

In **Card One**, the pronunciation of *billet* caused problems for some candidates, and the sort of ticket was not known by many candidates. In the final task *Combien?* was not known by a surprising number of candidates.

Card Two had its own area of difficulty. Where the first two tasks, asking for food items and a number, were well executed and produced few problems, the pronunciation of the various drink items, however, caused difficulty, with anglicised pronunciation of *eau*, *limonade* and *lait*.

In **Card Three** there was again a difficulty in pronunciation. The first two tasks saw some anglicised pronunciation of *chambre* and *télévision*. The third task proved to be accessible to the majority of candidates, although there were some who were not able to manage the number.

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

The issue in **Card Four** was again one of pronunciation. While the majority of candidates were able to communicate the other concepts in this role play, there was a difficulty in the pronunciation of *caravane* in the first task. There was also a problem in asking the cost in the third task.

In **Card Five**, candidates produced some excellent answers in the first task, but there were some instances of anglicised pronunciation of *café* and *chocolat*. Asking for a specific sort of sandwich proved to be a successful task.

The first task on **Card Six** was not well executed and candidates struggled to communicate the notion of the town centre. Candidates then struggled with the pronunciation of *voiture* in task two but recovered with an appropriate leisure activity in task three.

In **Card Seven** the candidates found the pronunciation of *timbres* a challenge but were able to express the notion of letters or postcards accurately. Most candidates were able to express the name of the country in task three, with only a minority using *anglais*.

In **Card Eight** the vast majority were able to express a sport but some candidates struggled with the day of the week in task two. The third task on this card gave rise to some problems of pronunciation.

Section 2 Role Plays

It was again thought that the cards were balanced and appropriate. Examiners also reported some skilful “nudging” and examining with real patience, which ensured that candidates were offered the opportunity to do their best.

In **Card One**, some candidates struggled to produce a correct past tense, often saying either *Je mangé* or *J'ai mange*. The second and third tasks were completed extremely well by the majority of the candidates, who had clearly been well trained to give opinions. In the final task, there was a variety of answers, and candidates communicated clearly the notion of what they wanted to do.

In **Card Two**, a significant number of candidates responded in the first task with *Je voudrais visiter un castle* which could not receive marks for communication. Some candidates struggled with the notion of *ouvert* in the second task, but the final two tasks were extremely well handled.

The first task in **Card Three** produced similar problems with the incorrect formation of a past tense. In task two, many candidates were able to spell the name correctly but unfortunately left out the concept of *mon ami* and could not therefore be awarded the full two marks. The final two tasks were extremely well done, but a minority of candidates incorrectly said “25” rather than “26”. This would have been an ideal time for the teacher/examiner to “nudge” the candidate for the correct response.

In **Card Four**, the first task again proved to be difficult, with a significant number of candidates either not able to communicate the past tense or not able to communicate the notion of “coat”. The descriptive work in the second task was well done and there were some very good answers to the third task. The final task was generally well communicated, but some candidates could not be awarded the full marks for communication as their response included an incorrect time frame: *Je suis resté* instead of *Je reste*.

The first task on **Card Five** was accessible for the majority of candidates with most saying *Je suis malade*. The second task, requiring a past tense, was better than in previous cards, but some candidates still found this task to be too difficult. In task three, there was still some

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

confusion over the use of *pour* which indicates a future time frame and in task four, there was some poor pronunciation of *lit*.

The first task on **Card Six** required the use of a past tense and this caused a problem for some candidates. Some candidates were not able to communicate the idea of *chemise*. In the second task, there was often omission of the concept of *trop* but candidates coped very well with the time frame in the third task. The final task was extremely well done, with most candidates either changing the shirt or buying a different item.

In **Card Seven** there was sometimes an anglicised pronunciation of *retard* but the vast majority of candidates scored full marks on the arrival time in task two. Task three caused the most problems with many candidates unable to communicate the notion of a road being closed. The final task was extremely successful with the vast majority of candidates able to ask the question accurately.

In **Card Eight**, the first two tasks proved to be challenging, with many candidates unable to communicate the past tense required in the first task and resorting to English in the second task. The final two tasks were tackled extremely well, with candidates responding superbly to the unprepared question.

Section 3 Role Plays

There were many excellent accounts given by candidates this year, but two trends were noted by the external examiners. This role play is designed to last for approximately three minutes but in some Centres, candidates were disadvantaged by role plays that were nearly double that length. It is also intended to be a role play with input from the teacher/examiner, not a monologue, though it is permissible to allow the candidate to narrate the story and then ask questions as the candidate nears the end.

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

Card One proved to be extremely accessible to the majority of candidates. They found the notion of the *fruits de mer* difficult to communicate, and also the past participle of *recevoir*. Meals and shopping, on the other hand, did not seem to present any difficulties. The candidates moved through the rest of the narrative with confidence, with a few stumbling over *souhaiter* in the fourth segment. The final section on this card was clearly communicated by the majority of candidates.

Card Two again proved to be accessible with candidates adding some imaginative detail in their accounts. The second section proved to be the most difficult, with many candidates reading prompts from the card rather than conjugating them in the past tense. The accident was tackled extremely well and the majority of candidates were confident in the final stages of the narrative.

In **Card Three** candidates built their confidence quickly with an account of the early morning routine, but stumbled slightly over checking the oil and water in the car in section two. The less able candidates found the problem of the lost passport difficult to communicate, but the majority communicated well and there were some excellent accounts. The final two sections were well handled by the majority of candidates, although there was considerable variation in the price of Shuttle tickets!

Candidates using **Card Four** produced some excellent accounts of their day out in Saumur. The first three sections were competently handled and in the final two sections, the concepts of *promenade en bateau* and *se coucher* proved to be the most difficult for candidates to communicate. The candidates offered opinions and justifications extremely easily on this card.

The suggestions on **Card Five** produced some excellent accounts. One area of difficulty appeared to be *monter la tente* in the second section. The accounts produced by candidates were excellent, with imaginative detail added by many. In the fourth section on this card, candidates often struggled with the perfect tense of *prendre* but at the end were confident with the evening activities.

The majority of the vocabulary in **Card Six** was familiar to candidates, and there were some very good accounts of the day. Some candidates struggled with the fruit and animals in the third box, but the main area of difficulty for the candidates was the fourth box, where the notion of *vendre* was not understood by some candidates. In the final section, many candidates coped well with the notion of going fishing and then enjoyed describing eating the fish.

The situation on **Card Seven** was handled extremely well, with some very good accounts of the narrative. Some candidates found *monter dans le train* challenging, although many were able to add some detail to the account. The remaining three sections were well handled although some candidates found the concept of *se promener* difficult to communicate.

Card Eight produced some good accounts of the evening concert although there was some poor pronunciation of *soirée*, often sounding more like *souris*. There was also some confusion over finding the room for the concert and booking the group to play. However, candidates moved confidently through the remaining sections of the narrative and gave their opinions and justifications fluently.

Presentation

There is clear evidence of excellent practice in the majority of Centres. Where candidates have chosen a topic in which they are interested, their passion for the subject becomes infectious and the final mark reflects the level of interest and preparation.

There was again clear evidence of the constructive use of the cue card, and this *aide-mémoire* allowed some weaker candidates to score in this section of the Speaking Test. It should be noted that the candidate should speak for one minute without interruption and not significantly longer than this. It makes it difficult to engage the candidate in a meaningful discussion if s/he has already spoken for two minutes or more in the Presentation phase.

The candidates should be encouraged in this section to give opinions and then to justify those opinions to gain the higher marks. It was very rare again this year to hear Presentations which attracted the highest mark.

Discussion and General Conversation

This year external examiners commented that teachers/examiners were choosing topics from the Teacher/Examiner Booklet but in a minority of cases Teachers forgot that it is their responsibility to write in the title of the Presentation and each Topic on the working mark sheet.

The discussion of the candidate's presentation should last for approximately two minutes (Teacher/Examiner Booklet page 6). This year, the discussions were of an appropriate length and allowed the candidates to develop ideas they had suggested in the Presentation section.

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 but Foundation Tier candidates, in particular, were not as confident with verb forms.

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

Among the more able candidates, the Perfect Tense was the best known, with the Future or near future always proving to be less accessible.

READING – 2353/01/02

General Comments

The examination of French Reading this year proved to be a fair test for candidates at both tiers. There were few examples of very weak scripts and many excellent ones. The overall level of difficulty proved to be a little greater than in 2006, and this was taken into consideration when setting the grade boundaries.

The papers contained the familiar range of topics, text styles and test types that are the regular features of these papers. The vocabulary knowledge expected of candidates is determined by the defined content lists of words and structures published as part of the specification.

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 when they would have been better served had they tackled the Foundation Tier paper. There were similarly some candidates entered at Foundation who clearly would have been able to complete the Higher Tier paper successfully.

Candidates at both tiers seemed to have had ample time to complete the paper but it is clear that some do not use the available time to check their answers carefully. Examiners were pleased to note that this year graffiti was much less evident than previously, probably because of the instructions on the paper indicating that answers should only be written in the spaces provided and that blank spaces should not be written on.

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

In spite of the instructions on the front of the paper about answering only in the space provided, where Candidates change an answer, they should be sure that the intended answer is indicated clearly. For example, if the question requires a letter to be written in a box, it should be clearly written (as a capital letter); and if Candidates change their minds, it is best to put the replacement answer alongside the answer box, crossing through the original answer completely. A minority of candidates left some questions unanswered which of course means that there is no hope of a mark being awarded.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION ONE

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

This exercise had a different format this year, requiring candidates to give brief answers in English, rather than to tick boxes. For the majority of candidates it was a straightforward task to supply one word in English to convey the sense of the sign, notice or message.

For weaker candidates Q5 (*jeudi*) was the most frequently wrong.

Surprisingly *chien* (Q1) was not universally known.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-12

This was generally quite well done, shops and shopping being a familiar topic. However, *timbres*, *beurre*, *épicerie* were the stumbling blocks for a number of candidates.

Exercise 3 Questions 13-17

This exercise was well done by most. Again, this topic is familiar.

Q17 (*potage*) was the most frequent wrong answer.

Exercise 4 Questions 18-23

This was well done by most but *église* was the least well known.

Exercise 5 Question 24

Few scored full marks here. This is a more challenging comprehension exercise, as it is the first task of the paper requiring candidates to relate full sentences in French with information in a text. Weaker candidates did not make the links accurately enough. For example they spotted the link between *animaux* and *chiens* but failed to take note of *interdits*.

Few candidates ticked more than the required three statements.

Exercise 6 Question 25

Here again candidates were required to make careful links between the text and the options for each question, and again there were few full scores for this exercise. However, it is only on rare occasions that some candidates resort to random ticking rather than thinking out the answer.

SECTION TWO

Exercise 1 Questions 1-3

Foundation Tier candidates did quite well on this exercise, and Higher Tier candidates usually scored full marks. Teachers are reminded that candidates (from both tiers) should follow the rubric and the example and not complete the sentences with their own words or words from the text.

Exercise 2 Questions 4-8

This exercise was appropriately challenging for candidates at both tiers.

For Foundation Tier candidates Q6 was often the only correct answer, known by linking *je déteste* with *nul*.

Exercise 3 Questions 9-15

There were many good answers to this task but it is accepted that the layout could have been clearer. The blank line between the Example and Q9 led some candidates to start their answers in this space. Most of these soon realised their error and crossed out their ticks and started again. Examiners worked hard not to disadvantage those who ended up with two ticks on some lines or lines left blank.

The most frequently incorrect answer was to Q15.

Exercise 4 Questions 16-19

Most candidates at Foundation Tier picked up at least some marks here and Higher Tier candidates generally scored well.

Q16: Most frequently wrong answers involved "sympathetic" or "kind".

Q17: Almost universally correct.

Q18: The understanding of *enseigner* was rare and the idea of seeing progress in the pupils was often missed.

Q19: The meaning of the verb *rester* caused problems to many candidates here. "On form" was not accepted.

SECTION THREE

Exercise 1 Questions 1-7

Many candidates did reasonably well on this opening exercise, and examiners were very tolerant of poorly spelled French which nevertheless conveyed comprehension. Candidates should be advised to avoid lengthy answers and "lifts". The danger of these is that Candidates might include extra material which invalidates the thrust of their answer. The best answers were brief

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

and accurate. Anything which does not indicate comprehension, such as ill-chosen and clumsy “lifts” from the text, are of course not rewarded.

The three multiple-choice questions were demanding, and only the best candidates scored on all three.

There were few instances of candidates answering in the wrong language. A number of these, however, did start off in English in Nos. 1 (and sometimes 2), but realised their error and switched to French for Nos. 3 and 4. Surprisingly, after realising the error, very few candidates corrected their answers to 1 and 2. Unfortunately this automatically cost them 2 marks.

Q1: The majority of candidates were successful here. For some, this was the only correct answer of the exercise.

Q2: The best answer here was “*ils couraient*”.

Q3: The mark was often scored here.

Q4: Many scored at least 1 mark here but *la voiture a démarré* was a frequent incorrect offering for the second answer.

Exercise 2 Questions 8-15

This type of exercise aims to discriminate, and it was pleasing to see so many candidates responding to the challenge and scoring well. Examiners could detect a clear distinction between those who were attempting to answer sensibly and those who were merely guessing.

The answers to Q14 and Q15 were frequently reversed.

Exercise 3 Questions 17-25

Again this test type is demanding and is a good discriminator.

For Q20 the answers G and/or J were accepted.

Exercise 4 Questions 25-29

Most scored some marks on this final exercise, which was accessible and straightforward. Often it was a lack of attention to detail in answers that meant that marks were lost.

Q25: Frequently successfully answered.

Q26: The word *collines* was not familiar. Some candidates were confused by trying to include information from the sentence *L'accueil a été très chaleureux*.

Q27: Frequently correct.

Q28: There were frequent correct answers here but also some that got the idea completely the wrong way round, making the Irish heavier smokers than the French. Others made the Irish totally non-smoking. A minority thought that *fumer* meant “to get angry”.

Q29: The difficulty here was an English rendering of *impressionnante*. “Impressionable” and “impressionate” were frequently seen.

WRITING – 2354/01/02

General Comments

The entry continues to show a decline in interest in Foundation Tier. Some entrants at Foundation Tier amassed scores considerably above the threshold for grade C, and may have been better served if they had attempted Higher Tier. There were comparatively few inappropriate entrants at the lower end of Foundation Tier and this was also true of Higher Tier. However, given the vital importance of having some command of Past, Present and Future tense verbs for the award of a grade C, it is hard to understand why Candidates not able to show consistent use of these still attempt the Higher Tier. At the top end, there was some excellent work, revealing a fine control of verb tenses and a confident use of a variety of structures and of subordinate clauses.

Examiners continue to note a significant number of Candidates who include impressive pre-learnt phrases which are not always relevant to the task. These items are particularly incongruous when the general control of language in the rest of the work is of a much lower standard. Similarly, as has been reported in the past, a few well formed structures using the subjunctive are no substitute for consistent use of the tenses required for the communication of the required messages.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION 1

Question 1

As always, this question provided a straightforward opportunity to start building up a good score. With the numbers of less able Candidates diminishing, the impression this year was that most could recall a number of relevant words in an acceptable spelling. As ever, items of food/drink not represented by the pictures were accepted if they were written in a form which complied with the principles embodied in the mark scheme. 'Chocolate' and 'lemonade' were amongst the commonest errors.

Question 2

Marks were awarded for words which conveyed the idea implicit in the picture. Past participles and infinitives were awarded marks for Communication, correct Present and Perfect tenses were given a bonus.

Comparatively few could render *habille* in task 2 ; *mets* and *porte* were not rewarded unless a noun such as *chaussures*, *vêtements* was added, however *me change* was credited.

In Task 3, a verb such as *mange* ... was expected ; *petit déjeuner* was accepted, given the contemporary use of this as a verb by the French.

There were comparatively fewer problems with the nouns required, however examiners noted a lack of accuracy in the spelling of *cuisine*.

Question 3

Candidates who give their answers in sentence form can gain upwards of 4 marks for Quality of language. The top band of 6/7 marks for Quality reflects the descriptor for 1/2 marks used for Section 2; consistently accurate verb forms are not expected for the award of a mark in the top band. Examiners noted the absence or misuse of prepositions - at this level this is tolerated unless the meaning is compromised.

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

For Task 1, most were able to give some indication of where they worked. There was frequently some confusion in the message given in the second task, *je travaille en bus*. Many continue to confuse *travailler* and *voyager*.

In response to both Tasks 3 and 5, which required a simple expression of time, there were many who still could not express the idea in a French format - a simple '10h' or '5h30' would have qualified. Numbers on their own and "am/pm" were discounted.

Most could manage at least one recognisable item of clothing for Task 4 but the English 'uniform' was often used and therefore lost marks.

A high proportion could communicate some idea of spending money in the final task.

SECTION 2

There appears to have been little difference in the popularity of the two questions. Examiners reported that Foundation Tier Candidates still struggle to produce correct versions of the three tenses required at this stage. They also commented that Higher Tier Candidates were failing to pick up full marks for Quality of Language because they chose not to use one of the acceptable methods of indicating futurity that have been listed in the past. Such flowery language as '*je caresse l'idée de partir en France*' does not acceptably convey future intention and this, along with the clever avoidance of the Future '*cet été j'ai décidé de partir en France*' resulted in a maximum mark of 18. This year each of the two questions provided two opportunities in the final task for the use a Future tense verb, it is therefore disappointing that so many willingly forfeited marks.

There are now far fewer entries from Candidates who are not able to write something of worth at this level; however, examiners noted that some were not able to produce a verb in a recognisable form. Infinitives and past participles were common meaning that sometimes it was difficult to decide what precisely the Candidates intended. Even among more able Candidates the spelling of frequently used words such as *parce que* was uncertain, and there was confusion over *dernier* and *prochain*. Prepositions were often used rather indiscriminately or omitted.

There were still very many Higher Tier Candidates who wrote at great length, using a wide variety of structures. As has been mentioned before, this is a pointless use of time and energy, as there is a limit to the Quality marks available in Section 2 to reward such richness of language.

Question 1

In Task 1, Candidates were invited to state where they went and when. It was not necessary to mention camping to achieve success here, but it was clear that many were unfamiliar with *le camping* or *le terrain de camping*; *la campagne* was often used as if it meant *le camping*.

Task 2 provided the opportunity to state what they did on holiday, one relevant activity in the past tense being sufficient to gain credit. Most gave a number of details and gained some credit, even if the past tense verb was faulty.

Many Candidates misread Task 3; instead of expressing a positive or negative opinion about camping in general, a significant number gave their opinion of the particular holiday referred to earlier. Such responses were not totally discounted. However this was the opportunity for Candidates to show their control of the Present Tense, which is as relevant as the other two tenses in securing Grade C.

The final task required a Future Tense. Although there were some, even at Higher Tier, who responded *l'été prochain je suis allé en Espagne ...*, a high proportion were able to respond

with an appropriate verb form. On the other hand, a significant number did not provide all the details required by the task as they only mentioned one activity.

Question 2

Firstly, Candidates had to mention where and when they went shopping. There was a high measure of success with this, but interestingly, as with Q 1, many did not know a vital piece of vocabulary i.e. *le cadeau* : *le cadeu, le gifte, la présente* were seen rather frequently.

Task 2 simply required mention of something done whilst shopping. A large number of Candidates gave quite extensive accounts of the shopping trip; there was usually at least one qualifying detail in the past tense.

As with Q 1, there was not always a general comment about shopping e.g. *je préfère faire des courses pour moi* or *je déteste les queues*. Many expressed an opinion about the particular trip to the shops.

Task 4, requiring the use of the Future, was perhaps not as well done as the equivalent one in Q1. Some did not even make reference to the coming birthday party. In some instances there was only one activity mentioned; *je danceraï* was quite common and there was some insecurity with the spelling of *anniversaire*.

SECTION 3

The standard at the top of the range remains very high. Candidates show consistent control of relevant tenses and use a range of appropriate subordinating clauses and verbal structures.

The best answers were inevitably those which were well planned. A paragraph of approximately 40 words per task is sufficient in terms of quantity of detail; those Candidates who had been trained to respond in an orderly way to each of the tasks set achieved on balance better scores. There were again far too many who, having started, continued to write without pause for thought, often repeating themselves, and sometimes contradicting themselves! There is a need for the transference of literary skills, paragraphing, punctuation etc, from other areas of the curriculum.

There were some trends, which have been reported in the past, which remain a matter of some concern to examiners. Some Candidates wrote at very great length, in certain instances in excess of 500 words in total for Sections 2 and 3. There is little to be gained from this and much to lose as the language invariably loses control, and the account becomes repetitive and occasionally contradictory. A more focused response within the word count is recommended.

Examiners have noted those Centres who, trying to prepare their students to achieve the highest grades, encouraged them to include set phrases. These then appeared in the answer of every candidate. In one Centre, for example, almost all the students began their answers *l'année dernière j'ai eu l'occasion de ...*, going on to comment *j'étais sur un nuage rose ...* and concluding *j'espère rencontrer le garçon de mes rêves*; some had used the same sentences in their answers to Section 2. Sometimes the use of such phrases was appropriate, at other times they added nothing to the narrative and were simply there to adorn the response. It has been noted that there were instances where these set phrases demonstrated the only correct use of particular tenses, verb forms, subordinate clauses.

Increasingly the subjunctive is being used, and whilst Centres are to be applauded for stretching their Candidates and broadening their linguistic range, it must be remembered that numerous examples of correct use of subjunctive verb forms do not compensate for a narrative/argument which contains no correct perfect/future/conditional tenses. Of course, all language used is 'pre-learned' but it is hoped that Candidates might make a more natural use of the structures acquired.

Question 2 was a little more popular than Question 1, though answers to the latter were also generally more successful.

Question 1

The first task, inviting reference to a meal out, was quite accessible and various details were competently given, although some able Candidates missed out information on what they ate and thus lost Communication marks.

It was surprising to note how frequently Candidates struggled with the second task, which required a description of what happened following the meal. Most focused on over-eating, poor quality food, fast food which were all reasonable responses. Although it was quite common to find *j'ai vomì*, many examiners reported that Candidates found the expression of the ideas in an appropriate tense/verb form difficult: *j'ai mal à la tête ...*; *je suis malade ...*. Comparatively few could report correctly symptoms using *mal au cœur*, *mal à l'estomac* etc. Knowledge of *médicament* was limited: the word was often rendered as *médecin*. This latter, when used appropriately, was also frequently misspelt. Those blaming fish for their discomfort, often referred to *le poison*, which made it seem as though their illness was self-inflicted.

Task 3 expected some reflection on the experience. There was much variation in both the quality of the language and the range of ideas. Some complimented the doctors/nurses at the hospital, others castigated the restaurant and some blamed their own greed or liking for 'junk' food. *Plus santé* was a commonly seen phrase which reflected the insecurity of many with the vocabulary required for this option.

Most were able to express clearly a determination to take more exercise, eat more healthily, avoid 'dodgy' food outlets in response to Task 4. In this final task, weaker Candidates struggled with the use of a very common structure: *je voudrais mangerais ...*; *je voudrais ferais ...*; *je voudrais irais ...*.

Question 2

Candidates attempting this option clearly felt more at ease with the topic.

There were good responses to the first task, with a range of relevant detail, expressed in appropriate tenses. However, there was again evidence of insecurity in handling the possessive: *j'ai travaillé dans mon père's bureau*.

Curiously Task 2, which seems straightforward, was not well understood by Candidates. Many considered that statements such as *j'ai gagné x livres ...*, *le salaire était bien ...*, *c'était bien payé ...* were sufficient. Candidates were expected to state how they had spent their money: of those who understood the implication of the question, many said that they had plans to spend the money in the future, whereas others had saved it at the bank - all of these were considered to have responded appropriately to the task. The spelling of *gagner* was however a little insecure, *j'ai gangé ...* was common and forms of the verb *recevoir* were not well known.

Task 3 was comparable to many similar tasks in previous papers. There was still a tendency to respond rather simply to the invitation to pass comment on the experience. *C'était ennuyeux / barbant / intéressant ...* etc. are not sufficient at this level. Some examiners reported the lack of range and originality in the use of adjectives. However, many showed that they could explain how they felt about the opportunity to work, and commented effectively on various aspects of their routine, encounters with the public, relations with work colleagues, sometimes commenting on how it fitted into their future plans.

Task 4 provided a familiar opportunity to write about future plans. There were many noble expressions of wishing to help people by becoming doctors, teachers, particularly the former.

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

Médecine was clearly the favoured career of a significant proportion; some, more venal, were interested in money, and a few in celebrity. By comparison with those opting for Question 1, most could use correctly a future/conditional tense and give a valid reason for their choice, using sometimes the undistinguished *parce que ...* but occasionally *si j'ai de la chance ... / si j'ai de bonnes notes... / si je réussis à mes examens ...*

SPEAKING – Internal Assessment – 2355/01/02

General Comments

As in 2006, Moderators were very positive about the quality of the work heard and the way the speaking test had been administered in Centres. It was usually the case that candidates had been well prepared for the tests and Examiners had prepared their own roles well. Examiners were generally confident as to how to elicit the best responses from their candidates and candidates were given the best opportunities to show what they knew and could do.

The general conduct of the tests was efficient and the pace was usually brisk in most Centres. Moderators acknowledge that the professional conduct of the test is vital and remains a crucial factor in helping candidates to achieve of their best.

Examiners were familiar with the mark scheme and clearly felt at ease in applying it consistently. It was however noticeable that there was this year in some Centres, a marked tendency not to query dubious/anglicised pronunciation and to mark such utterances a little too leniently.

It is pleasing to report after an increase in clerical errors last year that there was a decrease in such errors 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 ensure that all teaching groups are entered on the MS1 form. It is also important that all topics are entered on individual candidate forms. Some Examiners persist in leaving these blank.

The compilation of samples was usually good. Most centres submitted a well chosen and representative sample spread across different teaching groups from the stipulated range of marks. Centres which submitted an edited sample in rank order are thanked as this is very helpful to Moderators. Such Centres also separated out the candidate mark sheets as featured on the tapes. Several Centres also sent a helpful covering letter listing sample candidate numbers and names. Most mark sheets were completed with great care and cassettes were also usually labelled and numbered carefully. The quality of recordings was very good this year.

As in 2006, the standard of internal moderation was satisfactory and in some cases excellent. Many Centres had taken time and care in order to produce a representative and reliable sample. It cannot be emphasised enough that this is crucial, especially in larger Centres in which many non-recorded candidates will not be heard and standards rely on the sample in terms of consistency between markers. It would be unfair on candidates if all markers were not consistent in their application of the mark scheme in a Centre. New Centres are reminded that it they may standardise prior to marking by using the teacher booklet and discussing what are acceptable responses. Alternatively, they may choose to moderate after the event and adjust marks, if necessary. In either case, it is helpful to moderators to receive a brief note as to the method used.

In any event, it is vital that standards are aligned across the teaching groups prior to submission.

The mark scheme was usually well understood in Centres, and Centres clearly found the guidance and suggestions in the Teachers' booklet useful. As mentioned above, however, Centres were a little too quick to accept anglicised or poor pronunciation. Centres are reminded that anglicised pronunciation is awarded a maximum mark of 1 in role play tasks, not 2. Centres are also reminded that in role plays on Section 2 which require a verb or in which the candidates choose to use a verb, the time frame must be correct for a mark of 2 to be awarded.

e.g. *Je mangé à l'école* = 1 not 2 marks

Je resté 2 jours = 1 not 2 marks (even though the required element may be *2 jours*,

the addition of an incorrect time frame can distort the message and detract from the communication, e.g. *J'ai mange à l'école*).

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

Candidates usually coped well with the unexpected task and have been well trained to recognise cues prior to these tasks.

As last year, some Centres were generous in their marking of the Presentation. Centres are reminded that the key to gaining the highest marks is the ability to express ideas/opinions and justifications, rather than simply a factual, accurate account in a range of tenses.

The Quality of Language mark was this year applied more confidently in Centres and there were fewer cases of under-marking in this category.

Timings were generally good in Centres. Thank you!

As in 2006, a full range of performance was heard by Moderators. The majority of candidates were entered at the Higher Tier, and Moderators were treated to some really able performances at the top of the range. Generally, Centres assessed their candidates fairly, and many Centres had only small adjustments (or none) in order to bring their marking in line with the agreed standard.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section 1 Role Plays

On **Card One**, the pronunciation of *billet* was not good and the notion of a **return ticket** also proved challenging for many.

On **Card Two**, pronunciation again proved to be difficult on the various drinks chosen by candidates.

On **Card Three**, Task 2 was the least well done on the card.

On **Card Four**, many gave anglicised versions of *caravane* and some students confused *magasin* with *magazine*.

On **Card Five**, the pronunciation of the various drinks was often anglicised on Task 1.

On **Card Six**, *centre-ville* was not well known and on Task 2 *voiture* was often mispronounced.

On **Card Seven**, *timbres* still proves to be problematic for many and on Task 3 many Foundation candidates gave *anglais* rather than *Angleterre*.

On **Card Eight**, *samedi* was not well pronounced.

All other tasks were usually well approached by candidates.

Section 2 Role Plays

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

On **Card One**, the time frame on Task 1 was not clearly rendered by weaker students who often failed to give an auxiliary verb.

On Task 2 the first part of the task was omitted by some and the alphabet was not well known. Numbers and pronunciation caused problems on the last task.

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

On **Card Two**, the concept of **being late** on Task 1 was not well done

On Task 3 many could express the idea of “closed” but could not put this in the correct time frame.

On **Card Three**, some could not render **not feeling well** and on Task 2 some missed out the auxiliary verb.

On Task 4 many offered *je suis resté/e au lit*.

On **Card Four**, surprisingly, many did not know *chemise*.

On Task 2 only the best candidates knew *trop*.

On the last task very few expressed the idea of being reimbursed although there were many other ways to approach the task such as the most popular option of changing the item.

On **Card Five**, weaker candidates could not express the idea of what had happened in the past to cause their problem.

In Task 2 the pronunciation of *crème antiseptique* was very poor as was the pronunciation of *euros*.

On **Card Six**, on Task 1, some confused the notion of **losing** with that of **finding** and had obviously not taken in the context of the situation that the item had been lost in or around the pool. This then resulted in some saying that the item had been lost at the station or on a bus. It is important that candidates are reminded to read the context of the situation.

On **Card Seven**, some candidates failed to produce a valid time frame in Task 1.

If candidates gave a tense on Task 3 it was often incorrect.

On **Card Eight**, surprisingly, some of the best candidates did not know *château* well.

The most difficult task proved to be Task 2 and there were frequent poor renderings of the notion of **opening today**.

Tasks not mentioned above were generally well done by candidates. Unpredictable/open tasks were well attempted and showed good preparation in Centres.

Section 3 Role Plays

The cards were judged to be accessible and at an appropriate and equally balanced level of difficulty. Each card had its own more difficult and its own easier tasks. Examiners generally conducted this section well and there were very few cases of monologues or intrusive examining.

A handful of Teachers, however, still persist in querying incorrect auxiliary verbs. This is not within the spirit of the test and serves only to worsen the performance of the candidate overall. The flow of the story – not to mention the Candidate’s confidence - can be lost if there is excessive querying of verb forms.

As in 2006, the sections featuring daily routine, eating, drinking, free time and travel were well done. Moderators commented that they heard some extremely competent performances across the cards. Such performances featured full accounts of the events, together with the expression of opinions and justifications. It was also pleasing to hear candidates responding well to Examiners’ questions. The best performances were confident, delivered at a good pace and frequently featured an impressive range of structures and appropriate vocabulary.

Areas of difficulty were as below:

Card 1

Beaucoup de monde was not well handled. In the second block, *recevoir* was not well conjugated by weaker candidates and *fruits de mer* was not well known or was mispronounced by many as *frites*. Likewise, *voisins* was strange to some as was *souhaiter*.

Card 2

The concept of *travailler dur* was unfamiliar to some and likewise the verb *arroser* caused some problems. The weakest candidates found *se reposer* to be difficult. As ever, accidents can be challenging but, generally candidates coped fairly well here, partly due to the helpful inclusion of *aller voir l'accident*. Some did not realise that there were no injuries and went into gruesome detail but coped well with the other details.

Card 3

The second and third blocks proved most difficult. *Vérifier* was not well known and some did not conjugate *mettre* correctly. In the third block some failed to perceive the logical link of finding the passport. Some were also a little confused as to how they finally travelled to France.

Card 4

The verb phrase *se mettre en route* was not generally well handled and in the fourth section the boat trip was problematic for some.

Card 5

In the second section, *monter la tente* was often incorrectly conjugated and the past participle of *prendre* was difficult for some.

Card 6

In the third section, candidates coped less well with the activities in the garden. A few candidates pleasingly knew the names of fruit trees but there were some strange fruits (which were not penalised). Some failed to see the link with taking products to market to sell - perhaps this was due to the juxtaposition with buying food to eat.

Card 7

In the first section, *monter dans le train* caused some problems and generally candidates coped less well with the trip round Paris. *La Tour Eiffel* was nearly always poorly pronounced!

Card 8

The first section of this card produced the most problems. Verbs were usually conjugated correctly but pronunciation was not good. Only the more able could give details about clearing up after the party.

Presentation

There were some very fluently presented topics on a wide range of subjects. It was pleasing to hear candidates from the same teaching group presenting a wide variety of subjects. Most presented on familiar and worthy topics but there were also some interesting presentations on environmental issues this year. The best performances were those in which the candidate had a genuine interest and could express ideas and opinions.

Centres are reminded that this section of the test is not designed purely to elicit a range of tenses; for the highest marks to be awarded, it is more important that the most able should strive to offer a range of opinions and justifications. It was very unusual to hear candidates score less than 2 marks here. Many had worked hard on their topics and were consequently able to approach the follow up conversation/discussion with increased confidence.

Discussion and General Conversation

It is pleasing to be able to report that Centres are clearly aware of the need to ask questions to elicit a range of tenses and opinions in this final part of the examination. The examining in this section was frequently of a highly professional nature. As ever, the quality and differentiation of questions can have a huge impact on the performance of the candidate. The examining was generally sympathetic and of a spontaneous nature. Candidates were encouraged to work for the marks and to develop answers wherever possible. Only a few were allowed to give pre-learnt monologues.

It was felt that both Foundation and Higher Tier performances were very similar to the standards heard in 2006. A full range of performance was displayed. Generally Centres awarded marks well in this section of the test and were clearly aware of how best to question their candidates so as to fulfil the assessment criteria. Likewise, Quality of Language marks were usually well awarded in Centres, but in a few Centres there was a little reluctance to award marks in the top bands of the mark scheme, even when candidates could use complex language features consistently. This usually occurred in Centres which only had a few candidates at the Foundation Tier.

Timings were usually well observed.

It is always heartening to hear the genuine interaction (and in some cases humour!) which takes place in the MFL Speaking Tests and this is the result of much hard work on the part of both teachers and candidates.

WRITING COURSEWORK – 2356

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 three different *sub-Contexts*). The five *Contexts*, with their *sub-Contexts*, are listed in Section C of the Specification (p.27) and are subsequently glossed in considerable detail in *Appendix A* (pp.42–48). It will be realised that this differentiation of *Contexts* is designed to lead candidates to explore different fields of vocabulary and to offer greater potential for different task-related structures. Implicit here is therefore also the encouragement 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', doing more than three pieces, where candidate attendance is known to be poor.
- When writing under *Controlled Conditions*, a candidate may have recourse to a **dictionary only**. *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. Candidates who fail to do so may not be awarded more than **6** marks for Communication for *any* of the three pieces submitted. This reflects the national requirement stated in the grade descriptor for Grade C and above.

Length

The parameters here are generous, but teachers are reminded that rather 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: -

- If the overall word count is less than 400 words, a piece of **less than 140 words** may not score more than **7** marks for Communication.
- If the overall word count is less than 250 words, a piece of **less than 90 words** not score more than **5** for Communication.
- If the overall word count is less than 100 words, a piece of **less than 40 words** may not score more than **3** for Communication.

Quality of Language marks are not similarly constrained, but a short piece is likely to be self-penalising.

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 should be retained at Centres until the publication of results, in case of a later results query. However, candidates are required to verify for the Moderator the authenticity of their own work by signing the individual Coursework Coversheet as indicated.

The Moderator must be in receipt of the coursework marks no later than May 15. Teachers are urged to submit their marks earlier, if at all possible.

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.

Details of the tasks set for candidates, clearly assigned to the different teachers who have used them, should be included with the samples. Without these it is not possible for the Moderator to consider to what extent the *Communication* mark has been fulfilled.

Candidates' work should show accurate word counts, and list all relevant sources.

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 perform less well under pressure and so their mark for their controlled piece may be inferior to their independent pieces, Teachers should always investigate cases where there is a discrepancy of 10 marks or more and give an explanation for the disparity on the candidate's coversheet.

General Comments

Even though there was a small drop in the candidature, especially at the lower grade range, Coursework remains a popular option with Centres. The standard of work submitted was very similar to previous years and there were many pleasing submissions throughout the grade range.

Many Centres fulfilled all the Coursework requirements scrupulously and applied the marking criteria with a fair degree of accuracy.

Choice of tasks

As mentioned previously the three items of coursework submitted should be drawn from three different contexts and, whilst sub-contexts may be very different, submitting two pieces from the same context is not permitted. Unfortunately, some Centres had to provide a replacement piece as some of their Candidates had infringed this rule. Teachers may find it useful to enter the context number, sub-context letter as well as the task title when recording their marks. Such practice should prevent any possibility of context infringements. (e.g. *mon collègue* – 1b)

Coursework should be seen as part of the learning process, not a succession of isolated hurdles. Even though only three pieces are required for the final submission, Centres are advised to set more tasks during the two year GCSE course, as feedback can benefit Candidates to improve subsequent performance. However, Centres are reminded that Candidates' work should not be annotated in any way and so Teachers must use some other method of giving feedback to their Candidates.

Some Centres disadvantaged most of their candidates by setting the same three tasks and sub-tasks the whole cohort, regardless of ability. This approach only seemed to cater for the C-D range Candidates, as the sub-tasks failed to challenge to the more able and were beyond the scope of the weaker ones. It is therefore essential that differentiated tasks be set to ensure that all the Candidates can achieve their optimum potential. Tasks on *Ma ville, Ma région* or *Ma famille* can be rather limiting unless Candidates are trained not to repeat the same verbs and structures: *il/elle a, il/elle est, il y a, on peut* + infinitive.

More able Candidates who are not set an appropriate challenge often produce accurate work but without the complexity of language and ideas expected for the higher mark bands. They need to be set tasks which require them to describe and explain their views and reactions rather than just narrate events with the occasional basic opinion and justification thrown in. On the other hand, setting a task which is too challenging penalises weaker Candidates, who feel out of their depth as they do not have the level of language to express their ideas successfully. Some E-F-G Candidates would have achieved better results had they been set tasks appropriate to their ability.

The topic *Mes vacances*, for example, is appropriate for the whole cohort, provided differentiated sub-tasks are devised to suit different ability ranges. The more able should compare, discuss and draw conclusions. The less able should give simple facts; for example, writing a postcard, an e-mail or a diary would enable them to introduce the language they have learned, demonstrating what they can do rather than what they cannot do.

Whilst very weak Candidates can benefit from the use of a template or a writing frame, as it allows them to substitute words and phrases, this is not acceptable for more able Candidates, who should be encouraged to develop their own ideas and language. Moderators soon become aware that templates are being used, as Candidates' work follows the same format and uses the same phrases. Candidates cannot be expected to achieve high marks for Communication and Quality of Language when they have merely completed a gap-filling exercise, since in effect they

are merely substituting words and phrases. Centres are reminded that is a national descriptor for grade F.

Evidence of the use of a correct verb in the present, past and future tenses is a minimum requirement to gain access to grade C and above but this should not be the only criterion when setting sub-tasks. The repetition of *Qu'est-ce que tu fais/as fait/vas faire* whatever the topic can lead to repetition and a lack of originality in the work produced, as often the same vocabulary, structures and verbs are used on all three different time frames.

Marking Criteria

OCR has noted a significant number of Centres erring on the side of generosity when awarding marks for Communication and Quality of Language. Centres that have been marking over-leniently are advised to make every effort to rectify the problem to avoid having their marks reduced in a future session. Centres should particularly avoid the temptation to add extra marks up to the limit of what they believe to be a current margin of tolerance.

However, many Centres are now applying the mark scheme more accurately and seem more at ease with awarding "best fit" marks. Teachers recognise that a consideration of *all* the descriptors within a mark band gives the correct indication of what is expected for the band, and so they avoid the danger of focusing too closely on one or two descriptors in a way that can lead to the wrong choice of mark.

Whilst all the points of the task need to be addressed with some success to score 7 or 8 for Communication, details, ideas and points of view, descriptions and justifications should also be in evidence for a piece to score 9 or 10. Consequently, the amount of (detailed) descriptions, expression and justification of ideas and points of view should be determining factors when selecting a mark band. The repetition of *J'ai aimé/détesté ... parce que c'était + adjective* fails to qualify for "in some detail" or "ideas and points of view freely expressed and justified". An essay, which is repetitive in its ideas, opinions and justifications, rarely gives the impression of "pleasant to read".

For Quality of Language the key words are *range* and *variety* and their accompanying quantifiers. The repetition of the same structure: *je pense que/je trouve que/je crois que* does not fulfil the criteria of range or variety. To achieve this, Candidates need to demonstrate that they can use different tenses, structures and subordinate conjunctions successfully. Many Candidates can often successfully use the perfect infinitive or an infinitive after a preposition but they also need to include other grammatical structures to achieve range and variety. It should also be noted that the use of the subjunctive, which is **not** a requirement for GCSE, does not automatically place a piece in the top mark bands especially if the rest of the essay is rather basic or inaccurate.

For the overall impression to be one of accuracy, it is imperative that the spelling of the piece is checked carefully: wrong genders, lack of agreements or acute accents missed from Past Participles all affect the overall impression. When Candidates word-process their work, they should be reminded of the importance of learning a range of new keys to provide accents etc.

"Quantity" is not a synonym for "quality", and Teachers should not advise Candidates to write at length, since this leads to repetition, the inclusion of irrelevant material and usually a consistent decrease in the quality of the language. Candidates should be advised at the first draft stage to try to write succinctly and be reminded that more does not mean better or higher marks.

It is essential that all the teachers in the Centre check on the standards of each other's work on a regular basis. Regretfully, some Centres had to re-assess the work of all their Candidates, as the marks they had awarded did not provide a reliable order of merit. It is essential that internal moderation be carried out rigorously to avoid this situation which is stressful for all concerned.

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

Moderators are not allowed to alter the order of merit in any way, and if they were to adjust marks on this basis, many Candidates' marks would be unfairly affected.

Conclusion

The most successful Centres were those where the Teachers had carefully read the specification and read the coursework reports of previous years and who had been able to attend INSET sessions. These were able to guide their Candidates through the whole process more effectively, and the work submitted by their Candidates, at all levels, was a credit to them.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education
French (Specification Code 1925)
June 2007 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	36	29	22	16	10	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2351/02	Raw	50	41	35	26	18	13	10	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	33	26	20	14	8	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2353/02	Raw	50	37	31	24	18	13	10	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	40	33	27	21	15	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2354/02	Raw	50	43	36	26	16	10	7	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
2356/01	Raw	90	82	76	67	59	48	37	26	15	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0

Syllabus 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 Number of Candidates
1925	11.8	27.9	48	73.9	90.3	96.7	99	99.8	100	35,157

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/exam_system/understand_ums.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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