

# **Examiners' Reports**

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**January 2011**

**H075/H475/R/11J**

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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## **Chief Examiner's Report**

This session produced the full range of marks and the papers discriminated well. It was pleasing to note that most candidates were correctly entered and could do themselves justice.

For the written units, timing was not an issue, but for the speaking unit, some discussions were longer than 10 minutes, and no credit could be given for what was said beyond the time limit.

Generally candidates were well prepared for the demands of individual units. For F701, there is further scope for improvement in the technique of eliciting the 15 key points in the Role-Play. For F702 and F704, candidates' techniques for answering have improved. Candidates no longer rely on lifting (F702) or try to reformulate every single word (F704). In Section C of F704, they made effective use of factual evidence from French speaking sources.

Most candidates tried to extend their range of language, varying vocabulary and using more complex structures whenever they could. In the written units, they are advised to give themselves time to check that their work is accurate.

# F701 French Speaking

## Role-plays

### Use of Stimulus

Most teacher-examiners were well-prepared for the role plays giving their candidates every chance to perform well. Teacher-examiners can challenge information that is incorrectly given by candidates so that they have an opportunity to correct themselves. They can also prompt for missing details. It is important, however, that teacher-examiners do not give candidates an item of vocabulary that is needed for a key point as candidates cannot be credited if they are supplied with a key word. The questions on the examiner sheet are carefully worded to avoid this so teacher-examiners are advised to keep to the questions provided. Also, it is not necessary to ask all the questions if a candidate has already supplied the information as a follow-on from a response to an earlier question.

### Task A

Most candidates were able to convey the introductory details without difficulty. If candidates could not convey the idea of lessons for all levels, they were able to successfully paraphrase by using words such as *débutants* and *champions*. Examiners are looking for the idea to be expressed, not necessarily the exact wording.

### Task B

The 'Specsavers' role play proved to be a very fair test. Candidates showed skill in rephrasing 'removed' as 'you must not wear your contact lenses'. There was some difficulty with 'valid' and the figure '75'. Some candidates did not know *lunettes de marque*, but gave an example instead.

### Task C

Candidates were usually able to give details about the hotel and the restaurant. Some teacher-examiners and candidates shared a chuckle over the 'loo of the year' award. Some candidates missed the glossed word and used *la toilette*. The 5 course meal was sometimes incorrectly given as *cing courses*. A few teacher-examiners gave some of the details of key point 13 to candidates by making reference to the first of January or even asking whether it was possible to go racing.

## Response to Examiner

Teacher-examiners introduced the situations well, using the suggested wording, but there was some slight confusion about being in France or England with role play B, which then seemed to cause confusion for some candidates. Most candidates provided a good link between the questions and the main transactional part, only a small number omitted to mention the name of the place or business.

Many responded well to the examiner's questions, with some giving fuller answers, often combining several points to make an extended answer. Some candidates used a very successful technique and introduced information that was not in the stimulus text or added little touches that made the interchange sound like a genuine conversation. These included short opinions about a feature, extra details, or advising the teacher-examiner of something they would particularly like.

However, with candidates who speak quite slowly, it is important that they are given the opportunity to complete the role play within the six minutes, so getting the key points is more of a priority than adding extra details. The six minutes time limit is strictly adhered to, and candidates are not credited for anything said after that time.

For the extension questions, candidates should always try to give information beyond that already provided from the text.

### Quality of Language

Some candidates looked for ways to inject more complex structures into the conversations, and this is always credited unless the language is unnatural. There were some errors with agreements (*tout/toute*), subject-verb agreements, and word order in noun phrases, eg *un cinq courses repas* was quite common.

The opening questions were generally done well, but pronouns and possessive adjectives seem to still be a challenge, particularly changing *lui* to *vous*.

### Examining

It is clear that thorough preparation by teacher-examiners is of benefit to candidates. Good techniques are:

- carefully prompting candidates for missed information
- supplying a link between the questions and the main text (eg *Vous avez quelque chose à me proposer?*) rather than leaving a silence
- not asking questions that a candidate has already answered
- encouraging candidates to expand on the extension questions, particularly when a short answer has been given initially
- keeping to the time limit of 5-6 minutes.

### Topic discussion

#### Choice of Topics

There were many enjoyable discussions on the theme of television, tourism in France, transport, elitism in the French education system, and contemporary and older French films.

A minority of candidates offered topics from the A2 list, or that did not relate to France or a French-speaking country. The subject chosen must directly relate to the list of AS topics. For example, a footballer's work developing youngsters is pertinent to a discussion of sport in France, but his general life story is not, and candidates must not focus only on biographical details. Some candidates enjoy talking about a film or a literary text and this is acceptable as long as the theme of the book or film relates to one of the AS topics, for example relationships.

#### Ideas, Opinions and Relevance

Most candidates had prepared their topics well, and had a substantial amount of information to support their ideas and opinions, which is important. The most successful candidates expressed a wide range of relevant opinions, and used the information they had found to back up their ideas. Candidates seemed to have chosen their topics individually which is also important as it generally means that they have their own individual opinions.

## **Fluency, Spontaneity, Responsiveness**

Many candidates had a very natural discussion with their teacher-examiner and used prepared material flexibly, responding to the unexpected, and explaining and expanding as required. When topic discussions sound over rehearsed to the point of being almost scripted, and when there is no spontaneity at all, even when expressing opinions, this has an adverse affect on the marks that can be awarded. In addition, teacher-examiners must ensure that they have some unexpected questions that they can ask their candidates, however familiar they are with the topics.

It was surprising that some candidates started with a presentation lasting between two and five minutes because this is not required.

Many candidates were able to talk with fluency about their chosen topic, and they understood the examiner well with few requests for repetition or rephrasing of a question. If candidates speak slowly, this limits the number of ideas that can be expressed within the available time, which affects the mark that can be awarded for ideas and opinions.

## **Language**

It was good to hear the natural use of a range of tenses, *si* clauses, subjunctives, passives, and direct and indirect pronouns. It is important that candidates understand that they need to demonstrate in this test that they have learned the structures that are on the list for AS. Errors occur usually in the gender of common words, in topic specific vocabulary and in verb endings in the future tense. Sometimes the conditional is heard where a future tense would be the appropriate tense.

## **Pronunciation**

Many candidates made very impressive attempts to sound French. Difficulties tended to be the same as in previous series – nasals, especially in words such as 'principal' and 'important'. It is important to emphasise that it is not necessary to sound like a first language speaker in order to achieve full marks in this category.

## **Examining**

Examining was effective in this part of the test. Teacher-examiners had interesting and unexpected questions for their candidates, ensured that they were encouraged to express and develop their opinions, and thus avoided too much focus on only factual information and the reciting of chunks of pre-learned material.

Discussions should last between 9 and 10 minutes, and assessment stops at 10 minutes.

## **Administrative matters**

The administration requirements were fulfilled better than in any previous series.

Sometimes the volume of the recordings was too low.

Component codes have changed:

OCR Repository is now component 01  
CD is now component 02.

The Visiting Examiner component of 03 is unchanged and is available only in the summer.

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It is important to label CDs and CD sleeves accurately, so that the candidate order on the sleeve matches the recording order.

For the Repository, working mark sheets and candidate topic sheets should be sent to the OCR examiner through the post, but alternatively can be uploaded at the same time as the recordings.

# F702 French: Listening, Reading and Writing 1

## General comments

The paper performed and discriminated well. Candidates attempted all parts of the paper and completed it in the allocated time. It was good to see little evidence of lifting from the text in either Task 6 or Task 7. The area with scope for improvement is accuracy: allowing time to check all answers, if only to ensure that all basic agreement rules have been applied would benefit candidates. In a few cases handwriting was not clear, making it difficult to decide whether credit was due.

## Task 1

Generally, the outcome for this task was pleasing but some candidates ticked fewer or more than 10 boxes. Candidates should always ensure that the number of ticks matches the number of marks allocated to the task.

- (a) A good discriminator since both Mélanie and Sophie linked reading and relaxation but only the former said she read for relaxation.
- (b) Candidates needed to listen to the whole passage to make sure that they answered correctly. All three speakers mentioned "*les classiques*" but some candidates ticked the first one who did: Laurent.
- (c) Here candidates needed to infer meaning ("*des romans qu'on peut lire sans problème*"), so it was a good test of comprehension.
- (d) This was generally well done; candidates were able to link "*policier ... livres d'action*" and "*suspense*".
- (e) Another good discriminator. Sophie implied she read everyday. Those who did not understand went for Mélanie and Laurent in equal proportions or did not assign the statement to anyone.
- (f) This was generally correctly answered, although both Laurent and Mélanie mentioned cost.
- (g) There was no specific pattern here; it may be that candidates guessed because they had not understood "*la couverture du livre*".
- (h) This question was designed to be accessible but Mélanie was often erroneously ticked instead of Laurent, perhaps because of her mention of "*moins coûteux*".
- (i) This was the most accessible question. Most could link "*pendant les vacances*" and "*à un certain moment de l'année*".
- (j) Although transports were only implied ("*pendant mon trajet au bureau*"), many managed to attribute the statement to the correct speaker.

## Task 2

This task discriminated well overall. Candidates must only put one tick per question. Any additional tick incurs a loss of one mark. Some candidates seemed to have translated questions and options and to do this must take some time so it is not an effective technique.

- (a) This was a challenging question requiring detailed understanding.
- (b) Candidates who understood "*vente à emporter*" had no difficulty in identifying the correct answer "*les magasins*". In some cases "*gare*" was erroneously selected although this word was linked to the definition of the "*zone*" rather than to places within the zone itself.
- (c) This question required candidates to link "*habitants*" and "*résidents*", which most could do. Some selected "*fêtards*", which was glossed, but which was unlikely because people do not complain about their own behaviour.
- (d) Candidates who correctly identified "*pas seulement le week-end*" at the end of the sentence got the correct answer: A.
- (e) This question required linking "*bouteilles cassées*" in the text and "*morceaux de verre*" in option B.
- (f) An accessible question; a small number did not understand "*quinzaine*" and/or confused 15 and 50.
- (g) Many showed good gist understanding of the passage and opted for C.
- (h) This was an accessible question, with many candidates able to link "*de plus en plus jeunes*" and "*l'âge des fêtards baisse*".
- (i) A demanding question, testing understanding of a long section of the text. Option B was a sensible but incorrect guess.
- (j) A demanding question and understanding the full sentence was needed.

## Task 3

The text about hiring boats to travel through France was generally well understood by candidates. Some of the details, especially Q(b) and Q(d) proved to be challenging. Candidates should be aware that the number of marks allocated to a question gives an indication of the level of detail expected in the answer.

- (a) Nearly all candidates could explain that the figure represented the number of kilometers of rivers but some did not recognize "*canaux*" as the plural of "*canal*". There were some plausible guesses (streams, lakes) but some did not mention it and lost a mark. Many succeeded in conveying the idea of 'crossing'.
- (b) This question required detailed understanding of the text and was a good discriminator. If marks were lost it was because answers lacked precision, eg in (i) answering "important" instead of "compulsory" or mentioning "principles" only in (iii), omitting to convey "*de base*", an essential qualifier. The most challenging sub-question was (ii); and candidates needed to accurately convey "*dès que*" and "*prendre possession du bateau*". In part (iii) the incorrect addition of "test" or "exam" meant a lost mark. To get the second mark it was necessary to explain who was giving the training and "*loueur*" had to be conveyed accurately – not as "renter", "instructor".

- (c) When candidates did not get the mark it was because they wrote single words such as “certificate”, “authorisation” or even “authority”.
- (d) Candidates who took note of the gloss usually gave a correct answer for the first part of the question. In the second part of the answer a common problem was the omission of the frequency element.
- (e) Here most candidates could state the capacity of the boat.
- (f) To get the mark here candidates needed to include “per person per week”, and give the correct price range.

#### Task 4

All sections of the stimulus were well attempted. It is pleasing when candidates produce imaginative paraphrasing to get around vocabulary they do not know (sections 1, 4 and 6 especially). Some phrased questions very well (“*Pourriez-vous me dire si ...*”; “*Qu’est-ce que nous devons apporter?*”) Words or phrases candidates found difficult to transfer into French were: hiring, driven, how long, insurance (frequently spelt as in English), equipped, have to and bring.

The majority of candidates produced simple sentence structures accurately and attempted more complex ones with some measure of success. Some used complex language with confidence and few errors. Words that candidates found difficult to spell were: *intéressant*, *bateau*, *adresse*, *assurance* and *prix*.

#### Task 5A

Q(a) was generally well answered, a few candidates selected option C, possibly because they linked “*irruption*” at the start of the text and “*catastrophique*”. Q(b) proved to be a challenge, possibly because candidates did not understand “*chagrin*” and did not link it with “*triste*”. For Q(c) many were able to associate “*du matin au soir*” and “*constamment*”. Q(d) was successfully answered by most, but Q(e) proved to be a challenge.

#### Task 5B

This proved to be more challenging than Task 5A and a few candidates left some questions unanswered.

#### Task 6

This task proved to be the most challenging part of the paper and a good discriminator. Deciding on what to study post Bac is within the AS topic of Education but understanding the text and answering in French was demanding for some candidates. The outcome covered the full range of marks.

- (a) Correct answers need to relate to further studies.
- (b) Most candidates could explain that the difficulty lay with the wide range of options.
- (c) Correct answers referred to career.
- (d) Candidates had to produce language to express the role of “*conseillers d’orientation*”. Some cleverly avoided the difficulty with an acceptable answer such as “*il y a des conseillers d’orientation*”.

- (e) Many candidates understood the text and explained it in their own words. Using “*peuvent faire*” was an effective way of conveying the right idea.
- (f) To get at least one mark, candidates needed to clearly express the interaction between students and advisers. Using “*épreuves*” or “*examens*” was incorrect in this context.
- (g) This question discriminated well as it required understanding of a concept rather than a fact.
- (h) With three marks available, most candidates got at least one and many two or even three. Occasionally candidates gave the same idea but expressed in a different way (the coaches see fewer students/the advisers see more students) and could not be given credit twice. For the last point, it was enough to say that the service was expensive but quoting a figure (450 €) without mentioning what it related to did not get the mark.
- (i) This was also a good discriminating question. Most candidates had understood that past pupils had been asked to talk to them, but not all were able to explain the exact reason for their presence and some referred to them as older pupils.
- (j) Correct answers needed to indicate receiving direct responses rather than asking questions directly.

There was a significant drop in instances of copying from the text. There are 10 marks for quality of language and good responses were characterised by accurately conjugated verbs, correct subject/verb accord, correct formation of the passive or the *passé composé*, correct use of pronouns in Q6(f) or in Q6(i) and correct spelling of words taken from the text.

### Task 7

- 7(a) Good responses were from candidates who focused on parts of the text that were relevant to the question. There were some difficulties with points 6 and 8, mainly because candidates lacked precision when they mentioned the type of shops targeted by the old and the new law. Some candidates treated task 7a as another form of 7b, and did not refer to the text but gave an analysis of the passage, which did not get marks.
- 7(b) All candidates had views on the debate over Sunday opening and could respond relevantly to the requirements of the task. Very good responses gave a reasoned case, examined both angles and gave a personal conclusion. Some candidates showed thoughtfulness and originality by making reference to the economy, traditions, over-dependence on immediate gratification, pollution and extension to the 24 hours opening. It was interesting to note that a significant number did not agree with Sunday opening and cherished “old family values”. It was pleasing to see well-structured pieces, with introduction, paragraphs and logical conclusion. Responses with lengthy, all-purpose introductions, repetition of points and pre-learned phrases were not successful and took up words unnecessarily.
- 7(f) Most candidates attempted to extend the range of vocabulary and structures, using subordinate clauses, subjunctive and a range of tenses. The topic lent itself to the use of the “*si* + imperfect clause” followed by the conditional and there were many good examples of this and of other more complex structures (use of *ceux*, rhetorical questions, direct and indirect object pronouns, present participle, *aucun*, superlatives etc). In less coherent responses, candidates mixed formal and informal vocabulary in the same sentence, included phrases they had pre-learned without much understanding and made up words or used English; these only served to obscure or distort meaning.

- 7(c) Candidates were successful and achieved higher marks when they used correct verb endings, appropriate tenses and correct noun/adjective agreement. Many candidates used *avoir besoin* correctly and there was evidence of good use of 'links' between sentences to avoid a succession of very short sentences. The conditional was used effectively by many candidates. In some instances, candidates had written a lot more than the recommended length but had only repeated themselves and increased errors. A more effective strategy, and one that can be practised prior to the exam, is to write to the correct word length and then use checking techniques (which can also be practised) to make sure that what has been written is accurate.

## F704 French: Listening, Reading and Writing 2

### General comments

Most candidates appeared to have been correctly entered for this A2 French unit and were able to demonstrate sound knowledge of AS and A2 structures and vocabulary in their response to the various tasks. Judging by the length of Section C responses nearly all candidates appeared to have had enough time; however some left gaps in Sections A and B. Rubric infringements were rare, but a few candidates lost marks in certain sub-questions because they gave two answers of which only one was correct. Illegible handwriting may have cost a few candidates valuable marks as did inconsistent spelling, sometimes of the same word in one question.

### SECTION A

#### Task 1

Most candidates showed generally good gist comprehension of the recorded French and were able to respond to the questions.

- (a) If candidates had difficulty, it was with *cuisinière* and *lit*, which were sometimes rendered as 'kitchen' and 'book' respectively, and also *films* which was mistakenly understood as *filles*.
- (b) There were many correct answers but there were some inappropriate references to buying and selling.
- (c) To get the mark candidates had to get the correct number of objects.
- (e) Most candidates understood the idea of *sans intermédiaire*, but extreme misspellings of 'intermediary' sometimes lost candidates the mark.
- (f) There were some good answers here. Most candidates offered at least one acceptable point either for the idea of ecological conscience or for the idea of fighting against consumerism. The reference to citizenship was more elusive.

#### Task 2

This task discriminated well and produced a wide range of attainment. The most successful technique was to concentrate on getting the correct message across, using key words from the recording but not transcribing whole sentences.

- (a) Almost all candidates managed *les moins de 25 ans*. Some mistook *les enseignants* for *les anciens*, which they sometimes paraphrased as *les personnes âgées*.
- (b) Candidates expressed this well.
- (c) If candidates lifted *reviendra à la charge de l'État*, this was acceptable if it was expressed in a way that made sense. A few used *charger* incorrectly – as if it meant 'to charge'. The idea of *par an* was necessary to get the second mark.
- (d) Many candidates seemed to grasp the underlying ideas. It is often better to find a simpler word than the key word in the text – here *acheter* instead of *acquérir* – as this often ensures more accuracy in the response.
- (e)(i) To get the mark here, candidates needed to convey the idea of *éduquer* successfully.

- (e)(ii) This was often well answered.
- (e)(iii) This was well answered.
- (f) For the first marking point candidates needed to recognise the reference to football. Many candidates gained credit for the second marking point, either by lifting the rhetorical question *pourquoi pas...* from the recording or by putting into their own words the idea that paying for art exhibitions was normal.
- (g) A wide range of attainment here. Candidates needed to make the idea of 'free music' explicit and understand the reference to *concerts*.
- (h) It was important here to recognise the key phrase *change d'avis* and make the link between *peur* in the question and *se méfient* in the recording.
- (i)(i) This was well answered.
- (i)(ii) To get the correct answer here, candidates needed to show sufficient understanding of the interview. The answer *la culture n'a pas de prix* was not correct.

### Language, Section A

Many candidates showed a good grasp of appropriate grammatical structures. Candidates who excessively transcribed directly from the recording could not be awarded a high mark for quality of language.

### SECTION B

#### Task 3

Most candidates gave the correct answer for parts (b) and (c). For (a) they needed to have understood *chargé* and in part (d) *perçoit*.

#### Task 4

Here the main difficulty was in identifying *dus à* as the synonym of *causés par* in part (d).

#### Task 5

Many candidates showed understanding of the stimulus text and phrased their answers appropriately for the question set. In this exercise it is not necessary to find synonyms or near-synonyms for almost every word as this sometimes distorts the sense of the text and can invalidate the response. Please see the mark scheme for appropriate responses.

- (a)(i) Most candidates mentioned *les risques*, but it was also necessary to mention *sur notre santé*.
- (a)(ii) Here there was some good paraphrasing of *s'est vite répandue* such as *s'est développée rapidement*.
- (b) This was generally well answered.
- (c) Many candidates understood the general idea. The key idea to convey was that people fear masts more than mobiles even though mobiles are actually more dangerous.

- (d) This question targeted the ideas of imposition and helplessness and many candidates conveyed at least one of those ideas successfully. Some candidates made effective use of their own words, eg *Quand ils n'y peuvent rien* or *Quand ils n'ont pas le choix*.
- (e) Here candidates needed to refer specifically to the positioning of the masts to get the first marking point.

### Task 6

- (a) In the first gap, where *se réchauffe* was the most natural answer, the reflexive pronoun *se* was necessary. In the second gap it was important to take account of the preposition *à*. Verbs such as *se préoccupe* which take a different preposition were accepted for communication but were not credited under quality of language.
- (b) The first gap proved to be a challenge, but most candidates produced the correct adjective *facile* for the second gap.
- (c) This was a good discriminating question. It was important here to convey the meaning of the stimulus text; answers such as *réchauffement climatique* only made sense if the sentence were taken in isolation and were not accepted.
- (d) This also was a very discriminating question. In the second gap a passive form was necessary if *menacer* was used.

### Task 7

In this transfer of meaning task candidates need to show detailed comprehension of the stimulus text and they must write accurate, grammatical English.

It was necessary to transfer two verbs in the historic present, *arrive* and *lancent*, by either a present or past tense in English. Then also the future tense *diront* as a future or conditional tense in English so as to indicate that the words *pour rigoler* were to be spoken at a later stage. Many candidates produced a readable and largely accurate piece of English. Where errors occurred, they tended to relate to specific vocabulary items such as:

- *août*
- *lancé*
- *bêtise*
- *gravité*

### Task 8

This task discriminated well and produced a range of responses.

- (a) Here it was necessary to mention Sam and Hakim in the answer. For the second marking point, the use of an object pronoun was accepted.
- (b) Almost all candidates identified the appropriate section of the text. They also needed to explain clearly the reason why the word *violence* was used. To do this, they needed to specify that a glass item was thrown and that it had the potential to do harm.
- (c) A good discriminator. The key idea was the relatively trivial nature of the act, which could be conveyed by stating that the pot didn't hit the car.
- (d) The question asked what the judge did, so answers that began with *//* referring to Sam were not acceptable for the first marking point.

- (e) Here it was acceptable to lift the phrase *casier judiciaire*, although a more robust answer in terms of quality of language was *Hakim avait déjà commis des délits*.
- (f) Many candidates understood that the key issue was provocation and expressed the response clearly enough to get the first mark. Some kind of explanation was required for the second mark, such as *Il a dit qu'il n'avait tué personne* or *Il était méchant et impoli*.

### Task 9

In this task it was equally acceptable either to write a word or phrase that fitted the grammatical context of the highlighted phrase or to write an explanation on the lines of *Cela veut dire que ...*. On the whole the first of these approaches was more successful.

- (a) This proved to be a challenge and candidates did not easily find a paraphrase.
- (b) Here candidates needed to re-express *casier judiciaire* in French.
- (c) An explanation such as *C'est quand on parle sérieusement* was acceptable but the repeating of *voix* from the question was not allowed.
- (d) Here candidates needed to convey the idea of bringing another person round to one's own opinion.

### Task 10

Candidates generally did this task well.

- (a) The past participle of *commettre* was needed and only versions that sounded similar to *commis* when read out were accepted. A good alternative was *fait*.
- (b) There were some correct answers and *casse* or *ne respecte pas* were not accepted.
- (c) There were many correct answers, but also some instances of *l'école* which suggested that candidates had not understood *foyer* in the text.
- (d) This item discriminated well. The negative with *a condamné* in the first gap was necessary.
- (e) This item also discriminated well and tested comprehension of *avec sursis*. It required candidates to understand that the minimum length of time would be *un mois*.

### Language, Section B

For the quality of language mark in Section B, the accurate use of simple French, including adjectival agreements and common verb endings, as well as the extent to which candidates use complex structures that are not lifted directly from the stimulus texts, are important.

Task 8 in particular offered many opportunities for the use of complex structures, such as *aurait pu casser le pare-brise* in part (b) and *en disant qu'il n'avait tué personne* in part (f). The ability to write grammatically correct forms in the gap fill exercises, ie Tasks 6 and 10, also contributed to the quality of language mark.

### SECTION C

Most candidates chose a title which enabled them to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding that they had acquired during the A2 course. Many made a creditable attempt to address the requirements of the task and only a few tried to answer a different question from the

one set. The discursive titles were more popular than the imaginative titles. The length of most essays fell within the advised range from 250 to 400 words. Some candidates wrote at greater length, but this was not necessarily to their advantage because of the risk of losing focus and introducing irrelevant material.

### Relevance and points of view

Many candidates made appropriate references to French-speaking society in their choice of examples and illustrations. Often these references were successfully integrated into the response; however in a few instances candidates merely quoted statistics or the names of French towns or people without any attempt to explain their significance, resulting in a low mark for Relevance and Points of View. It should be remembered that all candidates are expected to have studied at least one topic area in sufficient depth to tackle a range of Section C titles; they will always have the choice of a discursive or an imaginative title within each topic area.

### Structure and analysis

Many candidates showed that they had thought carefully about the structure of their response, with clear and logical paragraphing enabling the reader to follow the line of argument with ease. However, some candidates started with a very promising opening paragraph but then wandered away from the requirements of the task, giving the impression that they were using pre-learned material without adapting it to the given title. The quality of concluding paragraphs was variable: some candidates succeeded in writing a succinct summary which followed logically from the specific points made in the body of the essay, while others repeated material with little evaluation or, in some cases, introduced new ideas in their final paragraph which then left the reader in mid-air. Where candidates chose to answer a non-discursive question, it was good to see them round off their response with a strongly persuasive appeal to support their cause.

### Quality of language (accuracy and range)

At the top end of the range, there was some impressive use of French, including topic-specific vocabulary, fairly sophisticated general vocabulary, good use of complex structures and a high level of grammatical accuracy. The strongest performances tended to be those where the candidate avoided an over-reliance on unnecessary complexity and produced natural-sounding French which suited the requirements of the task.

Candidates often got a higher mark for Range than for Accuracy because they tended to make good use of different verb tenses, subordinate clauses with *si* or *bien que*, and other constructions such as *ce qui* and *dont*, but made errors such as *le gouvernement française* and *beaucoup de femmes travaille*. The subjunctive was generally well known, but it was sometimes used when it should not have been, eg after *je crois que*.

### Question 11

This question produced a wide range of attainment. The strongest responses were those which remained focused on the issue of inequalities in French society, using evidence such as disparity in income based on gender and race to reach a suitable conclusion – usually that there are many inequalities in French society. As for how the inequalities might be tackled, some candidates considered that this was impossible given the nature of our society, while others offered suggestions such as changing the taxation system. Either approach was acceptable as long as it was sufficiently explained and justified. A few essays dealt with only one issue, usually racism, and so did not fully respond to the question.

### Question 12

In this question candidates made effective use of relevant information such as the number of employed people in France and the decline of manufacturing industries in France. Some candidates appeared to have detailed knowledge of a particular town or region, perhaps because they had visited it, and this enabled them to bring realism to their response. The title lent itself well to the use of persuasive language, such as exclamations and rhetorical questions, as long as these were not overdone.

### Question 13

Skilful responses to this question included those which looked at the topic from two angles – on the one hand, the reasons for protecting the natural environment and possible measures to enhance its protection, and, on the other hand, the other demands on public funds which might put a squeeze on money for environmental protection. Responses which treated *les milieux naturels* as a synonym for *l'environnement*, were not as skilful and were too general on the broad topic of 'the environment'.

### Question 14

Most candidates who chose the question were able to use relevant facts and figures to present a well-argued case, but some candidates incorrectly used examples from non-Francophone countries. Candidates were required to take sides and present a convincing argument, not to give equal weight to the positive and negative aspects of nuclear energy.

### Question 15

Candidates who chose this question, which asked candidates to assess the impact of medical advances on people's lives, usually did so effectively. They were able to specify two or more developments and explain their benefits for French citizens.

### Question 16

There were some good responses to this question with examples of persuasive language, particularly in relation to the need for money.

### Question 17

Candidates who chose this question did so with great effectiveness. No time frame was specified and it was equally possible to write about the French Revolution as it was to discuss the adoption of the single European currency. Linguistically, the title gave candidates the opportunity to use a variety of verb tenses, such as *Si cet événement n'avait pas eu lieu, les Français auraient beaucoup souffert ...*

### Question 18

An approach which worked well in response to this question was to explain why a specific government policy, such as measures to reduce unemployment or the proposed raising of the retirement age, would affect young people more than they realised. Less successful were responses which only presented 'politics' as an inherently interesting subject, with little or no evidence from a French-speaking country.

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