

FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/11

Listening

Key messages

- On this new syllabus, the Listening Paper was marked out of 45. The format and question types of the listening test remained as in November 2014.
- Candidates showed good levels of both specific and general understanding. The candidates' performance was extremely good on the first two sections of the paper. The final section of the test is designed to be more challenging, but even so, many candidates scored marks in both exercises of the final section.
- Centres should remind candidates to write clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should not write first in pencil and then overwrite in pen as this can make answers very difficult to read (see a more detailed comment on **Question 16**).
- Some scripts were extremely difficult to read due to very poor handwriting.
- Candidates must cross out any material they do not wish the Examiner to consider. If the candidate leaves two possible answers, one may invalidate the other and no mark can be awarded.
- Where words are inappropriately split or joined, no mark can be awarded (see a more detailed comment on **Question 39**).
- Some candidates still need to be more careful about ticking the correct number of boxes in objective exercises.
- Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is a danger that extra distorting details will be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.

General comments

The demand of this year's paper was found to be very similar to that of the 2014 paper. Overall, the candidature performed well, with weaker candidates able to achieve some marks on questions in the final section. The candidature was familiar with the demands and structure of the paper and rubrics were understood. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics were accessible to candidates.

As in previous years, the French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which is tested in the first two sections of the test is drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

Centres should note that where questions require a written response in French, full sentences are not required in answers. Brief answers are preferable as the risk of adding extra distorting material which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer is reduced. Candidates should not answer or infer from general knowledge as they run the risk of including material in their answers which is not on the recording and which may distort and invalidate the answer.

The Listening Paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous. Any material which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider should be clearly crossed out.

Candidates need to use the pauses on the recordings to read the questions carefully. Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and there is not extra reading time before the examination starts. It is important to give candidates practice on past papers to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple-choice questions with visual options. Candidates performed very well in this opening exercise which is intended to give candidates a confident start to the paper. All candidates understood the rubric well and the visuals caused no problems of interpretation. The extracts were short and straightforward.

The vocabulary areas tested were times, places, transport, food and drink, clothing and leisure activities. The first four questions proved to be accessible to the vast majority of candidates. **Question 5** proved challenging for some, with less able candidates choosing the incorrect icon for *sous l'armoire*. The remaining three questions were answered correctly by the overwhelming majority of candidates but in **Question 6**, some candidates chose the picture of a church (A) rather than a castle.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard an advertisement for a holiday home. Candidates were mostly required to show their understanding by selecting one from three visual options. As in previous years, candidates answered the vast majority of these questions correctly and many scored full marks on this exercise.

On **Question 9**, the vast majority of candidates were able to give an acceptable rendering of *septembre*. **Questions 10 and 11** were answered extremely well. In **Question 12**, some candidates heard the French *un grand lit pour deux personnes* and incorrectly chose option B as their answer. The remaining questions in this exercise were answered very well and it was especially pleasing to see a high success rate in **Question 15**, where only the occasional candidate answered incorrectly, sometimes with “36” and sometimes “3600”, instead of the correct answer “360”.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Candidates heard four young people talking about cycling. The vocabulary was taken from the Defined Content and extracts included some opinions as well as occasional use of tenses other than the present. The topic area was very accessible to candidates and large numbers achieved high marks. No one particular option seemed to be more difficult than another and no pattern of incorrect answers was discernible. This exercise was successfully attempted by the vast majority of candidates, many of them scoring 5 or 6 marks.

Candidates now appear to be very familiar with the requirement to tick six boxes on this exercise and there were very few incidents of candidates ticking fewer or more than the required number. Teachers should advise candidates to indicate the six true statements with either a tick or a cross.

Some candidates answered first in pencil and then went over their answers in ink but unfortunately did not completely remove their pencil answers. This meant that on occasion, there were more than 6 ticks present and the candidates lost marks as a result.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In the first part of this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Bernadette who had been to New Caledonia. Candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements by supplying the correct word(s).

On **Question 17**, the word *beau-frère* was not well known with a significant number of candidates omitting the first word and using *frère* as their answer. Only a minority of candidates scored the mark on this question.

On **Question 18**, nearly all candidates were successful in identifying *mois*. There were few acceptable alternative spellings for this answer, but the normal rule of not awarding the rendering of another French word, such as *moins*, applied and the mark could not be awarded.

Question 19 proved more challenging for some. Many did give the correct answer but some responded with *coûte* rather than the correct answer *côte*. There were also other acceptable answers such as *au bord de la mer* or *près de la capitale* but these answers were not common.

Question 20 also proved to be challenging, with a minority providing the correct answer *guide* and the most common incorrect answer was *taxi* but a pleasing number of candidates gave an acceptable rendering of *fruits de mer* in **Question 21**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

The second part of this exercise featured the second half of the interview with Bernadette. Candidates were required to give short written responses in French to the questions. All of the questions could be answered briefly without using a verb.

In **Question 22**, candidates answered with various spellings of *pittoresque* but the most common incorrect answer began with *pin* or *pyn*. **Question 23**, a series of beginnings and endings were used to identify correct answers but answers using the noun *charme* were also accepted in place of the adjective.

The final two questions in this exercise were answered correctly by the majority of candidates. The vast majority of candidates were able to identify the correct answer *distractions* in **Question 24** and also *parc d'attractions* in **Question 25**. A small number of candidates omitted the word *parc* from their answer and lost the mark as this communicated a different and incorrect concept.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

The extract featured a longer interview with Kémi, who lives in Bénin. Candidates coped well with this multiple-choice exercise which required them to follow a narrative that featured different time frames and in which feelings and opinions were expressed. In this exercise, candidates had to listen to and process more information than in the previous section.

Candidates understood the rubrics well. The vast majority attempted this exercise and were able to gain at least two or three marks even if they went on to find the last exercise difficult. It is worth reminding candidates to use the longer reading time available at the beginning of this exercise, and the pauses, to read the question and options very carefully. Reading the questions will also help to give them an overall plan of the content of the recording and help them to sequence the information which they will hear.

Although **Questions 30 and 31** were seen as more challenging, it was rare to see candidates with no marks at all. The vast majority of candidates attempted answers to the multiple choice questions and it is always worth stressing to candidates the value of an educated guess to these questions. It is certain that if a question is not attempted, no mark can be awarded.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–39

The extract featured a longer interview with Maryse Picard, the French surfboard champion. In this section, answers did not need to be lengthy but some required a verb.

On **Question 32**, a good number of candidates had clearly understood the concept. However, the spelling of *française* was sometimes poor and some candidates opted for *équipe nationale* or *équipe de France*, both of which were accepted.

Question 33 required candidates to convey the concept of *sixième*, which some candidates rendered with the figure “6”, which was, of course, acceptable. The main confusion for weaker candidates here was with *seizième*, which was incorrect.

In **Question 34**, candidates had to convey the emotion of *déçu*. A number of alternative spellings were accepted but when the spelling became so distorted that it was a different word, e.g. *dessous*, no mark was awarded.

The concept required in the answer to **Question 35** was that of “going back home” which candidates conveyed in several different ways. Some chose to say *chez elle*, while some chose *chez Maryse*, and both of these were accepted. Some candidates chose to express the concept using the one word *rentre* which was also accepted.

In **Question 36**, candidates were required to convey the concept of *motivé* and this question was extremely well answered. Many used a correct rendering of the word and different forms of the verb were acceptable in the mark scheme.

Question 37 proved to be extremely difficult for many candidates. The correct answer required some notion of plurality in the answer, either in the article, the noun or in a verb. Many candidates were unable to express this and as a result could not be awarded the mark, as their answer usually was *un bon camarade*.

On **Question 38**, candidates understood the concept and many scored the mark here. Unfortunately, some candidates lost the mark as they were not able to correctly render the word *monde* and chose to write *munde*, which was not an allowable spelling.

Question 39 proved to be a challenging question. One of three concepts was required: either that she wanted to **work as a doctor**, or that she **wanted to cure children**, or that she **wanted to finish her studies**. The most popular correct answer was *terminer/finir ses études* followed by *travailler comme médecin*. Unfortunately some candidates chose to split the final word and wrote *med cin* with a clear space between the two elements, meaning that they could not be awarded the mark. The rarest answer was *guérir les enfants*, with many candidates attempting answers using the word *garer* rather than *guérir*.

FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/12

Listening

Key messages

- On this new syllabus, the Listening Paper was marked out of 45. The format and question types of the listening test remained as in November 2014.
- The performance on this paper was very similar to the standards seen last year on the first half of the paper but candidates found the second half of the paper a little more demanding.
- Centres should remind candidates to write clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should not write first in pencil and then overwrite in pen or try to erase answers. Such answers can be very difficult to read. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Some scripts were extremely difficult to read due to very poor handwriting.
- Many candidates now appreciate the need to write as briefly as possible. Full sentences are not required in responses. If extra distorting details are included they may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Some candidates still need to be more careful about ticking the correct number of boxes in objective exercises.
- Centres are reminded that if words are combined or split inappropriately the mark is not awarded.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.

General comments

This year, the candidature overall performed quite well on the first half of the paper but clearly found **Section 2 Exercise 2** more demanding than last year together with some of the questions in the last section. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final and most challenging section with weaker candidates being able to be successful on a few questions in each of the two exercises. The candidature was usually familiar with the demands and structure of the paper and rubrics were usually well understood but there was some evidence that some candidates were unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were accessible to all candidates.

As last year, the French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which is tested in the first two sections of the test is drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

Candidates in many Centres had appreciated the need to write as **briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in response**. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of extra distorting material being added which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should also not answer or infer from general knowledge as they run the risk of adding extra material which is not on the recording and this will invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

This year, there were far more cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it extremely difficult to read answers. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and **not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen**. Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly. Any answer which a candidate does not wish the Examiner to consider should also be clearly crossed out. Candidates also need to be reminded not to combine words or split them inappropriately as such responses will not gain the mark.

The Listening Paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Candidates need to use the pauses on the recordings to read the questions carefully. Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and there is not extra reading time before the examination starts. It is important to give candidates practice on past papers to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed very well in this opening exercise which is intended to give them a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested everyday times, presents, places, food and transport. Candidates approached most of these questions very well indeed. The two most demanding items here were *casquette* on **Question 3** and *parapluie* on **Question 8**. Incorrect answers often indicated option C, *le sac*. A good number of candidates scored well on this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured information which was given to a group of tourists arriving at a hotel. Questions tested months, places to visit, sports, places in a hotel, entertainment and useful everyday items in a hotel. Just over half the candidates successfully picked out the month *avril* on **Question 9** but many incorrect answers featured attempts at *février* which appeared to indicate that some had not heard or confused the liaison of the number 29 (which was printed on the question paper) with *février*. *Avril* and *favril* were common incorrect attempts. **Questions 10, 11 and 12** posed few problems and were all well attempted. Only about half the candidates could correctly identify *cirque* on **Question 13**. More candidates were successful in identifying the iron on **Question 14**. The last question was very well done and nearly all candidates were able to pick out *réception*.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

The performance on this exercise was good and continues to improve as many candidates are now accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were still however cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates should be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: ticks **or** crosses are both acceptable, but are likely to cause confusion when used together. They should not attempt to put a tick and a cross in all boxes. Six of the twelve boxes need to be left blank.

Candidates heard four young people talking about social networks and methods of communication. The topic matter was very accessible to candidates and good numbers scored at least 4 marks on this exercise. The only discernible pattern of incorrect ticks was on option **(i)** which stated that Martine spent too much time on social networks. This was the opposite of what was heard, *Je fais attention à ne pas passer beaucoup de temps sur ces réseaux sociaux*.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview in two parts with Catherine, who talked about her life and career as a singer. In the first part of the interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists of the Defined Content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than that heard in the previous exercise.

Candidates attempted this exercise well and good numbers were successful on **Question 17**. Some did not always manage to identify *cousine* and instead wrote *cuisine*. Many candidates were also successful on **Question 18**. **Question 19** proved more problematic and only about half the candidates were able to identify *le bac*. Some rendered this as *baque* or *bacque* and did not score the mark. High numbers scored on **Question 20** and most were successful on **Question 21**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

This exercise was found challenging by many candidates. Many were very successful on **Question 23**, and were able to identify *positive* but **Question 22** proved to be one of the hardest in the test. The answer required the idea of being alive, *être en vie*. Many invalidated their answer by combining words inappropriately and gave answers such as *être envie*, *detreenvie*, *detre envie*. Such answers did not score the marks as they did not demonstrate comprehension. On **Question 24**, candidates needed to be able to start the word with the letter “h” in order to gain the mark. Many found it difficult to identify the word *honnête*. The final question in this exercise also proved demanding as many invalidated their answer by attempting to write *leur amour* and rendering it as *le ramour*. The word *amour* proved difficult to identify for many. Spellings such as *armour* and *amora* did not gain the mark.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Pierre who talked about his life as a player and trainer of volley ball.

The topic area was generally accessible and usually candidates made quite a good attempt at this exercise with even the weakest candidates being able to score one or two marks. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events in the past. Performance was much in line with the performance seen on the comparable exercise in 2014. The questions best done were **Questions 27, 29** and **31**. On **Question 30**, many found it difficult to identify that Pierre could not play at *un haut niveau*. More were successful on the final question in this exercise with just over half the candidates scoring the mark.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

As in 2014, this was found to be a demanding and challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Some questions were only answered well by the very best candidates. Many weaker candidates did however make commendable efforts to answer at least some questions and were usually able to score a few marks. Candidates heard an interview with Noémie who talked about how she helped and supported students in her school. There was a mix of harder and more accessible questions on this last exercise.

The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates seemed unaware of this. Candidates should be reminded not to write long answers as sometimes they add extra detail which is not on the recording. This can distort and invalidate an otherwise correct answer. It is appreciated that candidates may try to write quickly but they need to be aware that, if writing is unclear or incorrect spaces appear in words, this may also invalidate their answers. Examiners need to be able to see an answer clearly as the addition (or the omission) of a letter can change the meaning of a word. Candidates also need to be reminded that they should not require the Examiner to choose from a list of answers in which the correct answer may feature. Such answers count as invalidation and do not score the mark.

Candidates made quite a good start to this exercise and many were able to identify *changer le monde* in **Question 32**. **Question 33** proved to be more demanding and fewer were able to identify the Defined Content word *bête*. A good number of candidates scored the mark on **Question 34** and the notion of looking lost was identified by many. Care had been taken here to provide the start to the answer to ensure candidates did not have to write too much. **Question 35**, *Que venaient de faire les enfants qui ont parlé avec Noémie ?* was not well understood by candidates. Perhaps this indicated that the structure *venir de* was not well known. Only the very best candidates understood that they had just arrived in France and answered *arriver en France*. The concept of arrival was awarded in any tense or recognisable form of the verb. Candidates fared better on the next question and a good number were able to identify *récréation*. On **Question 37**, they were less successful. Some invalidated answers by writing *cours* as *courses*, others thought that the teacher was going to give the lessons after school. *Lecture* was not always well known. Such answers indicated that there was only partial comprehension and the full concept was not there. The very last section of this exercise was found to be very challenging. On **Question 38**, the fairly frequently met word *avenir* was often written inappropriately and answers such as *la venire* were seen fairly frequently. On **Question 39**, the answer required the idea that Noémie's parents were not in agreement if she spent too much time working with the children. Some did not read the question carefully here and ended up stating the opposite of what had been heard on this point, *ils ne me critiquent pas*. To be successful on the very last question, candidates needed to convey the concept of "the same thing". This could be done by using the word *pareil* as the question had been worded so that a brief answer could be given. Alternative answers such as *comme elle* or *la même chose* also scored the mark.

FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/13

Listening

Key messages

- On this new syllabus, the Listening Paper was marked out of 45. The format and question types of the listening test remained as in November 2014.
- The performance on this paper was similar in standard to last year with a full range of performance evident. As intended, the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- Centres should remind candidates to write clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should not write first in pencil and then overwrite in pen or try to erase answers. Such answers can be very difficult to read. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Some scripts were extremely difficult to read due to very poor handwriting.
- Many candidates now appreciate the need to write as briefly as possible. Full sentences are not required in responses. If extra distorting details are included they may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Some candidates still need to be more careful about ticking the correct number of boxes in objective exercises.
- Centres are reminded that if words are combined or split inappropriately the mark is not awarded.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.

General comments

This paper was found to be generally in keeping with the demands made in previous sessions. The candidature overall performed quite well on the first two sections of the paper. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final and most challenging section with weaker candidates being able to be successful on a few questions in each of the two exercises. The candidature was usually familiar with the demands and structure of the paper and rubrics were usually well understood but there was some evidence that some candidates were unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were accessible to all candidates.

As last year, the French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which is tested in the first two sections of the test is drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

Candidates in many Centres had appreciated the need to write as **briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in response**. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of extra distorting material being added which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should also not answer or infer from general knowledge as they run the risk of adding extra material which is not on the recording and this will invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

This year, there were far more cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it extremely difficult to read answers. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and **not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen**. Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly. Any answer which a candidate does not wish the Examiner to consider should also be clearly crossed out. Candidates also need to be reminded not to combine words or split them inappropriately as such responses will not gain the mark.

The Listening Paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Candidates need to use the pauses on the recordings to read the questions carefully. Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and there is not extra reading time before the examination starts. It is important to give candidates practice on past papers to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed very well in this opening exercise which is intended to give them a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested numbers, drinks, places, transport, leisure activities and household items. No question proved to be too demanding and there was no discernible pattern of incorrect answers. Rubrics had been well understood.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured information about a zoo. Questions tested sporting items, food, animals, activities, souvenirs, months and prices. Candidates usually attempted the first four questions on this exercise very well only occasionally misunderstanding *skateboard* on **Question 9** and *éléphant* on **Question 12**. **Question 13** was well answered and many correctly identified the month *décembre* on **Question 14**. Again, a good number of candidates correctly identified the number 30 on **Question 15**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was good and continues to improve as many candidates are accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were still however cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates should be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: ticks **or** crosses are both acceptable, but are likely to cause confusion when used together. They should not attempt to put a tick and a cross in all boxes. Six of the twelve boxes need to be left blank.

Candidates heard four young people talking about their favourite sport. This exercise was well done and the overall performance was similar to that of November 2014. Good numbers of candidates scored at least 4 marks on this exercise. The topic area was very accessible. The only discernible pattern of incorrect ticks was on option **(i)** which stated that Carole felt one needed a football pitch to play football. This was the opposite of what was heard, *on n'a pas besoin d'un terrain de foot, si on a un ballon, on peut jouer dans le parc où même dans la rue*.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview in two parts in which Ahmed talked about cycling around Europe with school friends. In the first part of the interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists of the Defined Content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than that heard in the previous exercise.

Candidates generally did quite well on this exercise with most being successful in identifying *sciences* on **Question 17**. On **Question 18**, candidates were less successful but many did manage to give an acceptable rendering of *bizarre*. **Question 19** was very well attempted by candidates with many being able to identify the commonly met *ville*. **Question 20** proved to be the most demanding of the exercise with many trying to split the word *élèves* inappropriately which often resulted in what appeared to be attempts at the verb *se lever*. There were many spellings such as *elves* which did not gain the mark. **Question 21** was quite well attempted with many giving an acceptable rendering of *bagages*. Incorrect answers often just stated *le transport*.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

Candidates made a good attempt at the second part of this exercise and performed very much in line with the performance seen in November 2014. On **Question 22**, candidates needed to refer to the group feeling happy. Over half the candidates managed to give acceptable answers here but incorrect answers often featured the concept of tiredness which was heard on the recording but not referring to the day of departure. **Question 23** proved more difficult. This answer required an appropriate verb to be attempted alongside the word *repas*. Correct answers often featured an incomplete concept or were distorted by the inclusion of an inappropriate verb which distorted the meaning such as *préparer un repas*. On **Question 24**, a reference to *spécialités* was required to gain the mark. A fair number managed this. Incorrect attempts at *régionales* were tolerated. The last question was found demanding. Candidates needed to read the question carefully as they were required to refer to the state of the roads in *certaines pays*. Some did not and carried on to state the opposite of what they needed to write which was that the roads were better. *Meilleures* was not well known.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Sophie who talked about how she had become a chef. The topic area was generally accessible and usually candidates made a good attempt at this exercise. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events in the past. Performance was much in line with the performance seen on the comparable exercise in 2014. Many candidates did well on the first three questions but on **Question 29** many chose option A instead of option D and had misunderstood that it was due to her friends (and not surfing the internet) that she had taken up her studies again. On other questions, there was no discernible pattern of incorrect answers.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

As in 2014, this was found to be a suitably demanding and challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Many weaker candidates made commendable efforts to answer at least some questions and were usually able to score a few marks. Candidates heard an interview with Alain who talked about his dog, Max. There was a good mix of harder and more accessible questions on this last exercise. Most candidates scored some marks with some questions only being successfully answered by the most able, as intended. The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates seemed unaware of this. Candidates should be reminded not to write long answers as sometimes they add extra detail which is not on the recording. This can distort and invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

Candidates made a fairly good start to the exercise but incorrect answers often featured *appartement* rather than *ferme* on **Question 32**. The word *appartement* was indeed heard but was linked to where he had lived when he was 20 and not his childhood. This showed that a careful reading of the question was necessary and that many had answered too quickly, not realising that the words *j'avais grandi dans une ferme* were expressing the key concept. Renderings such as *farm/firm* were not accepted. **Question 33** was found hard by many and the word *sauté* was not well known. **Question 34** also proved difficult as many were unfamiliar with the Defined Content item of vocabulary, *panier*. Incorrect answers often stated that the neighbour had lent him a dog. The middle section was approached with more success and a good number of candidates were able to score the mark on **Question 35** by referring to the concept of working in a supermarket or working extra hours. There were many good attempts at **Question 36** with many able to give an acceptable spelling of *déménager* and candidates also made good attempts at the next question realising that dogs were forbidden in the flat. Examiners accepted answers which successfully conveyed the concept of not allowing dogs. Many made a good attempt on **Question 38** and were able to convey the idea that Max, the dog, had left. Examiners also accepted here the concept of Max being lost or missing. The last two questions were answered well by candidates with good numbers being able to identify the concept of optimism on **Question 39** and, on **Question 40**, the concept of determination which could be rendered as *déterminé* or the equally acceptable *determination*.

FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/21

Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- read all instructions, questions and texts very carefully
- answer comprehension questions with brief but focused answers – where only a single line space is provided, short answers are expected
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice
- make any alterations to answers clear
- allow themselves time to check their work, particularly spellings, verb agreements and words copied from the text.

General comments

In general, candidates seemed to have enough time to complete the paper and most attempted an answer to all questions. They were well prepared and although one style of exercise was less familiar, the majority of candidates made a good attempt at it.

Standards of legibility and presentation were generally good, but copying of words from the text was less so. Any time left after finishing the paper could be profitably spent checking that all questions have been answered, that where material from the text has been used, it has been copied correctly, and that where an answer to a question has been changed, the final answer is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

This exercise was very well done: a few candidates chose A rather than C for **Question 3**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Most candidates scored full marks for this exercise.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

Again, this exercise was very well done, with only a few candidates choosing an incorrect option for **Question 13**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates are asked to read a short piece of text giving factual information, in this instance about the Musée Bacquet, a museum of musical instruments. This is followed by five sentences with a one word gap in each, each sentence to be completed with one of the words from the grid – there are ten to choose from.

Candidates are expected to choose the word from the grid which best reflects the meaning of the passage and which fits grammatically within the sentence. A few candidates chose instead to use words from the text, or their own words, which did not score.

Questions 16 and **20** were generally correctly completed, but for **Questions 17** and **19** many candidates chose *garderie* – presumably many saw a connection with the word *enfants* in **Question 19**. For **Question 18**, opinion was divided between *ouvert* and *fermé* – the text clearly says that the museum is open every day *sauf le lundi*.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–29

For this exercise, candidates are asked to read a longer text, written by Christine, talking about her decision to become vegetarian.

The questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. All that is required is to be able to locate the information needed, which can sometimes be rendered in just one or two words, rather than complete sentences. For example, **Question 23** could be answered with *pas contente*, **Question 25** with *dîner* and **Question 26** with *(son) frère*.

Candidates clearly understood the text and generally scored well for the exercise, but sometimes marks were lost because of the omission of detail: for **Question 21** many omitted the word *ans* and some offered *dix-six ans* rather than *seize ans*. In answers to **Question 27**, some candidates thought that it was Christine's brother who needed to eat a balanced diet, and many did not include the idea of *Ils doivent vraiment aimer les légumes* in their answer to the last question of the exercise.

Section 3

In this section, candidates are asked to read two longer texts and answer questions appropriately. In **Section 2**, they are asked just to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3**, they are asked to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and therefore do not score.

Candidates should keep their answers short and to the point – the space allowed for each question is an indication of the length of answer expected.

Exercise 1 Questions 30–34

The text here concerns Marie, her new life in France and the beauty of her singing. The rubric gives the information that 2 of the statements are true, and 3 are false, and candidates can score 5 of the 10 marks by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 3 marks are scored by correcting the 3 false statements.

In many instances, **Question 30** was identified as false, and **Questions 32** and **33** as true. The correction to **Question 31** was the best done of the three, although some candidates lifted as their answer *La plupart des gens de son pays parlait français* without actually mentioning Marie, so did not score. For **Question 32**, many again lifted their answer directly from the text *Marie et ses amis se retrouvaient dans un café* rather than expressing the idea that they went to listen to music, rather than to play it, as in the original statement. Many omitted *surpris* from their answer to **Question 33** and the word itself, where used, was surprisingly often misspelt.

No marks can be scored in this exercise when candidates quote directly from the text using the first person – they are expected to be able to show that they can report speech successfully using the third person of the appropriate verb.

There is no need for candidates to write anything for questions which they have decided are true.

Exercise 2 Questions 35–40

This longer text was the story of Stéphane and his guide book to discovering one's own country. Candidates need to make sure that they read each question with care, and that their answer is focused on what the question actually asks. Answers lifted from the text using the first person verb form will not score.

It was clear that most candidates understood the text and were generally able to locate the answer needed within it, but were not always able to structure their answer precisely.

Question 35 was very well done, but for **Question 36** the “before” and “during” answers were sometimes reversed. **Question 37** was frequently answered with *Il a trouvé la forêt tropicale extraordinaire* – it seems that *aurait amélioré* was not a well-known construction. Candidates were generally able to locate the material needed to answer **Question 38** but could not express their answer grammatically, with many lifting from the text *Quel plaisir d'admirer le paysage tout en se reposant* and those who attempted to rephrase were often caught out by the reflexive pronoun. For **Question 39**, the answer looked for was *Aux habitants des grandes villes / À ceux qui habitent les grandes villes* – many used *que/qu'* rather than *qui*, and others used *habitez* from the text, so could not score. **Question 40** proved more straightforward for the majority of candidates, and many scored the mark here.

FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/22

Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- read all instructions, questions and texts very carefully
- answer comprehension questions with brief but focused answers – where only a single line space is provided, short answers are expected
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice
- make any alterations to answers clear
- allow themselves time to check their work, particularly spellings, verb agreements, and words copied from the text.

General comments

In general, candidates seemed to have enough time to complete the paper and most attempted an answer to all questions. They were well prepared and although one style of exercise was less familiar, the majority of candidates made a good attempt at it.

Standards of legibility and presentation were generally good, but copying of words from the text was less so. Any time left after finishing the paper could be profitably spent checking that all questions have been answered, that where material from the text has been used, it has been copied correctly, and that where an answer to a question has been changed, the final answer is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

Most candidates scored well on this exercise, although for some, **Question 5** seemed to cause problems – perhaps *verre* was not well known – and a number of candidates answered with D rather than C. Almost all answered the other questions correctly.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Candidates often scored the maximum 5 marks on this exercise. **Question 7** was sometimes answered with A, rather than F, suggesting that some were unfamiliar with either *la météo* or with *des orages* or that the word *regarde* led them to choose the picture of spectacles.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

This exercise seems to have been more challenging for candidates than the previous two. **Question 11** was sometimes answered with A instead of B and, for **Question 12**, B was similarly offered instead of A. For **Question 13**, many chose A rather than C.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates are asked to read a short piece of text giving factual information, in this instance about the Toy Museum at Franchemar. This is followed by five sentences with a one word gap in each, each sentence to be completed with one of the words from the grid – there are ten to choose from.

Candidates are expected to choose the word from the grid which best reflects the meaning of the passage and which fits grammatically within the sentence. A few candidates chose instead to use words from the text, or their own words, which did not score.

There was a wide variety in the marks scored for this exercise, with a number achieving full marks.

Question 16 was often given as *acheté*, rather than *ouvert*, but most candidates managed *trains* for **Question 18**, and *fêtes* for **Question 20**.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–29

For this exercise, candidates are asked to read a longer text, an e-mail from Carole to a friend, talking about the week she has just spent with her aunt in Bruxelles.

The questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. All that is required is to be able to locate the information needed, which can sometimes be rendered in just one or two words, rather than complete sentences. For example, **Question 21** could be answered simply with *une semaine*, **Question 25** with *village* and **Question 26** with (*une grande*) *place*.

The exercise was generally well done, though some candidates, in talking about the *appartement* in **Question 22**, omitted *pas* from their answer and consequently said it was a long way from the centre of the city. **Question 23** needed some reference either to *traductrice* or to the idea that Carole wanted the same career as her aunt, and **Question 27** specifically asked “when” Carole had to go out on her own, which a number of candidates did not manage to locate. For the two parts of **Question 28**, a few failed to make clear that Bruxelles was famous for chocolate, but most managed the idea that *sa mère adore ça*. For **Question 29**, candidates needed to add *acheter/offrir/choisir* to the basic answer of flowers.

Section 3

In this section, candidates are asked to read two longer texts and answer questions appropriately. In **Section 2** they are asked just to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3**, they are asked to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and therefore do not score.

Candidates should keep their answers short and to the point – the space allowed for each question is an indication of the length of answer expected.

Exercise 1 Questions 30–34

The text here concerns Bernard, champion skier. The rubric gives the information that 2 of the statements are true, and 3 are false, and candidates can score 5 of the 8 marks by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 3 marks are scored by correcting the 3 false statements.

A number of candidates thought that **Question 30** was false and **Questions 32** and **35** were true, but many correctly identified **Questions 31**, **32** and **34** as false, and most were able to provide a suitable correction for **Question 32**, that *Bernard a refusé de quitter les montagnes* but the other two corrections were less conclusive – for **Question 31**, many said that Bernard skied to school in winter, omitting the detail that he only skied to school when there was too much snow / when the bus did not arrive, and although it was clear that many understood what the answer should be to correct **Question 34**, they found it difficult to manipulate the language sufficiently to convey the idea that, for Bernard, the best moment of his life was when he was able to ski just for pleasure.

No marks can be scored in this exercise when candidates quote directly from the text using the first person – they are expected to be able to show that they can report speech successfully using the third person of the appropriate verb.

There is no need for candidates to write anything for questions which they have decided are true.

Exercise 2 Questions 35–40

For the final exercise of the paper, candidates were given a text about *Le Lycée Municipal pour Adultes de Paris*. Candidates need to make sure that they read each question with care, and that their answer is focused on what the question actually asks. Many answers were far too long for the single line space given.

The vast majority of candidates found success with their answer to **Question 35**, that candidates were between the ages of 28 and 48, but for **Question 36** asking “why” candidates had to succeed in their bac, many found the right piece of text, but omitted *pour* from their answer: *pour (pouvoir) faire des études supérieures*. **Question 37** asked what each applicant had to show in order to be accepted, and again many were able to locate the correct section of the text, but talked about what the *directrice* was looking for and consequently gave some response involving *vérifier* or *un entretien*. The answers looked for were simply *niveau scolaire* and *motivation*.

For **Question 38**, many appeared to have misread the question, which asked what candidates had to do before 18 heures – the answer expected was *travailler* but many opted for *savoir combiner emploi et cours*.

The last two questions were generally done a little better, although some gave an answer in direct rather than reported speech for **Question 39**. Many candidates were able to score for the last question, correctly answering that Agnes’ ambition was to become a lawyer.

FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/23

Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- read all instructions, questions and texts very carefully
- answer comprehension questions in French with brief but focused answers – where only a single line space is provided, short answers are expected
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice
- make any alterations to an answer clear
- allow themselves time to check their work, particularly spellings, verb agreements, and words copied from the text.

General comments

This Reading paper followed the revised syllabus format. Candidates dealt confidently with the variety of reading comprehension exercise types, including the new gap-filling task in **Section 2**. All candidates seemed to have ample time to complete the paper. The paper offered an appropriate challenge and a gradient of difficulty. The standard of presentation and legibility was generally good.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

This exercise was handled with a high degree of success by the majority of candidates. Occasionally in **Question 2**, B was chosen instead of C and, in **Question 5**, C was chosen for D.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise was well done.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

This exercise was generally well understood. Where difficulties were experienced it usually involved **Question 12** and/or **Question 14**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a short information piece about a transport museum and complete statements in French, choosing words from a given list, in order to show comprehension of the text. The majority of candidates handled this task confidently and successfully. Candidates should be aware that the list contains words which can fit the structure of the statements grammatically but which do not show comprehension of the text (e.g. *fatigante* for **Question 18** and *adultes* for **Question 19**). Careful reading of the whole task is necessary.

Exercise 2

Questions 21–29

For this exercise, candidates read an email from Louise to a friend on the topic of family and shopping. This is a straightforward exercise requiring candidates to understand questions in French, select the appropriate information from the text and to write down an appropriate response. Most candidates scored well on this exercise, showing good understanding of the question words (e.g. *où*, *pourquoi*, *quand*) and of the text. It is to be remembered that long answers are not required and the space allocated to the answer is sufficient.

Section 3

In this section, candidates are asked to read two longer texts and answer questions appropriately. In **Section 2** they are asked just to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3**, they are asked to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and therefore do not score.

Candidates should keep their answers short and to the point – the space allowed for each question is an indication of the length of answer expected.

Exercise 1 Questions 30–34

For this exercise, candidates had to read a text about the experiences at work of a man called Marius. The rubric instructs candidates to read the text, tick VRAI or FAUX against five statements about the text and to write corrected version of the statements they have picked out as false. Three of the five statements are false. This was helpful information for the majority of candidates.

Candidates should be reminded that it is not enough to make a false statement negative to correct it. Normally candidates should select language carefully from the text or use their own words e.g. for **Question 34**, either *Marius a tout fait pour rester dans le Nord* (selected lift) or *Il voulait rester dans le Nord* (own words) would have scored as appropriate corrections to the statement.

No marks can be scored in this exercise when candidates quote directly from the text using the first person – they are expected to be able to show that they can report speech successfully using the third person of the appropriate verb.

There is no need for candidates to write anything for questions which they have decided are true.

Exercise 2 Questions 35–41

This final exercise required the reading and understanding of a longer passage about the life of a successful musician. Comprehension was tested by means of questions and answers in French. Most candidates attempted answers to all questions.

Question 35 was best answered by *son grand-père* or *le grand-père d'Hélène*. The incorrect possessive *sa* was tolerated but the inappropriate “lift” *l'exemple de son grand-père* was not rewarded.

For **Question 36**, candidates frequently invalidated their answer by inappropriately lifting *ce serait impossible de gagner ma vie*.

Question 37 could have been answered by a judicious “lift” *Un des avions de la compagnie a eu un accident*. The less carefully selected *des avions a eu un accident* did not score.

Questions 38 and **39** were often well answered but some candidates confused the information required for each answer.

For **Question 40**, the brief answer *Elle l'admire beaucoup* would have been sufficient to score.

La perte de son emploi (de comptable) was the answer required for **Question 41**. *Elle ne connaît pas de plus grand bonheur* was a fairly frequent wrong offering or an invalidating addition.

FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/03

Speaking

Key messages

- This year, new marking tables were in use in both of the conversation sections of the Speaking Test. The format of the test however remained the same and was generally well understood in Centres.
- The standard of work heard was very similar to that heard in November 2014.
- Candidates had usually been well prepared for the Role Play tasks. Good Examiners did not deviate from the script and set tasks and prompted candidates when necessary.
- Timings in most Centres were correct but there are still Centres where candidates were disadvantaged as the tests were too short or too long.
- Topic coverage was satisfactory in most Centres. A few Centres needed to cover a wider range of topics across their candidature in the topic conversation section. It is not appropriate for all candidates in a Centre to choose the same topic for their presentation.
- Most Examiners are well aware of the need to ensure that past and future tenses are tested in **both** conversation sections. There are still some Centres where this is not the case. In such cases, the mark for language was limited. All Centres need to ensure that questions to test different tenses are included in **both** conversation tests. Some Centres missed out one of the conversation sections or conducted very short conversations.
- The best work was heard in Centres in which spontaneous and natural conversations developed.
- In Centres in which internal moderation had taken place, this had usually been carried out efficiently.

General comments

This paper was common to all candidates. As in 2014, the standard of work heard was good and covered a wide range of performance. Most Examiners were well aware of the format of the test and conducted the examination efficiently. Candidates were generally aware of the demands of the test and had usually prepared well. Examiners were usually sympathetic to their candidates and helped them by making them work for the marks and giving them the opportunity to show what they knew and could do.

In the role plays, candidates had made good use of the 15 minutes preparation time. Centres are reminded that Examiners may have access to the confidential test materials (Teachers' Notes Booklet and Role Play Cards) in the four working days before the first Speaking Test is conducted in order to prepare the Role Plays. **Centres are reminded that the contents of these materials are confidential and must not be shared with candidates.** The confidential test materials must be returned to the secure storage facility after preparation has taken place and after each session of examining. Once started, the Speaking Tests should be completed as soon as possible within the Centre. There should not be a long interval of time between different groups taking the test within a Centre. Once the last Speaking Test has been conducted, the examination booklet(s) should remain in secure storage until the end of the Speaking Test period. **The sample should be checked and then sent as soon as possible after the tests have been completed.**

Centres are reminded that candidates must not be allowed to do any writing during their preparation time and must not be allowed to bring any written materials with them into the preparation area.

Please also ensure that candidates do not bring mobile phones into the examination area and that Examiners' phones are switched off.

Examiners need to understand the requirements of the mark scheme in order that they ask the right sort of questions which will stretch candidates and give them the opportunity to fulfil the descriptors in the higher mark bands. For example, **Examiners who included unexpected questions and went beyond the straightforward "closed" questions gave candidates the possibility of scoring in the Good band or above on Table B, Communication.** "Safe" straightforward questions which do not give candidates the opportunity to develop their answers will not enable them to score marks in the highest bands. It is also essential to include questions which will elicit past and future tenses in **both** conversation sections as candidates need to show they can use both of these tenses for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded on **Table C, Language.**

- **Clerical checks**

In most Centres, the clerical work had been completed efficiently and Centres are thanked for this. Usually, the addition and transfer of marks was accurate but in some Centres, large clerical errors were found. It is essential that all clerical work is checked with great care to ensure that all candidates receive the correct mark. On the Working Mark Sheet, the addition of the individual marks for each candidate should be checked to ensure that the total mark is correct. Then, for each candidate, the transfer of the marks from the Working Mark Sheet to the MS1 mark sheet (or the electronic marks file) must also be checked.

In larger Centres with several Examiners and in which internal moderation has taken place, please ensure that any marks amendments for the samples of internally moderated work are applied to the whole of that Examiner's group and not just the sample candidates. On the MS1 mark sheet, the Centre must enter the total mark for each candidate in figures as well as shading the lozenges. A few Centres did not complete the mark column. If internal moderation has taken place, please ensure that the final Centre mark has been entered correctly.

- **Cover Sheet for Moderation Sample**

Nearly all Centres remembered to submit the Cover Sheet for Moderation Sample, duly completed. Completion of this form allows Centres to check that their moderation sample is correct before they despatch it to Cambridge. **Please remember that this is a form which must be completed and submitted to the Moderator with the sample.** It is intended that this sheet serves as a checklist for the Examiner. If there is more than one Examiner per Centre, please remember to tick the relevant box on this sheet.

- **Sample size**

As in 2014, most Centres understood the requirements of the sample size well and nearly all Centres submitted a correct and representative sample. Centres with permission to use more than one Examiner had clearly gone to great lengths to ensure that both a good range of marks and different Examiners were represented on the sample. **It was particularly helpful in such cases for the Moderators to receive a list of all the sample candidates and in which examination group they could be found.**

- **Recording quality**

As last year, a high proportion of the recordings received were of a good quality and Centres are thanked for this. Again, most Centres submitted digital recordings which were very clear and enabled Moderators very easy access to the sample. Centres are reminded that whatever the method chosen for recording, if an external microphone is used, this should be positioned to favour the candidate. **Centres should note that the recording should not be paused between different sections of the test.**

Please use widely recognised recording programmes. It is sometimes difficult to open files when they are not put on CDs as .mp3 files. If new Centres are considering ways to record, it is well worth obtaining a digital voice recorder (IC recorder) as they are easy to use and the sound quality is excellent. Such recordings are easily accessed and the sound levels are good. Files cannot be recorded over and as the device is small it does not intimidate candidates. Please ensure that all recording equipment is tested carefully prior to the live exams. Also, please remember to avoid sticking labels on CDs and do not write on the surface of the CD without using a CD friendly pen. It is essential that each candidate's recording is labelled with the candidate name and number on the box for the CD and that the sound file is correctly labelled. **On the CD, the recording for each candidate must be saved individually and named as follows, Centre number_candidate number_ syllabus number_component number.** Moderators reported several cases of CDs being labelled incorrectly. The recording for each candidate should be on a separate file.

Please check that all CDs/cassettes are carefully wrapped in some form of protective packaging before they are placed in the envelope with the moderation paperwork.

Please note that samples should **not** be submitted on a memory stick.

If the recorded sample is submitted on cassette, each cassette must be accompanied by a list of the featured recordings in order of play. If the recorded sample is submitted on CD, a list of the featured recordings must be submitted with each CD. Each CD/cassette must include a recorded introduction by the Examiner, listing the cassette/CD number, Centre number, examination number, examination name, name of Examiner and date.

Whether Centres are submitting samples on cassette or CD, the Examiner must introduce the candidate by name and number and give the role play card number. **This announcement must not be made by the candidate.**

- **Internal moderation in Centres**

The standard of internal moderation in Centres which had been given permission to use more than one Examiner was usually good. New Centres are reminded that where more than one Examiner is used, Moderators need to be able to check that all Examiners have adopted a uniform approach to the test and applied the mark scheme consistently. All Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner to conduct the Speaking Tests for their candidates are reminded of the need to apply to Cambridge for permission well before the start of **each** Speaking Test period. Permission is normally granted, on the understanding that internal standardisation/moderation takes place at the Centre before a sample is chosen for external moderation by Cambridge. In order to assist Centres that have been given permission to use more than one Examiner, Cambridge has produced guidelines for internal standardisation/moderation. These guidelines explain the need for the marking of all Examiners in the Centre to be checked for consistency before a representative sample of recordings is chosen.

Centres are reminded that if after checking the sample for a particular Examiner the decision is taken to adjust that Examiner's marks, that adjustment must then be applied to the marks of **all the candidates** who were examined by that Examiner, and **not just to the work of the candidates who were part of the sample checked.**

- **Duration of tests/missing elements**

Most Centres adhered to the stipulated timings, but some Centres persist in going under or over the 5 minutes prescribed for the Topic conversation and/or the General conversation test. Each of these sections **must** last for approximately five minutes. Centres are reminded that the presentation of the topic should last no longer than 2 minutes and that the remaining time of this 5 minute section should be spent in conversation on this topic. **Where conversations are short or missing, candidates can be disadvantaged as marks cannot be awarded for tasks which are not attempted.** In the topic/conversation section, Examiners need to keep questioning focused on the topic in question and then introduce the final general conversation section of the test. This is helpful to both the candidate and the Moderator. In some Centres, marks had been awarded for missing sections which resulted in marks being reduced by Moderators.

- **Application of the mark scheme**

Examiners in Centres were usually successful in applying the mark scheme fairly and consistently. Some large Centres had adjustments made just to part of the mark range in cases of lenient or harsh marking. Some Centres had larger adjustments made to their marks. **This was often due to short or missing sections, or the generosity of marks awarded in Centres on Table C when there was no evidence of past and future tenses evident.**

Centres are reminded that a short response in the role plays, if appropriate, can earn a mark of 3. If there are two parts to a task then Examiners are free to split the task, but if only one part of a task is completed by the candidate, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 1. If a candidate uses a verb to complete a task and makes an error of tense or conjugation, a mark of 2 and not 3 is appropriate. Examiners are reminded that poor pronunciation may be queried especially if it prevents clear communication of a task. Apart from the task in Role Play A which requires the candidate to listen to two options and then choose one, candidates cannot be awarded marks for material given by the Examiner which is then repeated by the candidate.

In the Conversation sections, marking tended to be generous in some Centres, as marks were awarded in the higher bands when there was no evidence that candidates could respond **in a spontaneous way to unexpected questions or that they could communicate consistently and accurately in past and future tenses.** Moderators also reported that in some Centres high marks had been awarded when candidates could not go beyond a series of short responses to very straightforward questions. It cannot be overemphasised how important it is for the Examiner to pitch the level of questioning at a different level for candidates of different abilities. Impression marks were usually awarded fairly in Centres.

Comments on specific questions

Role Plays

Centres usually encouraged candidates to attempt all parts of each task and many Examiners did prompt when appropriate. All Examiners need to prompt candidates to try to attempt all tasks. If only one part of a two-part task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded. As last year, two-part tasks were split into **(i)** and **(ii)** on the candidate Role Play cards. Most Examiners kept well to their script and did not change the cues. Please remember to check the number of the candidate's card before starting the test.

Overlong answers are not to be encouraged as marks are only awarded for the set tasks. Indeed, should candidates go on and add material extra to the set task it may distort meaning and detract from an otherwise correct answer.

Candidates should be reminded that it is always important to listen to the Examiner as, on all the Role Play A situations, there is **always** a task which requires them to listen and choose from the two options offered by the Examiner. If one of these options is not chosen by the candidate, the appropriate mark to award is 0. Likewise, there is **always** one task which requires candidates to respond to an unexpected question on the B Role Plays.

A Role Plays

The A Role Plays were found to be of equal difficulty and appropriate for the candidature. They posed similar challenges to those of 2014 and were a fair test at this level. The A Role Plays are designed to be easier than the B Role Plays and are set using vocabulary from Topic Areas A, B and C of the Defined Content. All of the A Role Play situations featured a task which required a question to be asked and one task which required candidates to choose an option from two provided by the Examiner. Candidates generally found them to be accessible and even the weakest candidates were usually able to score at least one mark on each task. Centres had trained candidates well to include a greeting and thanks where required. Centres are reminded that often a short response (perhaps one word) will be appropriate and in such cases a mark of 3 can be awarded. Examiners should query pronunciation if the meaning of the utterance is unclear due to mispronunciation. Examiners should introduce the A Role Play and start the conversation off. English should not be used to introduce the test. It is always helpful to read out the introduction to candidates.

At the tourist office

Candidates generally approached this situation well. On Task 1, quite a few candidates mispronounced *billet/tickets*. Good numbers were able to supply a correct day on the next task and, on Task 3, were usually able to opt for one of the choices given by the Examiner in the prompt. Again, pronunciation was an issue for some candidates as mispronunciation of *quatorze* sometimes led to confusion between *quatre* and *quatorze*. Nearly all candidates could ask for a number of tickets and, on the last task, very good attempts were made to formulate an appropriate question either about the boat trip or facilities on the boat.

In a bookshop

This role play was attempted well by candidates. Nearly all candidates could greet and ask for a map. The second task proved a little harder as some mispronounced *routière* or *randonnée* and their meaning was not always clear. Tasks 3 and 4 were approached well with nearly all candidates being able to communicate well for whom they were buying the present. The last task was usually well done but some candidates rendered the second part of this task as *Combien de prix?*

Reserving a room

This role play caused candidates few problems. Nearly all candidates attempted this well. Most were able to communicate that they wanted to reserve a room and there were very few instances of candidates giving the incorrect message *J'ai fait une réservation pour une chambre*. On Task 3, candidates need to be reminded that when a date is requested, they should give a precise specific date rather than a general response such as *la semaine prochaine* as some only achieved partial completion of the message with such a statement. Candidates were well able to distinguish between a room with a mountain view or a sea view on Task 4. The last task was well done and candidates now seem more confident about formulating a correct question in this context.

B Role Plays

The B Role Plays were deliberately more demanding in that they required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, give opinions and justify these opinions. The level of challenge was balanced across the Role Plays. As last year, they differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score some marks on some of the tasks. It is important that Examiners know their own role and stick to the set tasks. Candidates should be reminded that there will always be one task in which they have to listen to the Examiner and reply to an unprepared question. Candidates should be advised to consider likely questions in the 15 minutes preparation time, immediately prior to the Speaking Test, and to listen carefully in the examination room.

Phoning a hotel to enquire about a job

Most were able to cope well with the first task saying why they were phoning but on Task 2, some required prompting and a change of cue. Candidates needed to respond to the set cue and state an appropriate future time when they would be available in order to score good marks. On Task 3, candidates needed to state in an appropriate perfect tense their experience of having worked in a hotel and state what they had done exactly. Some candidates were only partially successful on this task and sometimes missed out one of the two elements which resulted in a mark of 1 for partial achievement. On the fourth task, any two logical reasons for liking working in a hotel were awarded but some candidates were only able to supply one fact. Most chose on the last task to ask a question about *le salaire* but often mispronounced this as *salarie*. Use of the interrogative adjectives *quel/quelle/quels/quelles* and an appropriate verb form proved problematic for many weaker candidates.

Phoning a friend to say you are late

Some candidates were not familiar with the verb *rater* and on Task 2 could not always supply two details about their reasons for being late. The response to the unexpected question asking when they would arrive was however done quite well. The fourth task required some notion of polite refusal. A response which merely stated *non* did not gain full marks for the task but many were able to score at least one mark by saying what form of transport they intended to take. On the last task, candidates needed to formulate a question and ask the friend if s/he would like to go out. If there was no question but merely a statement such as *Je veux aller au restaurant ce soir avec toi*, this was treated as only partial completion. An appropriate question such as *Tu veux aller au restaurant ce soir?* was required.

Inviting a friend to go on holiday with you

The initial task proved difficult to formulate for some but good numbers were more successful on the second task, especially when well prompted by Examiners. Most were able to say why they did not like camping but some did not attempt the second task and Examiners sometimes did not take candidates back to the task and encourage the candidates to attempt it by giving the cue a second time. In a task with two parts it is worth noting that it can be split so that the candidate can attempt it in a more natural way. The next task was attempted well and many were comfortable with giving two details about what they would like to do in the way of activities. The final task proved difficult for weaker candidates and only the more able were capable of formulating a correct question despite the task supplying the relevant vocabulary.

Topic presentation and conversation

The overall standard heard this year was very similar to that heard in 2014. There was a wide range of performance and candidates had usually prepared their material thoroughly. The best presentations were presented at a reasonable speed, were clear to understand and they showed something about the candidate in a very personal way. Most were well able to do themselves justice on their presentation but it was often the case that, for weaker candidates, there was a drop in the level of performance in the topic conversation section. The most able candidates were however usually capable of sustaining a consistent performance in which they justified and explained routinely whilst making use of a wide range of accurate structures.

Most candidates chose to speak on familiar topics such as their School, a favourite sport, their country/town of origin, life in another country, their holidays or their leisure interests. A few topics were occasionally a little over ambitious in nature for the linguistic level of the candidate. Some fascinating accounts were given about local festivals, family occasions and future plans. This year, there were fewer cases of candidates talking about *moi-même*. This is a subject to be avoided as it often replicates the general conversation section. Likewise, it is worth telling candidates to avoid a very general area such as my daily routine as this can become far too general and often covers too many different topic areas rather than enabling candidates to go into depth on one particular topic. Generally, candidates were enthusiastic about their topic and are to be commended for the way in which they had prepared their material. All of the candidates heard had prepared a topic and many had put much thought and effort into this part of the examination. Please remind

candidates that in topics delivered at great speed, the communicative message can be lost. It is important that the presentation is delivered at a comprehensible speed and that Examiners do not interrupt this flow too early. Early questioning can put candidates off and make it difficult to say when the presentation ends and the conversation on it starts. It must also be emphasised that candidates in the same Centre should not all prepare the same topic for this part of the examination. A variety of topics across a Centre helps to keep the examining and responses spontaneous. A good range of topics should be apparent in Centres.

Centres are reminded that the presentation should last for a maximum of 2 minutes. There should then be about a further three minutes of conversation on this topic. The total timing of this section is 5 minutes. In the conversation, questions should be put which enable the candidate to develop his/her material **rather than merely repeat material from the presentation**. The best performances were ones in which the questions and answers developed into a natural conversation.

While it is expected that teachers will have prepared candidates for the follow-up conversation, if candidates are to score highly, **this must not consist of a series of pre-learnt questions and answers in which both Examiner and candidate know what is coming and in which order**. Questions should instead arise spontaneously as the conversation develops. It is not appropriate for one or two questions only to be asked. Examiners were usually aware of the need to elicit both past and future tenses but in a few Centres, **questions to test different tenses were not asked in the topic conversation**. This sometimes resulted in marks being reduced by Moderators as there was no evidence that the candidates could use tenses in this section of the test. Examiners need to remember that when questions in different tenses arise, they should be relevant to the topic being discussed. Some Examiners need to try to ask a few more unexpected questions on this section to enable the more able candidates to show that they are capable of “thinking on their feet” and using their prepared material in terms of vocabulary and structures appropriately. Most Examiners remembered to make a clear transition in French between this section of the test and the general conversation section. This is very helpful for both the candidates and the Moderators.

General conversation

Examiners generally realised the need for questions to be put to elicit tenses but timings were again often inconsistent in this section. Some general conversation sections were very long and others very short. Most Centres covered an appropriate range of topics and are reminded to try to cover **two or three topics only** in this final section. It is helpful on each of the two or three topics examined to include questions in different tenses rather than leave such questions until the final topic and, indeed, there were some good examples of this approach. Centres are reminded that if there is only evidence of candidates working in the present tense then the language mark will be limited to a maximum of 6.

It is also important to remember to cover different topics with different candidates and, if using the same topic with different candidates, to try to use different questions. Generally, Centres need to cover fewer topics and try to include a good range of questions which enable candidates to have access to the upper ends of the mark bands for communication. **Questions which are very straightforward and which require simple short responses will not give candidates access to the upper mark bands for both communication and language**. The best examining gave candidates logically related questions on a topic and featured some open ended questions such as *parle-moi de*. This meant that candidates could try to develop their answers in a natural way. As in the topic conversation, candidates need to be able to develop their answers, give and explain opinions and be able to respond to unexpected questions in a spontaneous way in order to gain high marks. A few Centres made use of too few questions or the same questions in the same order on each conversation topic from candidate to candidate: **this approach must be avoided**. Once in the examination room, it is far better if the Examiner listens to what the candidate is saying and responds as spontaneously as possible. The best examining heard this session featured such an approach.

As in 2014, a very wide range of performance was heard by Moderators. A good number of candidates showed that they could communicate across a range of topics. Many spoke about holidays, future plans, the environment, their town/country, a favourite animal, school, leisure activities, food and drink/health living, daily routine and their families. There were also some interesting conversations about life in another country. Many candidates not only communicated their message clearly but were also well able to do so in accurate language which showed a good control of a range of linguistic structures and lexis and accurate, consistent use of tenses. The best work in terms of language featured longer more complex utterances which made use of a variety of tenses and structures such as *si* + imperfect plus a conditional tense, *avant de* + infinitive, *depuis* and, occasionally, compound tenses.

It was clear from the work heard in many Centres that oral work plays an important part in the IGCSE classroom and in the learning of the language. The Speaking Test is the culmination of much effort on the part of both Examiners and candidates. Many candidates heard by Moderators were enthusiastic about the relevance and importance of learning a foreign language and had enjoyed their experience of learning French.

FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/41

Writing

Key messages

- Candidates showed that they were well prepared to manage the demands of this component in its new format.
- In the longer questions, candidates respected the guidelines regarding length, producing approximately 80 words for **Question 2** and, for **Question 3**, between 130–140 words.
- The most successful answers focused clearly on the demands of the rubrics, were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades could use a range of verb tenses, sentence structures, and more complex linguistic patterns.
- Work was generally very well-presented and nearly always legible.

General comments

Work from the full ability range was seen. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1 provided candidates with the opportunity to establish a solid basis for further success. Candidates should always try to give a full set of eight items even though only five correct/acceptably spelt nouns receive a mark. If candidates cannot recall the word for any of the items pictured, they are free to add the word for a different item provided that it fits the context of the question.

Candidates are reminded that they should write one item per line. Candidates are also advised that they should not write their answers as labels beneath the pictures.

As had been indicated in the sample papers, there is no requirement to include a definite/indefinite article.

Question 2, which had previously featured in Paper 2: Reading and Directed Writing, was assessed by the same criteria as previously. Candidates appeared to be comfortable with this type of question; they wrote simple sentences to convey effectively the details required.

One mark is awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Up to ten marks are awarded across the question. There is no requirement to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks.

Candidates are also reminded that the maximum of ten marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit a task.

Sometimes a task will invite candidates to give a reason. Communication marks will only be awarded for reasons which are expressly requested in the question. Candidates are therefore advised to provide such information only when the task demands it.

There was some evidence to suggest that candidates had been too concerned about the recommended length of 80 words; some candidates, who indiscriminately crossed out details which would have earned them marks, missed out on full marks. The recommendation is a guideline: candidates will not lose marks if they write beyond that amount.

A small number of candidates misunderstood the rubric: they thought that they should choose one of the 4 tasks and write exclusively on the theme of the chosen task. Candidates must be advised that it is a requirement to respond to all of the tasks: there will normally be four or five linked tasks.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options, each of which reflected the styles of writing required in past sessions: a letter, an article, a story line to be continued. Assessment of this question has changed quite significantly. There are ten marks for Communication, two marks for each of the specified tasks making up the question. Language marks are awarded in two categories: Verbs, eight marks and Other Linguistic Features, twelve marks.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question. It was very clear that some candidates were drawn to **Question 3(a)**. Unfortunately some, despite their obvious ability to communicate in French, did not gain high marks because they did not address the specific tasks laid out in the question. Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary; it is a pity that candidates do not always take note of that to copy correctly from the rubric and also to note the gender of any significant nouns. In the very best work, the language flowed naturally.

Communication: in order to gain the two marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the five tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks.

As with **Question 2**, there was some evidence to suggest that candidates thought that they must only write 140 words. The recommendation is a guideline: it reflects the fact that the question can be answered effectively within that amount of words. A small number of candidates crossed out important pieces of information. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult if there is little time. Unfortunately some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of eight is awarded for 18 verbs; there were instances where candidates produced many more than that. Candidates must remember that each different form of a verb earns a tick. Repeated correct forms of a verb do not qualify for a tick. By way of illustration, when expressing their opinions about situations and events, many candidates used a variety of verbs: *je pense, je trouve, je crois* and when appropriate, used them in different tenses.

Other Linguistic Features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The strongest candidates will be able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses such as *quand, si, parce que, car, qui, que*, object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (e.g. *ne... jamais, ne... plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions such as *depuis, pendant, pour*, and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter. It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity, common prepositions.

Some candidates were rightly allowed to word process their responses. Centres should advise candidates who submit their work in this way to use a larger font and to use double spacing in order for examiners to be able to have room to annotate the work in the normal way.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 *Les Jeux Olympiques 2016*

Candidates were asked to write a list of eight sports.

To maximise their chances of scoring the five marks available, candidates are well advised to provide a list of eight items. The eight pictures only serve as a guide and candidates are free to use different items provided that they fit the context of the question. *Rugby, tennis, basket and volley* were well known by the vast majority. Some candidates were not so secure with the correct spelling of *natation, équitation* or *football*.

Question 2 *Mon nouvel ami / Ma nouvelle amie*

For this exercise, candidates were asked to write an essay of 80 to 90 words. It was pleasing to see that the vast majority of candidates kept to the recommended word count.

Candidates were expected to write about a new friend, giving details about:

- (a) their name, age, nationality
- (b) physical appearance and personality
- (c) what their new friend enjoys doing
- (d) what they were going to do with their new friend the following weekend.

The vast majority of candidates scored the ten marks available for Communication as they found plenty to say about their new friend.

To ensure that they score the ten marks available, candidates are advised to:

- check that they have addressed every task and sub-task
- produce clear and concise answers which remain focused on the task
- offer a variety of choices. Candidates who only provided a couple of leisure activities often found it difficult to communicate sufficient relevant points
- highlight or underline key words in each task
- write in well-defined paragraphs.

Task (a) was very well done as candidates were able to give the required details regarding their new friend.

In task (b), candidates wrote extensively about their new friend's appearance and personality, using a wide variety of adjectives. Some did not communicate effectively as they were confused regarding the use of *avoir* and *être*. There was also some confusion between *cheveux* and *chevaux*.

The emphasis of task (c) was on what the friend does to enjoy himself/herself. Saying *mon ami(e) aime la pizza, les bonbons, le sport* was therefore not rewarded. There had to be a mention of the friend's involvement in the activity. *Il/elle fait du sport, il/elle regarde la télé* were sufficient to qualify for a communication point.

An appropriate verb needs to be used for a communication point to be awarded. The use of *jouer* with *des sports* could, therefore, not be rewarded.

In the last task (d), an idea of future had to be communicated. The use of *le week-end prochain* followed by a verb in the present tense was rewarded. *Le week-end prochain, je veux aller au cinéma avec mon amie* or *le week-end prochain, on va jouer au foot* were both acceptable.

The vast majority of candidates scored 5 or 4 for the language mark. They produced pieces of work which were coherent, showed that they could use relevant verbs and vocabulary with a fair degree of accuracy.

Some candidates were not secure in the use of the future tense. The use of a past tense with *le week-end prochain*, distorted the meaning of the message being conveyed and also affected the language mark.

Section 2

Candidates have to choose one essay out of three options: a letter, an article and a story line to continue. There are ten marks for Communication, eight marks for Verbs and twelve marks for Other Linguistic Features. Candidates were expected to write 130 to 140 words to complete the task. It was pleasing to see that candidates kept to the recommended word count.

Question 3(a) *Votre frère/sœur a quitté la maison car il/elle a trouvé un nouvel emploi dans une autre ville.*

Candidates were expected to address the following points:

- where their brother/sister had gone to live and why
- the family's reactions
- the type of job the candidate wants to do in the future
- whether the candidate will stay at home or move to another town when they have finished their studies and why.

Each task was awarded two communication marks.

This option was very popular.

Many candidates did not address the first task fully. Many seemed to think that the copying of the stimulus was all that was required to fulfil the first task. Whilst many could say what the brother/sister's new job was and where, they did not mention where they now lived. Candidates were awarded two communication marks for stating where their sibling now lived and an extra two marks for the reason for the move. As prompted by the stimulus, a past tense was expected. However, candidates who stated *mon frère habite maintenant à ...* were fully rewarded.

Candidates were very successful describing the family's reactions. The word *triste* was well known and widely used with different members of the family. Present and past tenses were both accepted. Many candidates wanted to say that the brother/sister was missed but could not express the idea clearly as they often used *Je/ma mère le/la manque* instead of *il/elle me/lui manque*.

An idea of future had to be conveyed when stating what job they would like to do. Some candidates did not read the question carefully enough and wrote about what they would study at university. Many indicated that they would like to become doctors or architects but could not score full marks as they often used non-existent French words such as *medicine* or *arquitecte*.

Opinions were equally divided between those who would stay at home and those who would move to another town or even country. Many did not want to move as they would miss their family and friends and they liked where they lived. Others were attracted by better job prospects and the discovery of a new way of life and different cultures.

Question 3(b) *Une sortie au cinéma*

Candidates were expected to say:

- with whom and when they went to the cinema
- why they chose the film they saw
- whether they prefer to watch films in a cinema or at home and why
- if they would like to become an actor and why/why not.

The first task was very successful as many candidates could clearly describe a recent visit to the cinema. The use of a past tense was required and those who wrote about a future visit to the cinema could not score the two communication marks available.

Two marks were available for explaining their choice of film. Many stated that their favourite actor was in it or that it's their favourite type of film.

Candidates had to explain whether they preferred going to the cinema or staying at home to watch films. Many candidates liked going to the cinema because they liked special effects, the atmosphere or even the popcorn they could buy there. The word *écran* was not well known and many used *télévision*, which distorted the message. *Au cinéma, la télévision est plus grande* could not be rewarded. Others preferred to stay at home as they found it more relaxing, cheaper and more comfortable.

For the fourth task candidates were asked to say why they would/would not like to become an actor. The two Communication marks were awarded for any sensible reason. Many candidates were tempted by the fame and money the career would bring them, whilst others were much more realistic and felt *c'est un métier très difficile* or *je voudrais devenir professeur/médecin*. Some candidates misread the task and wrote about their favourite actor, which could not score any points.

Two extra communication marks were awarded flexibly for extra detail, given in a statement/clause containing a finite verb, relating to tasks 2, 3 or 4.

This essay was, on the whole, very well done and many candidates scored eight or more for Communication.

Question 3(c) *Je rentrais à la maison en bus. Il a commencé à neiger très fort. Tout d'un coup le bus s'est arrêté, il ne pouvait plus avancer, la route était bloquée...*

Very few candidates chose this option.

Candidates were expected to:

- describe what the bus driver did to contact the emergency services
- say what they did while waiting on the bus
- give their reactions and the reactions of the other passengers to these events.

Four communication marks were available for tasks 2 and 3.

Stating *le chauffeur du bus a contacté le service de secours* was not sufficient to score the two marks available as there was no indication of how he did it. However, *il a téléphoné au service de secours* communicated fully and was rewarded.

Some candidates were rather ambitious when trying to explain what they did as they were waiting. Those who used more straightforward language and stated *j'ai écouté de la musique/j'ai lu un livre/j'ai parlé avec les autres voyageurs* easily scored the marks available.

Reactions to events are an essential part of relating the story and candidates need to be prepared to show their own reactions as well as those of others to what happened. Marks for reactions were awarded at any point in the story and not just at the end. Candidates achieved communication marks by stating how worried they were to begin with but relieved when help finally arrived.

FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/42

Writing

Key messages

- Candidates showed that they were well prepared to manage the demands of this component in its new format.
- In the longer questions, candidates respected the guidelines regarding length, producing approximately 80 words for **Question 2** and, for **Question 3**, between 130–140 words.
- The most successful answers focused clearly on the demands of the rubrics, were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades could use a range of verb tenses, sentence structures, and more complex linguistic patterns.
- Work was generally very well-presented and nearly always legible.

General comments

Work from the full ability range was seen. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1 provided candidates with the opportunity to establish a solid basis for further success. Candidates should always try to give a full set of eight items even though only five correct/acceptably spelt nouns receive a mark. If candidates cannot recall the word for any of the items pictured, they are free to add the word for a different item provided that it fits the context of the question.

Candidates are reminded that they should write one item per line. Candidates are also advised that they should not write their answers as labels beneath the pictures.

As had been indicated in the sample papers, there is no requirement to include a definite/indefinite article.

Question 2, which had previously featured in Paper 2: Reading and Directed Writing, was assessed by the same criteria as previously. Candidates appeared to be comfortable with this type of question; they wrote simple sentences to convey effectively the details required.

One mark is awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Up to ten marks are awarded across the question. There is no requirement to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks.

Candidates are also reminded that the maximum of ten marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit a task.

Sometimes a task will invite candidates to give a reason e.g., in this session, to explain why they enjoy how they spend the evening. Communication marks will only be awarded for reasons which are expressly requested in the question. Candidates are therefore advised to provide such information only when the task demands it.

There was some evidence to suggest that candidates had been too concerned about the recommended length of 80 words; some candidates, who indiscriminately crossed out details which would have earned them marks, missed out on full marks. The recommendation is a guideline: candidates will not lose marks if they write beyond that amount.

A small number of candidates misunderstood the rubric: they thought that they should choose one of the 4 tasks and write exclusively on the theme of the chosen task. Candidates must be advised that it is a requirement to respond to all of the tasks: there will normally be four or five linked tasks.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options, each of which reflected the styles of writing required in past sessions: an email, a blog, a story line to be continued. Assessment of this question has changed quite significantly. There are ten marks for Communication, two marks for each of the specified tasks making up the question. Language marks are awarded in two categories: Verbs, eight marks and Other Linguistic Features, twelve marks.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question. It was very clear that some candidates were drawn to **Question 3(a)** as it invited information about a friend. Unfortunately some, despite their obvious ability to communicate in French, did not gain high marks because they did not address the specific tasks laid out in the question. Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary; it is a pity that candidates do not always take note of that to copy correctly from the rubric and also to note the gender of any significant nouns. In the very best work, the language flowed naturally.

Communication: in order to gain the two marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the five tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks.

As with **Question 2**, there was some evidence to suggest that candidates thought that they must only write 140 words. The recommendation is a guideline: it reflects the fact that the question can be answered effectively within that amount of words. A small number of candidates crossed out important pieces of information. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult if there is little time. Unfortunately some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of eight is awarded for 18 verbs; there were instances where candidates produced many more than that. Candidates must remember that each different form of a verb earns a tick. Repeated correct forms of a verb do not qualify for a tick. By way of illustration, when expressing their opinions about situations and events, many candidates used a variety of verbs: *je pense, je trouve, je crois* and when appropriate, used them in different tenses. There were some instances where candidates were so focused on including sufficient verbs that they had little to show in terms of range of structures which might qualify for marks in Other Linguistic Features.

Other Linguistic Features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The strongest candidates will be able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses such as *quand, si, parce que, car, qui, que*, object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (e.g. *ne... jamais, ne... plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions such as *depuis, pendant, pour*, and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter. It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity, common prepositions.

As mentioned earlier, the recommended word count was generally very well respected. Unfortunately, some candidates, thinking that this recommendation was mandatory, crossed out some work in order to meet the target and, in so doing, deprived themselves of valuable marks across all three categories of the assessment. Candidates should be advised to write the recommended amount, as excessive length often leads to error and repetition, however, they should be very careful when deleting work.

Some candidates were rightly allowed to word process their responses. Centres should advise candidates who submit their work in this way to use a larger font and to use double spacing in order for examiners to be able to have room to annotate the work in the normal way

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 *Vous préparez une soupe*

The demands of this question were straightforward: candidates were required to give the French for eight ingredients, represented in the pictures, which they might put in a soup.

There were very few who did not gain all five marks. There was however some insecurity, even among able candidates, in the spelling of certain quite common words: *carottes*, *eau*, *pommes de terre*, *tomates*. It is worth remembering that candidates are free to offer any other items which fit the context and for which they know the relevant French word. The following were seen and rewarded: *lait*, *lentilles*, *œuf*, *pâtes*, *poivre*, *porc*, *riz*, and there were others, as listed in the published mark scheme.

Question 2 *Un jour typique*

Candidates were required to write about the events of a typical day. Very many scored highly on this question. Marks were awarded for each piece of relevant information. Candidates could gain any number of marks for each part of the question.

Candidates were expected to:

- (a) describe what they do in the morning
- (b) state what they normally do in the afternoon
- (c) say how they like to spend the evening and why
- (d) say what they would like to do during the next holidays.

Most candidates gained at least one mark in (a) for details such as *je mange du pain*, *je bois un jus d'orange*. Although some also gained marks for *je me lève à 6 heures*, *je me lave*, *je me brosse les dents*, it was clear that there was some insecurity in the use of reflexive verbs. Marks were not awarded for verbs which lacked the reflexive pronoun, e.g. *je réveille à 5 heures*, *je douche*. Candidates had some difficulty expressing the idea of putting on their school uniform; rather than *je mets mon uniforme*, many wrote *je porte mon uniforme*, *j'habille mon uniforme*. Another common error was the use of *départ* as a verb: *je départ la maison à 7 heures*. Many candidates were confused with the spelling of *cheveux*.

Marks were awarded for task (b) for a whole range of different activities; this was also a task where many candidates boosted their score: *je joue au basket*, *je vais à la piscine*, *je vais en ville*, *je travaille en classe*, *je rentre à la maison*, *je fais mes devoirs*.

Task (c) presented few problems; again the details were many and varied: *je prépare le dîner pour la famille*, *j'aide ma mère dans la cuisine*, *je joue avec ma petite sœur*, *je regarde la télévision*, *je sors avec mes amis*, *je vais au cinéma*. Reasons commonly given included *cela me relaxe*, *c'est amusant*, *j'aime passer du temps avec ma famille*. Some omitted this element of the task, which was a pity because generally candidates are quite good at expressing simple opinions.

It is an established pattern for task (d) that candidates will need to use a future time frame. Marks are awarded for responses which use a phrase: *l'année prochaine*, *pendant les prochaines vacances* or a statement using a future tense verb pattern: *je voudrais aller*, *je vais visiter*, *je partirai*. When the name for a country is needed, candidates should remember that the name should be the French word. Candidates gained marks for a wide range of plans, from working: *je voudrais travailler dans un supermarché*, *je voudrais gagner de l'argent*, to travelling: *je veux aller au Canada pour voir ma sœur*, *je vais visiter Paris*, to relaxing: *je vais jouer au foot avec mes amis*, *je voudrais lire des romans*, *je nagerai à la piscine*, to preparing for the next academic year: *je vais étudier*, *je voudrais faire mes devoirs pour l'année prochaine*.

Candidates should remember that when the question invites them to write about themselves, marks will be awarded for statements using *je*, *on*, *nous* but no marks will be awarded for references to what other people do. In this instance, some candidates gave ten pieces of information but these included what other members of the family did in the morning, details which were not required by the question and which carried no marks.

Perhaps some candidates think that this question is easy and as a result they neither think carefully enough about what they wish to say nor check their work afterwards.

Accuracy

Very many gained full marks. The writing did not need to be error free for the award of five marks; candidates who use simple structures, who can correctly form verbs and who check their work can readily access the top bands.

Section 2

Question 3(a) *Un(e) ami(e) est arrivé(e) chez vous. Quelle surprise!*

This was a very popular choice and a high proportion of candidates earned high marks for the communication element. Some, however, would have done a little better if they had studied carefully the question before beginning their response: a small number understood that they had to write about a visit that they made to friend.

Communication

The first task required a piece of personal information about the friend who visited. This was easy for the vast majority of candidates who variously wrote *elle s'appelle Maria, il a 16 ans, elle est très gentille, il est grand, elle a les cheveux longs et noirs*. In the case of the latter example, there was some evidence to suggest that candidates still confuse the words *cheveux* and *chevaux*.

The second task was again comparatively easy for most candidates who were able to state where their friend lived: *elle habite à Paris, il habite au Canada, elle habite dans une petite maison, il habite un appartement avec sa famille*. Unfortunately, some are still a little uncertain about this verb: errors such as *elle j'habite en Afrique du sud* could not be rewarded, nor could statements which confused the verb *habiter* with *habiller*, e.g. *il habille dans une grande ville*.

Candidates needed to use a past tense for the third task to express how they reacted when they caught sight of their friend. This idea was expressed sometimes quite simply: *j'ai été très content* and sometimes in more complex language: *j'ai commencé à pleurer quand je l'ai revue, j'ai éclaté de rire, je l'ai embrassée*.

A past tense was also required for the fourth task, to describe how they spent the evening together. A wide range of activities were given, in various formats: *nous sommes allées au restaurant, j'ai bavardé avec mon ami pendant la soirée, on a joué au foot dans le parc*. This was a relatively easy task for those who knew how to form a verb in the perfect tense. Sadly, the evidence was that there were a number who were unsure about the formulation of this tense. Errors such as the following earned one of the available marks: *nous avons allé en ville, on pris un repas, je parlé avec ma copine*.

It was very pleasing to see how candidates managed the final task of explaining the importance of friends: they made it very clear that this was an issue which mattered to them and that mutual support was a significant thing in their lives. Frequently seen ideas included *parce qu'ils m'aident avec mon travail scolaire, car je peux parler avec eux quand j'ai un problème, mes amis sont comme mes frères et sœurs, ils me rendent heureux*.

Verbs

Candidates could and did answer this question using a range of common verbs. As has been pointed out, the perfect tense was not sufficiently under control for successful communication of the required messages and this had an impact on the marks for this element of the assessment. Some phonetically acceptable forms of verbs which did gain marks for Communication, e.g. *nous sommes allé, elle est arrive chez moi, nous avons fais la cuisine*, did not earn marks in this category. Whereas the verb *visiter* is accepted for use with places and people, there was some evidence to suggest that candidates occasionally use this verb where *aller* would be more appropriate: *nous avons visité un restaurant, j'ai visité le cinéma avec ma copine*; such uses will not be rewarded.

It is quite a challenging task to produce 18 different verb forms; many candidates succeeded in reaching the top bands but many others might have improved their scores if they had checked carefully their work. Accents and agreements on the past participles, the choice of auxiliary verb and spellings should be thoroughly reviewed.

Other Linguistic Features

Candidates whose rather basic language had brought them a good mark for Communication scored relatively poorly in this section if they had not been able to use some more complex sentence patterns. There were opportunities for using varied and complex sentence patterns: *ma copine qui s'appelle Nicole, quand j'ai vu mon ami, j'ai été très content, nous sommes allés au restaurant où nous avons mangé un steak*. It was pleasing to note the confidence with which some candidates were able to use object pronouns: *mon ami m'attendait à la porte, mon amie m'a donné un cadeau, je l'ai vu dans le salon, mes amis m'aident*.

Question 3(b) *Un problème de devoirs à l'école*

There were few candidates who chose this question. The majority understood the situation but there were some who thought that this was an invitation to write about school generally.

Communication

For the first task, candidates were required to give details of a problem that they had encountered with their homework. Some chose to complain about the quantity: *le professeur de chimie nous a donné trop de devoirs*, others commented on the difficulty: *je ne pouvais pas faire mes devoirs de mathématiques, c'était trop difficile*, whilst others identified a set of circumstances: *je n'ai pas fait mes devoirs d'histoire parce que j'étais fatigué, j'ai oublié mes devoirs de français à la maison, j'ai perdu mon cahier*. All such responses were awarded two marks.

The second task invited candidates to express their reaction to the situation; this idea needed to be expressed in a past tense. Reactions varied from *j'étais fâché, je suis sorti de la classe, j'ai pleuré, j'ai décidé de changer mes habitudes*.

The candidate's opinion of the importance of homework was required for the third task. This was found to be a little more difficult to express. Those who chose a simple idea were more successful: *les devoirs sont importants parce qu'on peut apprendre mieux, on peut préparer les examens, je voudrais réussir aux examens, les examens seront plus faciles*.

For the fourth task, candidates were invited to express a general comment about their own school. The vast majority gained marks here and even those who had misunderstood the question provided some relevant detail. References to any aspect of the school/of school life were rewarded: *c'est une très bonne école, les professeurs sont gentils, mon uniforme est confortable, le bâtiment est très moderne, on peut faire beaucoup de sport, on mange bien à la cantine*.

The two marks for the fifth task were awarded flexibly for any relevant additional detail given in response to the other tasks. The relative ease of the fourth task meant that most candidates gained the marks for further comments about school; again this favoured those who had not fully understood the question.

Verbs

Some candidates were successful here and confidently used a range of verbs which were essential for communicating the required messages: *je n'ai pas fait, je ne pouvais finir mes devoirs, il faut travailler, je veux étudier, je ne comprends pas très bien, j'ai appris*. Unfortunately, marks were lost when common words were spelt incorrectly: *j'aime étuder, je travaille dur, j'ai appris, je ne pouvait pas*. Candidates are advised to review their work carefully so that they do not lose marks for basic spelling errors.

Other Linguistic Features

The correct use of basic vocabulary is vital. Some candidates were uncertain about the gender and spelling of common nouns: *le devoir* rather than *les devoirs*, *les deviors* even though the correct version was given in the question, *professeur* was variously written as *proffesseur*, *proffeseur*, *professure*, *professuer*. School subjects were a problem for some: *chimie/chemie*, *histoire/historie*, *biologie/biology*, *dessin/dessin*, *anglais/anglias*. Some candidates did gain high marks as they demonstrated control of complex sentence patterns: *si je travaille dur, quand je quitterai l'école, parce que le professeur est sympa*, others used object pronouns: *le professeur nous a donné, il m'a expliqué, je lui ai dit*.

Question 3(c) Je suis arrivé(e) à l'aéroport avec ma famille pour partir en vacances. On a annoncé que l'avion ne pouvait pas partir à cause du mauvais temps...

This was a less popular choice. In some respects it was a little more demanding in that it placed a heavy emphasis on the consistent use of past tenses. There were some effective, if quite predictable, responses. There was generally a less imaginative approach to that adopted for the other two options. Some candidates would probably have fared better if they had attempted either **3(a)** or **3(b)**. Candidates would have gained more marks if they had used simple, familiar language rather than trying to express sophisticated ideas for which they lacked both the vocabulary and the grammatical structures. A small number of candidates misunderstood the question completely and wrote about a holiday.

Communication

For the first task, candidates needed to say how they spent the time at the airport whilst they waited for the weather to improve. The following responses were commonly seen: *j'ai écouté de la musique, nous avons mangé au restaurant, mon père a téléphoné à l'hôtel, ma mère a acheté du parfum*.

The second task, to explain what the airport staff did to help, was more challenging. However some candidates successfully explained: *les employés nous ont donné des boissons, ils nous ont montré des chaises confortables, ils ont organisé des chambres à l'hôtel à l'aéroport*. Candidates gained a further two marks for an additional detail either about what they did whilst waiting or what help the staff offered.

For the final two tasks, candidates were required to give reactions to events. For some, the response was a summative comment: *c'était ennuyeux, mon père s'est fâché, ma mère a pleuré, nous étions déçus*. Others expressed opinions about specific aspects of the day: *les employés étaient sympas, le repas au restaurant était délicieux*.

Verbs

The heavy reliance on past tenses put a strain on a few of the candidates who chose this option: *je allé, je fait, on attend*. There were also some errors which could have been corrected: *les employés étaiement, il y a avait un orage*.

Other Linguistic Features

Some common vocabulary was not properly used, e.g. *les vacances* was often rendered as a singular noun, its gender was not known. In fact, errors of gender were common: *à la restaurant, le salle d'attente*. There were some candidates who could construct more complex sentences which added interest to their accounts: *mon père qui était très fâché a téléphoné à son frère, nous sommes allés au restaurant où nous avons mangé un bon repas, quand j'ai entendu l'annonce, j'ai décidé d'écouter de la musique*. Accuracy and variety of language are both important and it was pleasing to note the confidence with which some candidates used object pronouns: *les employés nous ont donné de l'eau, un employé nous a réservé une chambre*.

FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/43

Writing

Key messages

- Candidates showed that they were well prepared to manage the demands of this component in its new format.
- In the longer questions, candidates respected the guidelines regarding length, producing approximately 80 words for **Question 2** and, for **Question 3**, between 130–140 words.
- The most successful answers focused clearly on the demands of the rubrics, were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades could use a range of verb tenses, sentence structures, and more complex linguistic patterns.
- Work was generally very well-presented and nearly always legible.

General comments

Work from the full ability range was seen. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1 provided candidates with the opportunity to establish a solid basis for further success. Candidates should always try to give a full set of eight items even though only five correct/acceptably spelt nouns receive a mark. If candidates cannot recall the word for any of the items pictured, they are free to add the word for a different item provided that it fits the context of the question.

Candidates are reminded that they should write one item per line. Candidates are also advised that they should not write their answers as labels beneath the pictures.

As had been indicated in the sample papers, there is no requirement to include a definite/indefinite article.

Question 2, which had previously featured in Paper 2: Reading and Directed Writing, was assessed by the same criteria as previously. Candidates appeared to be comfortable with this type of question; they wrote simple sentences to convey effectively the details required.

One mark is awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Up to ten marks are awarded across the question. There is no requirement to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks.

Candidates are also reminded that the maximum of ten marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit a task.

Sometimes a task will invite candidates to give a reason e.g., in this session, to say where they would like to live after their studies and why. Communication marks will only be awarded for reasons which are expressly requested in the question. Candidates are therefore advised to provide such information only when the task demands it.

There was some evidence to suggest that candidates had been too concerned about the recommended length of 80 words; some candidates, who indiscriminately crossed out details which would have earned them marks, missed out on full marks. The recommendation is a guideline: candidates will not lose marks if they write beyond that amount.

A small number of candidates misunderstood the rubric: they thought that they should choose one of the 4 tasks and write exclusively on the theme of the chosen task. Candidates must be advised that it is a requirement to respond to all of the tasks: there will normally be four or five linked tasks.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options, each of which reflected the styles of writing required in past sessions: a letter, an article, a story line to be continued. Assessment of this question has changed quite significantly. There are ten marks for Communication, two marks for each of the specified tasks making up the question. Language marks are awarded in two categories: Verbs, eight marks and Other Linguistic Features, twelve marks.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question. It was very clear that some candidates were drawn to **Question 3(a)** as it invited information about a party in a restaurant. Unfortunately some, despite their obvious ability to communicate in French, did not gain high marks because they did not address the specific tasks laid out in the question. Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary; it is a pity that candidates do not always take note of that to copy correctly from the rubric and also to note the gender of any significant nouns. In the very best work, the language flowed naturally.

Communication: in order to gain the two marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the five tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks.

As with **Question 2**, there was some evidence to suggest that candidates thought that they must only write 140 words. The recommendation is a guideline: it reflects the fact that the question can be answered effectively within that amount of words. A small number of candidates crossed out important pieces of information. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult if there is little time. Unfortunately some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of eight is awarded for 18 verbs; there were instances where candidates produced many more than that. Candidates must remember that each different form of a verb earns a tick. Repeated correct forms of a verb do not qualify for a tick. By way of illustration, when expressing their opinions about situations and events, many candidates used a variety of verbs: *je pense, je trouve, je crois* and when appropriate, used them in different tenses.

Other Linguistic Features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The strongest candidates will be able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses such as *quand, si, parce que, car, qui, que*, object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (e.g. *ne... jamais, ne... plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions such as *depuis, pendant, pour*, and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter. It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity, common prepositions.

Some candidates were rightly allowed to word process their responses. Centres should advise candidates who submit their work in this way to use a larger font and to use double spacing in order for examiners to be able to have room to annotate the work in the normal way.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 *Vous allez au musée des transports*

The demands of this question were straightforward: candidates were required to give the French for eight types of transport, represented in the pictures, which they might see at a museum.

There were a few who did not gain all five marks. There was however some insecurity, even among able candidates, in the spelling of certain quite common words: *bateau*, *avion*, *voiture*. It is worth remembering that candidates are free to offer any other items which fit the context and for which they know the relevant French word. The following were seen and rewarded: *tracteur*, *tramway*, *vélocycle* and there were others, as listed in the published mark scheme.

Question 2 *Ma maison*

Candidates were required to write about their house and life at home. Very many scored highly on this question. Marks were awarded for each piece of relevant information. There was no limit to the number of marks which candidates could gain for each part of the four parts of the question.

Candidates were expected to:

- (a) describe their home and mention who lives with them there
- (b) say what they do to help at home
- (c) say what they do not like to do around the house
- (d) say where they would like to live after their studies and why

The vast majority of candidates were able to gain some marks for the first task. Many gained a high proportion of their total for this part of the question for simple descriptions such as: *j'habite une grande maison*, *ma maison est moderne*, *il y a trois chambres*, *mon appartement est petit*, *mon appartement est en ville*, *j'habite avec mes parents et mon frère*, *il y a cinq personnes dans la maison*.

Generally, candidates were able to gain at least one mark for (b): *je range ma chambre*, *je fais la cuisine*, *je mets la table*, *je travaille dans le jardin*. Some attempted to say that they walked the dog but they did not know the correct pattern *je promène le chien*. There were a small number of candidates who did not understand or notice the word *aider*; they did not gain marks for simply describing how they relax at home.

For task (c), most candidates who understood what was required continued the theme of helping out around the house: *je n'aime pas faire la vaisselle*, *je déteste sortir la poubelle*, and gave an appropriate reason. Mostly reasons followed the following pattern: *c'est fatigant*, *c'est ennuyeux*. Marks were also awarded for references to other types of activities: *je n'aime pas faire mes devoirs*, *je déteste jouer avec mon petit frère*.

Candidates were often able to say where they would like to live for task (d). It is an established pattern for this question that candidates will need to use a future time frame. Marks were awarded for responses which used a phrase: *l'année prochaine*, *à l'avenir* or which used a future tense verb pattern: *je voudrais habiter*, *je vais vivre*, *j'habiterai*. When the name for a country is required, candidates should remember that the name should be the French word. Some stated *je voudrais rester chez moi parce que j'aime ma famille*; information such as this was fully rewarded. The reasons for moving to another country were varied: *parce que je voudrais habiter avec ma tante*, *parce qu'il fait plus chaud*, *car je voudrais étudier la médecine*.

Some candidates perhaps think that this question is easy and, as a result, neither think carefully enough about what they wish to say nor check their work afterwards. A small number could have gained full marks here; brevity, careless errors and omissions all cost marks.

Accuracy

Very many gained full marks. The writing does not need to be error free for the award of five marks. Candidates who use simple structures, who can correctly form verbs and who check their work can readily access the top bands.

Section 2

Question 3(a) *Une fête au restaurant*

This was by far the most popular choice.

Communication

For the first task, candidates were required to give details of when and with whom they ate at a restaurant. Marks were awarded for either the timing: *samedi dernier, pendant le week-end, le 28 octobre* or information about the people involved: *avec ma famille, avec mes amis*, provided that the verb was in acceptable form. Most candidates gained marks for statements such as *hier soir je suis allé au restaurant avec mes parents et ma sœur, vendredi dernier j'ai mangé au restaurant avec mes copains*. The verb *visiter* was occasionally used; candidates should be advised that this is not appropriate here and they should be discouraged from using it in such a context.

The second task required some information about the celebration. For many, this was a birthday: *c'était l'anniversaire de ma mère*; some celebrated the end of the school year: *nous avons fêté la fin de l'année scolaire*. Unfortunately, a few omitted to give this piece of information, a few simply added the detail to the first task using a phrase such as *pour l'anniversaire de mon amie Rebecca*. It is important to remember that a verb must be used in order to gain both of the marks available for a task.

Many candidates gave additional details about what each person chose for their meal in response to the third task. Marks were awarded for any comment about the meal, whether general or individual, whether about the food, the service or the atmosphere. Most were complimentary: *tout le monde a aimé le dessert, c'était très bon, Marc a pensé que le steak était excellent*. A few offered negative comments: *la viande n'était pas bonne, le garçon était impoli, il y avait beaucoup de bruit*.

The majority of candidates were able to say whether they preferred eating at home or at a restaurant, however, the marks for this task were awarded to the reason for the choice. Many preferred to eat at home: *parce que ma mère cuisine bien, car j'aime faire la cuisine, parce que c'est moins cher, parce que c'est plus facile, car c'est moins bruyant*. Those who preferred to eat out suggested: *parce qu'il y a moins de travail, car il y a plus de choix*.

The final set of two marks was awarded for any additional piece of information given for tasks 3 and 4.

Verbs

Candidates could answer this question effectively using a series of commonly known verbs: *aller, manger, boire, prendre, choisir, faire, penser* and the question provided two more: *fêter* and *apprécier*. It was a little disappointing to note that some candidates lost marks for such common errors as omitting the accent on the past participle of *-er* verbs and forgetting agreements: *nous sommes allé_, mon amie Claire est venu_ au restaurant avec moi*.

Other Linguistic Features

There was evidence of some sophisticated language. Candidates whose rather basic language had brought them a good mark for Communication scored relatively poorly in this section if they had not been able to use more complex sentence patterns. There were some frequent errors in the use of the partitive article: *du poulet, de la glace, des carottes*, and in the agreements of adjectives: *ma meilleur_ amie, ma petit_ sœur, des glaces délicieux_*. There was some evidence also of insecurity in the use of prepositions: *je suis allé_ à le restaurant, chez ma maison*. Candidates do need to remember that the basic vocabulary which carries the essential messages of the response needs to be secure for the award of marks from the topmost bands.

Question 3(b) *Vous avez aidé un homme âgé/une femme âgée.*

A small number of candidates responded to this option.

Communication

Candidates successfully responded to the first task, often identifying the person by name. There were many other details offered including: *elle habite près de chez moi, il habite tout seul, elle a 80 ans, il est très vieux*, all of which met the criteria for two marks.

For the second task, candidates needed to use a past tense in order to gain the two available marks. One mark was awarded for information in the present tense. Candidates were generous with their time, some did a number of things to help: *j'ai parlé avec lui/elle, je suis allé au supermarché et j'ai acheté des fruits et des légumes, je suis allé au parc avec lui/elle*. Those who responded simply, using familiar language, managed this task well.

The reaction of the elderly person to the help was required in the third task. Most often candidates offered the information using the simplest structure: *elle était contente, il était heureux*, however there was evidence that some candidates could use more sophisticated patterns: *il/elle m'a remercié, il/elle m'a dit merci*.

For the fourth task, candidates needed to explain why they thought it was/was not important to help elderly people. The two marks were awarded for the reason. Those who attempted this option clearly considered it essential to give help and support: *un jour nous serons vieux aussi, les personnes âgées habitent souvent seules, si elles sont malades, elles ne peuvent pas sortir, quelquefois ils n'ont pas de famille*.

The two marks for the fifth task were awarded to any additional detail given in response to task 2, task 3 or task 4. Most candidates understood the need to write more than the bare minimum and they readily gained the marks.

Verbs

Some frequently used common verbs, although sufficiently accurate for the award of Communication marks, were not accurate enough for reward in this category. Notable amongst these were *aider, travailler, faire, aller, partir* in the case of the latter two largely because of the use of the wrong auxiliary. Careful checking as ever is important, marks were lost for trivial errors e.g. *j'ai visté* with regard to this particular verb, it is often wrongly used to express the idea of going somewhere e.g. *j'ai visité le cinéma*; also, it is becoming increasingly rare to see candidates use the more correct *rendre visite à ...* when referring to visiting a person. It was pleasing to see that some knew and were able to use correctly the verb *s'occuper*.

Other Linguistic Features

There was plenty of opportunity to use complex sentence patterns as the candidates needed to switch between time frames. There was some frequent use of *quand* clauses, although the appropriate sequence of tense was not always securely known. *Après* was often used but the absence of *que* rendered the structure faulty. There was a little inconsistency in the control of adjectival agreement: this was highlighted in the use of *content/contente* and *heureux/heureuse* in the third task.

Question 3(c) *Samedi dernier, je suis parti(e) en ville pour rencontrer mon ami(e). En route, j'ai reçu un texto de mon ami(e) qui était en retard...*

A small number of candidates chose this option. In some respects, it was a little more demanding in that it placed a heavy emphasis on the consistent use of past tenses.

Communication

The first task required candidates to explain why their friend was late. Various details were given: *il/elle était malade, il/elle avait oublié son argent, il/elle avait râté le bus, il y avait beaucoup de circulation.*

Candidates were invited to say where they met up in town for the second task: many lost marks here because they did not know well enough the verb *rencontrer*. There were frequent errors: *j'ai recontré mon ami, nous nous sommes rencontrés* and there was also some confusion with the verb *raconter*. A few knew another, and perhaps easier, way of expressing this idea: *j'ai retrouvé mon amie à la gare, nous nous sommes retrouvés au parc.*

Candidates managed the third task rather more successfully. It was well within the capacities of the majority of candidates to say how they spent time together: *nous sommes allés à la piscine, on a fait du shopping, j'ai mangé au restaurant avec mon ami.*

For the final two tasks, candidates were required to give their reactions to events. For some, the response was a summative comment: *c'était amusant, j'ai passé une journée agréable, nous nous sommes amusés ensemble.* Others expressed opinions about specific aspects of the day: *je n'étais pas content(e) car mon ami était en retard, le repas était délicieux, nous avons beaucoup aimé le film.*

Verbs

The heavy reliance on the past tenses put a strain on a few of the candidates who chose this option: *je attendu, je fait, nous mange.* There were some errors which could have been corrected: *ils étaiant, il y a avait.* As already mentioned, there was insecurity/confusion over the verb *rencontrer* which variously appeared as *recontrer, rencontrer* and even *raconter*. Those choosing this option should be aware that a command of the various past tenses is vital for success.

Other Linguistic Features

The mark scheme outlines the features which are rewarded in this category. There was plenty of opportunity for candidates to move the narrative on by using conjunctions: *quand, où, après que*, or by using adverbial and prepositional phrases: *premièrement, plus tard, ensuite, à deux heures.* High marks will be gained if candidates can add interest by varying the sentence patterns they use; however, as has been mentioned for the other options, candidates must demonstrate that they can accurately spell, they know the gender of common nouns, they place adjectives and make them agree appropriately, if they wish to achieve marks above the lower bands.