

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2009

IGCSE

IGCSE French (4365) Paper 1

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Questions 1 - 5

Candidates had been well trained for these questions and were familiar with the vocabulary being tested.

Question 6

Many candidates made unnecessary errors when dealing with numbers. The number 12 was known (Qi) but 19 was variously given as 17, 10 and sometimes even left blank. The answer to (Qiii) was not given correctly as frequently as was expected by the examiners. The decimal place in (Qiv) was, of course, more testing. It was surprising how many candidates coped successfully with this answer when they had failed with other answers. Most disappointing was the number of candidates who fell into the error of confusing 83 and 43 in (Qv). Teachers are recommended to drill their candidates more thoroughly in the numbers - not just for the purposes of the examination, but so that their candidates do not make serious errors if they ever find themselves in a French-speaking country.

Question 7

Candidates were more confident when relying on vocabulary rather than numbers. This question was frequently well answered. Candidates did well to spot the word *tous* and the plural *vos* in the expression *tous vos ingrédients*. They correctly gave answer A. The most common error made by candidates was to give the incorrect answer D for (c). This was most probably because the word *four* was not known. However, *temperature* does not seem to apply to image D at all.

Section B

In section B, candidates are expected to draw inferences and to be able to judge attitudes. There was little evidence of the candidates having been trained to do this.

Questions 8 - 10

Many candidates seemed at a loss to answer these questions. Although the examiners were looking for the answer *soir* for 8(a), the answer *jeune* was later accepted as the story makes it clear that Dominique is talking about himself as he was in the past, when he was younger. For the same reason, *timide* was also accepted. Few candidates understood that the mother was unhappy. There was a high proportion of blank answers.

Candidates did not fare much better in Q9. For (a) far too many candidates tried to put in the date of 2009, often unsuccessfully at that. Disappointingly, not only did very few candidates understand that the Dominique was happy, but even fewer could spell such a word in French. Although the listening paper is not a test of spelling and grammar, the words written on the paper by the candidates must be comprehensible to a sympathetic native speaker: the word *heurusse* would not be understood either visually or phonetically; *amusé* did not have sufficient force to convey Dominique's mood, rather than the fact that he just agreed with her.

In Q10 candidates had two chances to understand that the *spectacle* was comic (*plein de farces / ils ont beaucoup ri*). Very few candidates were able to find the simple

words *comique / amusant*. Those who attempted simply to lift from the text fared very poorly as *plein de farce* (the most common spelling) was highly ambiguous and therefore did not answer the question. Only a small minority of candidates managed to interpret that *il n'y avait pas d'autre garçon* meant that he was the *seul garçon*. Despite being grammatically inaccurate, *le unique garçon* was accepted as a correct answer as it showed good comprehension.

Teachers preparing candidates for Paper 1 should bear in mind that most of the answers required can be couched in the simplest of language. However, candidates will need to practice converting the language of the original text into something simple which they know how to spell and can write quickly and easily.

Questions 11 - 13

No candidate left blank Q11, but far too many candidates failed to spot the negative in *il n'a pas été puni*. Many candidates therefore gave the answer (d) as being correct. To revise the negative, teachers might like to show the delightful scene from the film "La gloire de mon père" in which Marcel creeps into his father's class. The scene ends with Marcel saying plaintively: *Ce n'est pas vrai. Il ne l'a pas puni*.

Questions 12 and 13, as expected, were just about attempted, but often not fully successfully, even by the best candidates. It was extremely rare to see a version of the word *menacer / menace / menaçant* in Q12 and equally, not many sheep were recorded as dying / being killed / being eaten etc. Although the word *manifestations* was gleaned by the candidates, their attempts to use the word were poor: the word had to be in the plural, as the fact was underlined both by the use of *les manifestation* and *dans plusieurs villes*. Again, the spelling of the word was very weak, with much influence from the candidates' mother tongue.

Q13 showed that candidates had not sufficiently practiced the use of comparative structures. It was rare for the words *plus* or *moins* to appear with *dangereux*. Although grammar is not tested in the listening test, candidates must at least make an attempt to use the appropriate structures.

By the time the vast majority of candidates had reached 13 (b) (i) and (ii) they were proving that they had not had sufficient training in one of the topic areas given in the Specification, namely "the environment". The word *biodiversité* was rarely used, whereas *université* was. Candidates should be reminded that at this level, it is most likely that one word answers will be inadequate. The word *touristes* is not sufficient as an "argument". Candidates should be encouraged to say what it is about the tourists which convinces some inhabitants of the Pyrenees to accept bears; a verb is probably needed: *ils encourage les touristes; les touristes aiment voir les ours*.

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