

OCR Report to Centres

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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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Advanced Subsidiary GCE French (H075)

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F701 French Speaking

Introduction

The examination provided a fair test for candidates; most seem to have been appropriately entered. It is recommended that centres upload or post recordings as soon as possible after completion.

Role-plays

Use of Stimulus

Many candidates were well prepared and had made good use of the preparation time to work out which sections of the text related to which bullet point. The most successful teacher-examiners had also prepared well using the three days to become familiar with the texts. They were able to give candidates an opportunity to correct themselves, prompt for missing details and adapt their questions to follow what the candidate had said. They were also able to avoid inadvertently giving candidates an item of vocabulary that was needed for a key point and thus allowed candidates to gain credit for doing so. It is strongly recommended that teacher-examiners use the questions on the examiner's sheet as these match specifically to the bullet points on the candidate's sheet.

A good technique shown by some candidates was to alert their teacher to the fact that there was information from the text that they had not been given the opportunity to convey. They were thus able to pick up additional marks which would otherwise have been lost.

Task A

Candidates found this accessible and were able to discuss the themes in the extension questions. Most candidates were able to convey the introductory detail about the centre, but it was important also to mention the different types of restaurant. Most successful candidates sounded genuinely enthusiastic about the Metrocentre and played the role very well. An area for more focussed practise is 'from' and 'to' with times and days of the week, as some candidates found this difficult.

Task B

The Black Country Living Museum role play was successfully done by candidates. Many were able to add their own inventions to the information given on the sheet to give some of the conversations a very authentic feel. Some commented that they had visited the museum last year; others added a small commentary throughout which made them sound very persuasive. Sometimes candidates missed out details and so did not gain as many marks as perhaps they could have done. For example, stating that there were forty buildings, but not that they were authentic and similarly that there was plenty to see inside but not indicating that this was particularly relevant in winter. It is important to convey the idea but not necessarily in the exact wordings; so 'winter' could be conveyed by *en décembre ou janvier* for example.

Task C

Candidates had to refer to a third person in this role play so it is important that they practise doing so, especially for the opening questions. Successful candidates were able to speak about the benefits of the work and convey, by acceptable alternatives, 'training' and 'accommodation'. Some missed marks because they did not mention that the pool was heated, or that the discount also applied to accessories.

Response to Examiner

Teacher-examiners successfully made candidates feel at ease by using a range of techniques. By far the most important was that of introducing the situations using the suggested wording.

Most candidates provided a good link between the questions and the main transactional part. They responded well to the examiner's questions, often giving fuller answers and combining several points to make an extended answer, and the most successful added in extra details giving more authenticity to the situation.

Most candidates attempted a response to the final questions. Many offered several sentences, explaining and justifying their ideas, some teacher-examiners encouraged this, and it worked well, provided that all the key information had already been given. Sometimes, if candidates have missed out information from the text, it is better to spend any spare time encouraging them to give that rather than asking the additional extension questions.

Quality of Language

Candidates are not expected to offer a full range of complex structures in this part of the test. Some candidates found ways of using the grammar from the AS and even the A2 list in a natural way. Areas that generally cause difficulty are: subject-verb agreements, word order with adjectives and faux amis. Specific difficulties are: *tout/toute* etc and agreement with nouns, and the dot (*point*) and 'UK' in email addresses.

Examining

The best examining helped candidates to perform to the best of their ability. Many candidates benefited from teachers who had read through the tasks thoroughly and were able to prompt for missed information. Most examiners struck a good balance between their input and that of the candidate, ensuring that they did not talk too much and use up valuable time. Good techniques also were: to ask the extension questions at the end – this is when the candidate is expecting them, and to use the exact wording on the examiner's sheets – so that the candidate can get quickly to a response.

Topic discussion

Choice of Topics

Candidates choose their topics from the list of AS sub-topics given in the specification. If candidates wish to discuss a book or a film, the themes must also relate to one of the set topics. Centres are welcome to seek advice if unsure as to whether a topic is suitable or not. Topics such as, immigration, racism and nuclear energy are A2 topics and as such they are not appropriate for this speaking test.

Ideas, Opinions and Relevance

Most candidates had prepared their topics well, and demonstrated evidence of research with material presented beyond that likely to have been covered in class. Grid D rewards developed ideas and opinions, supported by factual information. The most successful candidates expressed a wide range of relevant opinions, and used the information they had found to back up their ideas. Many candidates appeared to have chosen topics in which they had a personal interest and were also able to skilfully avoid anecdotal presentations, which are not usually successful.

Fluency, Spontaneity, Responsiveness

Many discussions made appropriate use of prepared material. Successful examining started with the teacher-examiner asking a question, allowed candidates to be forthcoming, probed for explanations or justifications, or, in some cases, to break up a monologue. It is not normally advantageous to interrupt a candidate every few words. Most candidates understood their teacher without undue difficulty and did not require excessive repetition.

Language

In this section of the test candidates need to demonstrate that they have learned the structures that are on the list for AS. Good performances included the natural use of structures such as the subjunctive, a range of tenses, correctly sequenced tenses after *si*, and subordinate clauses.

Candidates are expected to know the genders of high-frequency words, and topic-specific vocabulary. Language errors tended to be focussed around verb endings and tenses, adjectival agreements, and word order.

Pronunciation

Candidates are awarded full marks for a good attempt to sound French rather than for perfection. Difficulties are usually encountered with nasals; especially in words such as 'principal' and 'important', and this time 'parent' surprisingly also gave problems. When candidates rely on pre-learned long passages, pronunciation and intonation are often not good, particularly in terms of silent endings.

Examining

Teacher-examiners asked a good range of questions and ensured that their candidates were encouraged to express and develop their opinions. Good techniques in evidence in this section of the test were: changing a question when a candidate could not answer one already asked, speaking much less than the candidate, interrupting a monologue and allowing error to pass uncorrected.

Discussions should last between 9 and 10 minutes; assessment stops at 10 minutes. Very few topic discussions in this series exceeded 10 minutes.

Administrative matters

Component codes are:

- OCR Repository – 01
- CD – 02.
- Visiting Examiner – 03 (available in the summer only).

To get best recording volume, make sure that candidates are seated nearer to the microphone than the teacher.

Label CDs and CD sleeves accurately, so that the candidate order on both is the same.

For the OCR Repository, send the working mark sheets and candidate topic sheets to the appropriate OCR examiner through the post. Alternatively, upload them at the same time as the recordings.

F702 French Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General comments

Fewer candidates were entered than at the same time last year but they seemed better prepared; this showed in their approach to the extended writing exercise in Task 7 and in the quality of language, especially in the transfer of meaning (Task 4). In Task 6 longer answers were more frequent; instances of lifting were rarer and candidates generally seemed more willing to manipulate language or to use their own. A few candidates seemed unaware that the aim of Task 7(a) was to provide a summary of the text rather than an opportunity to air their own views. Candidates are urged to make an effort to write legibly; some scripts were difficult to decipher.

Task 1

Candidates showed a good understanding of the text and generally chose the right part of speech to complete the sentences.

- a All candidates understood the gist of the passage and knew that *changer* was the only suitable word.
- b This question targeted “*n’avait, jusque là, causé aucun problème de discipline*”. It proved to be a good discriminator possibly because candidates were not familiar with the word *sage*. Many chose *difficile*.
- c This question was well answered; *mauvaises* was a common error.
- d Another well-answered item; *stupidité* seemed to be chosen by those who were guessing.
- e Many selected the correct answer *percer*. The more usual association of *logiciel* with the verb *installer* was a common source of error.
- f Generally well-answered.
- g A very small number incorrectly selected *centaines*.
- h Occasionally *percer* was used instead of *paralyser*
- g Both *financer* and *installer* would have made sense but careful listening (“... *la facture des frais d’installation*”) explained that the parents were expected to pay for installing the new system, so *financer* was the only correct option.
- h This question was usually well answered.

Task 2

The text presented an unusual take on the theme of marriage. On the whole, the passage was well understood but many, including some of the better candidates, seemed to find identifying larger numbers difficult. This task differentiated well and its outcome was pleasing.

- a Very well answered. Even if candidates already knew about the trend towards PACS, they still had to understand the text to select option C.

- b A question designed to be accessible. The audio track was very clear yet many answered 260 000 rather than 265 000 perhaps because they expected the last letter in *cinq* to be sounded.
- c Another accessible question and those who chose *romantiques* seemed to be guessing.
- d The second question requiring a number was more successfully answered than in Q(b), possibly because it was a smaller number. A few candidates spelt it out, which was acceptable.
- e Correctly answered by nearly all candidates.
- f Also almost always correctly answered, although a few chose option A (*nourriture*), possibly because of *grignoter*; *budget* should have told them that food was not the correct answer.
- g This question targeted *avoir les moyens* – and required candidates to link it to *aisés*. All three options were selected in equal proportions..
- h A good differentiator; it was important to notice the negative in *Rien n'est moins sûr* to select the correct option B
- i This question targeted the new idea of sponsored weddings which the passage explained and the concept was generally understood.
- j Another good differentiator targeting the future of sponsored weddings.

Task 3

The gist of the text about working as a volunteer for different types of projects was generally well understood. Candidates attempted all questions. The task produced a full range of marks. As Tasks 3 and 4 are linked, vocabulary from one may appear in the other, so it is always a good technique to read the message in English in Task 4 before doing Task 3.

- a A very accessible starter with an outcome unrepresentative of candidates' ability. Many did not hear the plural, even though it was expressed in two different ways and also featured in the title, and wrote about 'a camp' which distorted the meaning of the French text.
- b Another accessible question; a few lost one mark because they wrote 2 (weeks) instead of 3. Under exam conditions, it is easy to make errors; candidates are advised to take great care over numbers. In part (ii) *en été* posed no difficulty.
- c A more demanding question, yet candidates managed to get at least one of the three marks and frequently two: options (ii) and (iv) were the most common. Occasionally lack of precision (*archaeological work*) or distortion (*old castles*) lost candidates the mark. The other two possible answers were more demanding. *Aménager* seemed to cause some difficulty and was given incorrectly as cleaning, making or managing whereas the third possibility (looking after footpaths) was not always given.
- d As for Q(c) above, the best candidates managed to score full marks. Careful reading of the question was needed to avoid using the first part of the relevant section of the text (*par des organisations, quelquefois internationales*); it did not answer the question. Consequently, the idea of *s'évader* seldom featured. Part (iii) was well-answered by most. In part (ii), it was necessary to distinguish between 'being useful' and 'wanting to feel useful'.

- e A very well-answered question throughout the range.
- f The word *animateur* seems to have been unfamiliar for some. There was also some confusion as to what the leader was overseeing (the group and not the camp).
- g An accessible question but all the required information was not always given.
- h Answers to Part (i) were generally good but in part (ii) some thought the cost of travelling was included.

Task 4

The outcome of this task was encouraging – both for content and language. Some really tried to produce a genuine letter, occasionally adding material of their own. It is not necessary to include such material to gain full marks, but it is good to see candidates going beyond the bare minimum and extending range of vocabulary and structures.

For communication, the following points proved to be occasionally difficult:

- I heard about – *entendre parler* seldom used; *entendre* and *écouter* occasionally mixed up
- Two years ago – use of *depuis* instead of *il y a*, thus distorting the message
- to build – vocabulary not known
- I was in charge of – vocabulary from Task 3 could have been used
- I had received – pluperfect missed
- some training – vocabulary not known
- available – use of *gratuit* instead of *libre*, thus distorting the message

Some candidates thought of paraphrasing the message (e.g. *en 2010* instead of *il y a deux ans* or *je suis né en Grande-Bretagne...* to avoid translating the word British which they may not have known.). Some avoided the subjunctive and split the sentence into two smaller units linked with words such as *pourtant*, *cependant* or *mais*. However, many took the opportunity of showing they could use the subjunctive with confidence.

Tenses were often correctly used and formed and the question form (in the 4th point) was generally accurately produced. Language was mostly straightforward but it was effectively used to convey meaning whilst remaining reasonably accurate.

Areas for improvement:

- use of possessive adjective in the plural form (2nd part of 1st point)
- position of adverb in compound tense and use of pluperfect (point 3)
- Sequence of tenses with a *si* clause (point 4)
- Use of *avoir besoin de* (point 4)

Task 5

In part A candidates had to find in the text the word(s) that conveyed the same meaning as the words in the questions. Many gave groups of words going beyond the exact equivalent and this could not gain credit. Q(a) (*ramassage / collecte*) and Q(c) (*interdit / pas question (de)*) were intended to discriminate. Q(b) and Q(f) were intended to be more accessible.

Section B was more straightforward and was very well answered. Q(j) and Q(m) proved to be slightly more difficult.

Task 6

The language of the text was accessible and firmly anchored in an AS topic area familiar to all. The ideas and subtle differences were more challenging. Questions were phrased to discourage candidates from lifting sections from the text and were successful in this. Candidates made genuine attempts to produce their own language, wrote in sentences and also left relatively few questions blank. Some candidates underlined key words in the questions – which showed good understanding. Others read the questions too quickly (e.g. Q(j) seemed to have been read as *Est-ce que ça serait différent?* because some answers started with *oui.*).

- a An accessible first question. Most candidates identified the relevant section of the text. Some answered *notre vie* instead of *miroir*.
- b Answers required details to get full credit; essential words / phrase missing were *de leur /notre histoire* or a qualifier if *occasions* had been used instead of *événements*.
- c With three possible answers for two marks, many candidates got at least one mark here, even though the question was challenging. Part (i) targeted the description of the changes in society; part (ii) how the life of the French people had changed and part (iii) rewarded the idea of a chronicle of the last 50 years. Part (i) was more successfully attempted than the other two. Candidates needed to manipulate language to gain credit – ideally changing the two future tenses into *pour* + infinitive.
- d Here candidates had to mention the changes in the family unit. It was a good discriminator.
- e An accessible question with three possible answers for two marks. Many candidates gave two details about the presenters' family life; this counted as one idea and some did not go beyond that, so they may have deprived themselves of another mark. Manipulating the text to go from *un thème qui m'est proche* to *un thème qui lui est proche* proved to be a challenge and some who attempted it used either a reflexive (*s'est*) or a direct object (*l'est*) pronoun. It was necessary to mention that she had experienced the changes herself; this information (*Moi j'ai vécu cette évolution*) came right at the start of the sentence, before the presenter was mentioned.
- f Again two separate ideas were required here: a comparison between family patterns now and in the past and how quickly the changes happened. It required understanding two idiomatic expressions: *ne se comptent plus* and *à une vitesse grand V*.
- g “*Selon l'animatrice*” in the question guided candidates to the second paragraph. It was one of the most successful questions, with minimum language manipulation required.
- h Many were able to understand the idea of participation in an earlier programme, but did not always use the correct pronoun; *'ils'* was often used even though the participants' gender was clear from both text and question. It was obvious that those who chose to explain this point had understood that part of the text well.
- i Almost everyone had the key word *divorce* in their answer, but sometimes the language around it was not always correct...
- j This was a deliberately demanding question because it required candidates to infer meaning and it discriminated well. Successful candidates wrote a relevant response, did not lift directly from the text and were able to produce conditionals even though the text had verbs in the infinitive.
- k Here candidates needed to concentrate on the programmes being funny, surprising or informative and make reference to the spectators to get the two marks.

The quality of language was not as good as in Task 4. There were errors on verbs, adjectives and agreements, possibly due to candidates using two different skills at the same time (writing in the target language and showing comprehension) as opposed to one only in Task 4. Candidates must learn to use language from the questions (e.g. genders in Q(h) would have led to *elles* rather than *ils*). It is also good practice to allow time for checking to ensure that language is as accurate as it can possibly be.

Task 7

- 7a Most candidates now know how to approach this task. The more frequently identified points were 1, 2, 3, 7, 10 and 11; points 4, 8, 9 and 12 were accessible but candidates either omitted them or gave incomplete information (e.g. in point 4 the omission of “oneself” – the idea of self-protection as opposed to being protected; in point 9 giving the length of time but not mentioning the message). Points 5 and 6 were the most demanding as they required clear explanation of a lot of information.
- 7b Candidates responded well to this topic, probably because of their own personal experience of the Internet and its positive and negative aspects. They were able to move away from the suggestions given in Q7(a), often using personal examples or anecdotes.

Candidates wrote relevantly about other types of dangers linked to the use or over-use of the Internet: the lack of ability to differentiate between a virtual world and reality, the risk of cutting oneself off from friends and family, the lack of exercise leading to obesity and the negative impact on high street shops as more and more people are shopping online. Some of the more imaginative pieces referred to the role of the Internet in last summer’s riots, the Arab Spring, bullying through social networks etc.

Apart from mentions of anti-virus software, extra vigilance from parents, better education and government intervention, candidates tended to have less to say about what could be done to alleviate the dangers of the Internet. Many of the answers were interesting and enjoyable to read.

The better responses were structured, with an introduction and a conclusion and separate paragraphs for each main idea and its developments, and did not contain any repetition of ideas.

7c Quality of Language

The quality of language used was rather mixed –there were discrepancies between Q7(a) and Q7(b) within the same script. Overall candidates were able to vary sentences and to introduce a degree of complexity with some measure of success. Candidates who got higher marks had mastered a range of complex structures (*si* clause, rhetorical devices, adverbial clause, use of a variety of pronouns, tenses, passive, conditional etc.). Again, careful checking often eliminates errors.

Examples of good language used include:

- *C’est pour cette raison qu’il vaudrait mieux ...*
- *Bien que ce jeu puisse les aider...*
- *Cela ne leur donnerait pas la même protection que leurs parents*
- *Il me semble que la meilleure solution serait de + infinitive*
- *Les risques d’Internet ne doivent pas être pris à la légère*

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- *N'importe qui ne peut pas utiliser n'importe quoi*
- *Il faut bien reconnaître / admettre que...*
- *Il y en a toujours qui ...*
- Link words / contrasting words / comparisons

Areas for improvement

- The English "...ing" form (often given as *qui est parlant; pendant jouant* etc.)
- Use of modal verbs would / should, as opposed to use of a verb in the conditional
- Widening vocabulary to avoid having to invent words (*résolver, provider, occurrer, disponible* etc.) or to avoid using English words (*available, suitable. observant* etc.)
- Use of possessive adjectives, pronouns
- Accurate use of *être* and *avoir*
- Agreements of adjectives
- Verb endings – to match subject

F704 French Listening, Reading and Writing 2

General comments

Most candidates tackled the various question types in an appropriate way, suggesting that they had been well trained in examination technique. However some candidates seemed under-prepared in terms of their linguistic maturity; this was most noticeable in their quality of language in Sections A and B and in their response to the writing task in Section C. A few candidates seemed to have run short of time judging by the fact that they either omitted some questions – usually some or all of Task 2 – or wrote a very short response to Section C. Rubric infringements were few; they included answering Task 2 in English and writing two or more possible answers instead of one. Legibility was, once again, an issue for a small minority of scripts.

SECTION A

Task 1

Most candidates showed a sound overall understanding of the recorded item. Where difficulties arose, they tended to relate to individual words.

- a The phrase *pas d'autre choix* was almost universally understood.
- b This item was often well answered, but some candidates did not know the verb *récidiver* and some did not grasp the correct sense of *profitable*, i.e. of benefit to the child in question.
- c Part (i) was well answered. In part (ii), most candidates latched on to the correct key phrases *comprendre les raisons de sa violence* and *des jeunes victimes*, but they did not always understand the context correctly: for example some thought wrongly that it was the children who needed to understand the reasons for their (own) violence.
- d Most candidates produced at least one of the two required answers. Some interpreted *le monde scolaire* too narrowly, taking it to refer to the children's (old) school rather than to the educational world.
- e This item was usually well answered.

Task 2

Despite the potential difficulty of the subject matter, most candidates showed a fair understanding of the recorded interview and were able to identify and express many of the key points from it. In a few instances candidates did not pay sufficient attention to the wording of the question; an extreme example of this was the answering of question (c)(iii) as if it had asked *Quoi?* rather than *Qui?*. Some candidates tried too hard to paraphrase the vocabulary of the recording and sometimes distorted their answer by using words with a different meaning. It is good practice to avoid wholesale transcription in this task, but it is not necessary to find synonyms for every key word.

- a There was a good number of correct answers, but some candidates did not seem to know the word *ouvrages*.

- b In part (i), most candidates referred correctly to the *bombardements*, but the phrase that gave access to the second marking point – *l'entrée dans la ville de Nice des troupes de l'Italie fasciste* – caused some confusion; the key idea here was that of the Italian 'arrival' or invasion. In part (ii), there were many correct answers, but some candidates blurred their message by misusing the word *obsession* from the recording.
- c Part (i) was generally well answered, but parts (ii) and (iii) were rather more challenging. The best answers were those that made a clear distinction between the reference to democracy as an aspect of French society, for which the present tense was appropriate, and the reference to how Max Gallo benefited from it, where the perfect tense made best sense. Most candidates grasped the correct meaning of *mes proches*.
- d Some candidates did not seem to have understood the phrase *bien plus que* and wrongly referred to 'social categories' such as *la bourgeoisie*, rather than mentioning *les individus* or *les personnages* as required.
- e This item was generally well answered. Where errors occurred, they tended to be either faulty transcriptions of *lucidité*, such as *l'ucidité*, or misunderstandings of the phrase *ses rapports avec sa fille handicapée*.
- f Many candidates found this question quite challenging. The most accessible part of the answer was the reference to De Gaulle dying alone; references to De Gaulle's resignation – *il a dû démissionner* – were conveyed correctly by some candidates but not fully understood by others.
- g Although the answer to this question was relatively straightforward, some candidates did not score the mark because they wrote *les memoir(e)s* instead of *la mémoire*.
- h Most candidates produced at least one of the two required pieces of information. Those who attempted to transcribe whole phrases from the recording sometimes ran into difficulties.
- i This was a challenging item because candidates had to manipulate and re-order the information from the recording to suit the angle of the question: they had first to mention America's black president and then explain how the discriminatory attitudes of 1944 would have made this seem impossible at the time.

Quality of Language, Section A

While some candidates were able to show a good understanding of appropriate grammar and syntax, others did not grasp all the opportunities to show their knowledge and did not pay enough attention to basic accuracy; there were errors with verb endings, for example between *-er* and *-é*.

SECTION B

Task 3

Many candidates understood the gist of the passage and at least some of the detail. Most responded appropriately to the rubric *Utilisez vos propres mots autant que possible*, but a few either lifted too much, e.g. by quoting the whole phrase *Fini les maisons, vive les lofts high-tech* in question (a), or distorted their answer by using words with a different meaning, such as *la vie de famille* or *les rapports* instead of *les rituels* in question (c).

- a In part (i), the phrase *fini les maisons* caused some difficulty, but candidates successfully expressed the idea simply and accurately in their own words, e.g. *On n'habitera plus dans une maison individuelle*. The reference to *lofts high-tech* was generally conveyed correctly. Part (ii) was well answered, again with some effective use of own words. There were also some good answers to part (iii), although not all candidates interpreted the statistics correctly, especially the reference to 80% of the housing stock of the year 2030 already existing today.
- b This item was generally well answered. The single word *l'espace* was sufficient, but candidates could write a sentence if they wished to, thereby contributing to the global quality of language mark for Section B.
- c Part (i) was very well answered, but part (ii) caused some difficulty, as not all candidates understood the significance of *horaires* and some did not grasp the contrast of the *rituels* being fewer in number and therefore more special. The lifting of the whole phrase *la sortie de l'esclavage des horaires* was inappropriate given the wording of the question and therefore did not get credit.

Task 4

Parts (a), (c) and (d) were well answered, but in part (b) not all candidates managed to identify *à venir* as the equivalent of *qui ne sont pas encore là*.

Task 5

Most candidates identified at least three out of the four correct sentences. A common error was to tick (c) instead of (d), perhaps because they did not realise that the whole of the third paragraph referred to experiences in the past.

Task 6

For many candidates, this task provided the first major challenge of the paper. It was primarily a test of comprehension, but candidates needed also to take account of the syntax of the question, i.e. their answer had to fit directly into the gap.

- a This first item was, on the whole, well answered. Both perspectives were allowed, i.e. either *à la maison* or *dans un bureau*.
- b This item produced a wide range of attainment. Some candidates showed a lack of comprehension by writing *la personne*, while others wrote unclear answers such as *travail* (with no article).
- c Relatively few candidates gave a correct answer. Lifting the noun *secrétariats* or *télévendeurs* was insufficient.
- d A good discriminating questions and there were not many correct answers. A number of candidates misinterpreted the text and wrote *plus valorisées* instead of *moins valorisées*.
- e Again a range of performance on this question. Some candidates did not take account of the verb *auront* in front of the first gap and began their answer with a verb in the infinitive such as *aménager* which was not appropriate.

- f As with part (d), there were some misunderstandings of the text; some candidates wrote *diminuer* or similar. A few candidates inappropriately wrote a noun, e.g. *accroissement*.

Task 7

This task discriminated well across the ability range. It proved to be slightly more challenging than Task 3, mainly because the wording of the questions made it necessary for candidates to make greater use of their own words and sentence structure.

- a Many candidates showed that they had understood the relevant section of the text, but a few transposed *douche* and *bain* in the second marking point and some referred to *recycler* rather than *trier* in the third marking point. In this question no credit was given for answers that began with an imperative form such as *Prends un bain*.
- b In part (i), the expression *vous en avez ... marre* caused difficulty for many candidates, who either seemed not to know what it meant or were unable to put it into the third person form. Answers with *ennuyeux* or *s'ennuyer* were not accepted because they did not convey the same meaning as *en avoir marre*. Part (ii) was generally well answered.
- c This item was fairly well answered, although some candidates introduced confusion by including the phrase *faire autre chose qu'* from the text.
- d There was a good number of correct answers, but some candidates did not seem to have interpreted the question word *Comment?* appropriately. Answers comprising merely a noun, e.g. *l'enthousiasme*, were not credited.
- e This was a challenging question because candidates needed to take account of the verb *sensibiliser* in the text. It was not enough to write the noun phrase *le tri de leurs déchets*.
- f Many candidates got at least one of the two available marks in this question. The word *intervention* caused some difficulty: candidates who were unsure of how to conjugate the verb *intervenir* would have been better off to find an alternative expression such as *elle parle aux élèves* or *elle explique son emploi*.

Task 8

As in previous series, this question type could be answered in two ways: candidates could either write a word or phrase that fitted the grammatical context of the highlighted phrase or they could write an explanation on the lines of *Cela veut dire que ...*. Most candidates opted for the first approach, which usually turned out to be the more straightforward.

- a This item was on the whole well answered; a few candidates misunderstood and gave answers such as *ancien* or *très vieux*.
- b Candidates needed to find an alternative phrase that did not include the word *actions*. Among the acceptable answers were *prend beaucoup d'initiatives*, *agir de plus en plus* and even *fait beaucoup de choses*.
- c The main requirement here was to produce a superlative form. A few candidates gave answers which showed a thorough understanding of the context such as *l'action qui réussit le mieux*, but a more straightforward answer such as *le meilleur moyen* was equally acceptable.
- d This seemed to be a challenge as few candidates understood *par la suite* correctly.

- e Among acceptable versions here were not only the expected paraphrases such as *sent mauvais* and *a une mauvaise odeur* but also some more creative explanations such as *quelque chose que votre nez n'aime pas*.

Task 9

This task discriminated very well. As with Task 6, candidates needed to take account of the grammar of the question as well as showing comprehension of the text.

- a This item produced some correct answers, but some candidates wrote a phrase ending with a noun, which was inappropriate in front of the wording *ce qui est produit...* in the question.
- b Some candidates gave an appropriate answer, which could either be a noun such as *la visite* or a verbal construction such as *(après) avoir visité l'usine*. A few candidates did not identify the relevant section of the text and wrote an inappropriate answer such as *le recyclage*.
- c This proved to be quite a challenging question. A response indicating that there would be a change in car usage or lifestyle was required.
- d There was a reasonable number of correct answers, candidates needed to distinguish clearly between the distance travelled, referred to here, and the frequency of travel, which was not mentioned. Answers with, for example, *un petit peu* instead of *pas loin* were not accepted.
- e Many candidates answered this item successfully, either by making a general comment such as *changer de mentalité* or by making a more specific reference such as *utiliser moins la voiture*.

Task 10

Although this transfer of meaning task proved to be challenging, a good number of candidates not only conveyed the meaning of the French stimulus text faithfully but also wrote fluent and accurate English.

Words and phrases which were generally done successfully included:

- *Comment savoir...?*
- *il vaut mieux*
- *sous la contrainte*

Sources of error were:

- *ancien* – sometimes taken to mean 'old'
- *moniteur* – sometimes rendered as 'monitor' or even 'mentor'
- *formation* – sometimes rendered as 'formation' or 'job'
- *n'a rien à voir* – sometimes taken wrongly as a past tense, e.g. 'which had nothing...'
- *ressemblera la société* – sometimes with confused syntax e.g. '...will resemble society'
- *se déplacer* – seemed not to be known by a few candidates.

The quality of candidates' written English is assessed in this task and many responses were good in this respect. Errors included mis-spellings of 'voluntarily' and unclear renderings of box 4 such as 'What seems evident to him, it is that the methods of moving around will change'.

Language, Section B

Candidates were assessed globally for the quality of their French in tasks 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 and they needed to be secure in their use of basic French in order to achieve a mark in the middle band. Some candidates did this very well and impressed with their ability to use complex French in an unforced way, others seemed to have difficulty with structures that ought to be secure at GCSE stage. Errors were: an incorrect *après avoir* construction in Q9(b), the wrong sequence of tenses in Q9(c) and the incorrect use of the present participle such as *activités comme regardant la télé* in Q3(c).

SECTION C

Essays were well structured and candidates achieving good marks produced competent and creative work which was relevant to the question and which included appropriately detailed content that made references to French-speaking society. The length of responses varied; most were closer to the recommended maximum of 400 words than to the minimum of 250 words although in a few cases excessive length led to repetition and irrelevance.

Relevance and points of view

As in previous series, the two main hurdles that candidates needed to get over were: Have I answered the question set? And have I made appropriate use of examples and evidence from French-speaking society? On the first point, some candidates veered away from the title and wrote too generally about the topic area. A more common failing was not to include sufficient target-language references: it was certainly not enough to write general statements that could apply to any country and prefix them with phrases such as *Comme j'ai lu dans Le Monde...* or *Comme j'ai vu quand j'ai passé mes vacances en Suisse...*. The quoting of material from Sections A and B of the paper was acceptable if it genuinely suited the task, but those candidates who did this often struggled to incorporate the material convincingly into their line of argument.

Structure and analysis

Introductory paragraphs were often suitably engaging. The use of linking words such as *donc*, *en revanche*, *pourtant*, was often an effective means of keeping the reader in line with the candidate's thinking. Some responses seemed to be well structured as they often comprised an introduction, a series of main paragraphs and a conclusion. In some cases, however, candidates were unable to maintain a clear sense of direction in their piece as a whole; conclusions did not take account of points made earlier or new ideas were suddenly introduced which there was now no way of developing. It was pleasing to read some responses to the non-discursive tasks that were genuinely persuasive and imaginative. A few candidates mistakenly wrote what was in effect a discursive essay in response to such tasks.

Quality of language (accuracy and range)

Some candidates used a wide range of verb tenses and grammatical structures with confidence, paying attention to points of detail such as agreements on past participles. Some attempted plenty of complex language, but made errors both in the complex areas and in simple structures. The over-use of the subjunctive seemed to be less of a problem than in previous series. A number of candidates had difficulty using appropriate prepositions and conjunctions to link their ideas together, perhaps because they were thinking in English and trying to translate too literally.

The variety of candidates' vocabulary was often pleasing, including the use of topic-specific terms. However there were a few persistent Anglicisms and invented words, such as *issue* (in the sense of English 'issue'), *habileté* or *abilité* ('ability'), *déservir* ('to deserve'), *sentence* ('(prison) sentence') and *propre* ('proper').

Question 11

This question, which invited a 'for and against' discussion of the death penalty, was a popular option. Almost all those who chose it made a genuine attempt to answer the question set; the only significant irrelevance came from a small number of candidates who wrote mainly about crime and the reasons for it, perhaps because they had misunderstood the reference to *raison* in the opening phrase of the question. Some candidates helpfully gave a historical perspective and mentioned how and when the death penalty had been abolished in France and some candidates quoted appropriate facts and figures on other forms of punishment, such as reoffending rates and the costs of sending criminals to prison. In some essays target-language references were missing or perfunctory. In terms of content, the best responses tended to take a well-balanced 'for and against' approach and mentioned factors such as the death penalty as a deterrent, human rights issues, the feelings of the families of victims and the lack of space in prisons. A few candidates adopted an extreme approach, suggesting that the death penalty should be considered for theft and rioting. A few candidates made a good number of points in the body of their essay but did not bring their thoughts together in a conclusion; sometimes they ended with a general statement on the lines of 'this is why the death penalty should be reintroduced' when in fact they had presented some strong arguments to the contrary.

Question 12

A good number of candidates opted for this question, which asked for a web page contribution alerting young people in France to the problem of unemployment. Some candidates wrote what amounted to a discursive essay on the causes and consequences of unemployment, often including plenty of relevant information but not fully responding to the requirements of the task. The more successful responses related directly to the intended readership, perhaps challenging them to work hard at school, get good qualifications and find (unpaid) work experience in order to increase their chances of finding long-term work. Some candidates dwelt a little too long on the reasons for unemployment, but many were able to incorporate a few well-chosen facts and figures – perhaps relating to the differing unemployment rates for different ages, genders and ethnic groups – into a coherent and well-argued appeal to their readership.

Question 13

This question, which asked candidates to consider the rights and wrongs of France's nuclear energy policy, evidently struck a chord with many candidates and was a popular choice. The best responses often consisted of a small number of well-developed points, backed up by suitable facts and figures from France such as: the number of nuclear reactors, the proportion of energy that is generated by nuclear power, the fact that France sells some of its energy to other countries, how France disposes of irradiated nuclear fuel, and campaigns by politicians and citizen groups for or against nuclear energy. It was acceptable to draw international comparisons and it was sometimes helpful to include evidence from other countries such as Germany with its very different energy policy from France and Japan because of its recent nuclear disaster. Even the well-worn example of (T)Chernobyl could be quoted convincingly on this occasion. An approach which sometimes worked well was to compare nuclear power with renewable energy sources, provided that the essay did not wander too far into the pros and cons of individual types of renewable energy. A pitfall for some candidates was to focus too much on the future prospects for nuclear energy rather than on whether it has been the right choice so far. A few

candidates showed ignorance of basic facts by claiming that, for example, nuclear power plants emit large quantities of greenhouse gases. While wrong facts are not penalised *per se*, clearly an argument based on a false premise cannot be an effective one. In terms of language, most candidates who chose this question were able to use a suitable range of topic-specific vocabulary. They were often able to use a wide variety of verb tenses, including *si* clauses with the conditional perfect e.g. *Si la France n'avait pas construit de centrales nucléaires, comment aurait-elle pu couvrir tous ses besoins énergétiques?* .

Question 14

This question, which required candidates to express their admiration for environmental initiatives in a French town, was a moderately popular choice. It was well tackled by a few candidates, who were able to provide specific facts and figures to support their points. Some quoted recycling and car-sharing schemes but sometimes gave insufficient detail with the result that they could have been referring to any place in France or elsewhere. Another way of including factual evidence was to explain the national context of the local initiatives in question, perhaps mentioning the rise in measurable air pollution and the increase in health problems arising from that. A few candidates seemed to have misread the question and concentrated on berating the local population for not doing enough. It was fine to refer briefly to the future in the concluding paragraph, perhaps by exhorting others to take the lead of the town in question or simply by encouraging the local townspeople to carry on. Linguistically, this task provided a good opportunity to use lively, engaging French, an opportunity which was well exploited by some candidates.

Question 15

No candidates chose this question.

Question 16

A small number of candidates chose this question, which focused on the issue of equal access to medical treatment. The letter format invited a persuasive, personal approach. Answers tended to be vague, with limited use of evidence from France.

Question 17

This was potentially an attractive option for those with an interest in contemporary French politics, as it invited them to judge the extent to which Sarkozy's presidential leadership had improved the life of ordinary people in France.

Question 18

This question required the positive appraisal of any work of French literature for a target readership of fellow sixth form students. It was a potentially appealing option for those who had studied a book for their A2 speaking test. As with all literary essays, it was important to avoid the temptation to 'tell the story'.

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