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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/11
Listening

General comments

This Paper was found to be accessible to candidates and to be of a similar level of difficulty to the June 2009 Paper. Candidates are instructed to attempt all three sections of the test. This was well understood and there were very few candidates who did not go on to attempt ***Section 3***, the last and most difficult section of the Paper. The French heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and the emphasis of the questions moved from targeting candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces to requiring them to identify opinions and understand and identify explanations within narrated accounts in different tenses.

The candidature increased yet again this year and a full range of performance was seen by Examiners. Many candidates were able to score high marks, showing very good levels of attainment in both specific and general comprehension tasks. It was gratifying to see that candidates from all parts of the globe found the topics and themes of the exercises accessible and well within their knowledge.

Generally, candidates had been well prepared in Centres and were aware of the demands of the examination, but candidates should be reminded to read all the instructions with care and to tick the specified number of boxes.

New Centres should note that where questions require written responses in French, these responses do not need to be written in the form of full sentences. Questions are set in such a way as to make brief answers possible. This Paper is a test of comprehension and inaccuracies are tolerated, provided that the message is clear. If the answers sound and read like French, they will be accepted. However, where candidates add extra information, which distorts an otherwise valid answer, invalidates it or places the Examiner in the position of having to pick out the correct answer from amongst the information given, the mark cannot be awarded. Centres should remind candidates to use the pauses on the recordings to read the questions carefully and not to add extra details to answers which may distort an otherwise correct response. Material which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider should be clearly crossed out. Candidates should be told not to write first attempts in pencil and then overwrite their answers in pen as this can make responses very difficult to read. As last year, Examiners noted that some candidates, on multiple choice objective questions requiring one box to be ticked, had ticked an answer in pencil and then made a further choice of answer in ink, but had not indicated which of these answers they wished the Examiner to consider. Candidates must be warned not to do this: if a candidate makes two choices whether in pencil or ink, the mark **cannot** be awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This starter exercise tested the comprehension of very short extracts of a factual nature and candidates generally did very well. Nearly all candidates were successful on **Question 2** and **Question 6**. **Question 7** was not always correctly answered, with a few candidates opting for A instead of the correct D (*il va faire un temps chaud et ensoleillé*). The question least well done on this exercise was **Question 8**: *chauffage* was not very well known and the incorrect option most frequently chosen was C. Otherwise there was no discernible pattern to incorrect answers on this exercise.

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Exercise 2 Questions 9-16

This exercise featured a telephone conversation on the subject of hiring a holiday house. Questions tested months, numbers, location, facilities, leisure activities. Several of the questions could be answered by choosing the correct answer from three visual multiple choice options. Although many candidates were awarded the mark for **Question 9**, all Examiners noted how poorly *juillet* was spelt. It was often rendered in an acceptable version such as *juilet, jullet, julliet* in which case it was awarded the mark, but answers such as *juli, julio, july and jueuillet* were judged not to meet the look-alike/sound-alike test and were refused. **Questions 10**, **11**, **12**, **14** and **15** were usually well answered. On **Question 13**, *arbre* was not always well known by candidates. The final question however proved to be the most difficult on the exercise and many incorrect numbers were given, eg 42 or 4200. Numbers continue to cause some problems at this level and are well worth emphasising in revision programmes.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 17

Candidates were familiar with the requirements of this exercise, which featured four young people talking about clubs and organisations which interested them, and on the whole coped well with the questions. Appreciable numbers of candidates scored high marks on this exercise. The failure to select **b** and in particular **j** were the commonest errors; **k** was frequently chosen instead of **j**.

Exercise 2 Questions 18-22

This exercise proved very accessible to candidates. They heard a short conversation with Sergio, the teenage son of a French parent living in Colombia, who talked about his life and daily routine and his contact with France. For the first part of the exercise, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of 5 statements. The words which candidates needed to listen for and write down were lexically frequent items, such as *sœur* on **Question 18**, which most candidates handled well. **Questions 19** and **20** were also well answered with most candidates correctly providing *française* and *histoire*, although on **Question 20** some gave *espagnol.* **Question 21** was the most demanding on the exercise, but was still well attempted by many: *neige* or *montagne* were both accepted; *nage* however was refused. On the last question, weaker candidates identified the parents rather than the grandparents.

Exercise 2 Questions 23-27

Candidates went on to hear the second part of the interview. The second part of the exercise was more demanding as candidates were required to provide short answers in French to questions in French. Surprisingly, perhaps, *en ville* was not well identified on **Question 23**: this may be explained by candidates misinterpreting the interrogative adverb *où?* as 'who?'. On **Question 24**, *violence* was normally picked out without too much difficulty, but some candidates conveyed the incorrect concept by stating that Sergio's parents were violent. On **Question 25**, Examiners were looking for the concept of playing video games or watching films. However, some candidates invalidated an otherwise correct answer by including extra incorrect information such as going to the cinema. On **Question 26**, a surprising number found it difficult to spell *poulet* and some invalidated their answers by including extra food items not heard on the recording such as *pommes.* The last question was usually well answered: working in tourism/in a hotel/in France or attending the *école hôtelière* were all accepted, but Examiners did not accept the idea of working in a tourist office.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 28-33

This multiple choice exercise was answered well by candidates and was deemed to be comparable in terms of difficulty with previous examinations. Candidates heard an interview with a young French girl, Maëlle who had spent time in Canada. She talked about where she had stayed, her life in a Canadian school and her feelings on her stay. In general, candidates fared well on this exercise, usually finding the last three questions more accessible than the first three. **Question 30** proved to be the most demanding question. There was no discernible pattern of incorrect answers on this exercise.

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Exercise 2 Questions 34-42

As intended, this final exercise proved to be the most demanding on the Paper. Although there were questions which afforded even weaker candidates the opportunity to score one or two marks, some questions in the latter part of the exercise proved suitably demanding for the most able candidates. Candidates heard an interview with a young French chef, Thierry, who talked about his career and how he felt about his profession. This exercise required candidates to follow sequences of events in a lengthier account. They needed to be able to recognise feelings and identify explanations of feelings and opinions.

Question 34 was a good test for the better candidates, the weaker ones commonly offering *formation* or *un restaurant connu à la montagne.* Some clearly misunderstood *beaucoup appris* and attempted to transliterate resulting in answers such as *papris*. Omission of *par jour* on **Question 35** was common and reference to 'ten hours' alone was not enough to gain the mark. However, many candidates gained the mark with an acceptable rendering of *longues heures.* Weaker candidates misheard *silence* in the phrase *si longues heures.* Both parts of **Question 36** were quite well answered with many candidates successfully identifying *plats différents* and *cuisine équilibrée.* Most candidates picked out *passion* on **Question 37**, although some weaker candidates misheard it as *patience.* On **Question 38**, Examiners were looking for the concept that Thierry opened up his own restaurant or worked in his own restaurant, but some candidates invalidated a correct answer by adding extra details which distorted, eg incorrect information about the location of the restaurant. The material for **Question 39** was reasonably well understood by candidates, and most grasped that Thierry had to sacrifice his personal/family life or that he had less time for his family. Attempts to render *sacrifier* were usually successful. The final three questions were suitably demanding. Weaker candidates typically confused the material for answering these questions and many such candidates gave the answer for **Question 40** in **Question 41**. On **Question 40** the required concepts were *voyager* or *trouver du travail facilement.* Those who answered *trouver le travail facile* were not awarded the mark. On the last two questions candidates did need to include an appropriate verb to gain the mark. On **Question 41**, answers such as *le sens de l'organisation* were deemed to be incomplete. On the final and perhaps the most demanding question only the best candidates were able to convey the required concept: in order to invent or create more interesting menus or in order to surprise the customers.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Listening

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/21
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

In general, candidates seem to have coped well with this paper – there were no indications that they had insufficient time to complete it, and presentation and legibility were generally good. Candidates had been well-prepared to cope with the type of questions and most made some attempt at all the exercises in all three sections, with the vast majority scoring well.

From this session, this paper is marked on line, so it is particularly important that candidates observe the rubrics about how and where they should answer questions: for example, in the first exercise of *Section 3* they must tick one of the *Vrai/Faux* boxes – where there is no tick in either box, the mark cannot be awarded. Where they have decided that the answer is *Faux*, they must write their correction on the line below. In all parts of the paper, where candidates are undecided about an answer and make more than one attempt at it, they must make it clear which is to be taken as their final decision, or no mark can be awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

This exercise was generally well done, though **Question 1**, which required candidates to identify the correct picture for *Gare SNCF*, was sometimes given as B (picture of a taxi rank), and **Question 3** as A, where candidates seemed to be confusing *ananas* and *banane.*

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Many candidates scored full marks on this exercise which requires them to match a place to the activity in the speech bubble. Answers to **Questions 8** and **9** were sometimes reversed, and some candidates offered C (*le parking*) as their answer for **Question 9** (*je dois faire des courses*).

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

Here, candidates had to read a short text and decide on their answers to five multiple choice questions. The first two questions caused very few problems, but answers to **Question 14** showed that candidates had allowed their eyes to stray to *ce soir* in the text, rather than *samedi soir* at the end of the previous paragraph. For **Question 15**, the most common wrong answer was B, instead of C.

Exercise 4 Question 16

For this piece of writing, there were three marks available for communication and two for language: candidates were asked to leave a message saying **(a)** where they were going, **(b)** what they were going to buy, and **(c)** what time they would be back. One of the simplest possibilities was: *je vais au marché, je vais acheter/pour acheter des fleurs, et je rentre à 12h*. Examiners were prepared to accept any food shop instead of *le marché*, a bouquet, or the name of any flower, and the time given in either figures or words. Most candidates managed all three marks for communication and managed at least two accurate verbs – *je vais* + infinitive was well-used – and many produced much more than the basic requirement. There were some candidates who scored all three marks for being able to communicate the three tasks, but were unable to produce correct verbs to score the marks for appropriateness of language. Past tenses were accepted as possible for the first two tasks, but not for the last, where there had to be some idea that the return was at a moment in the future. The spellings of *marché* were many and various, and few could manage *j'achète*

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entirely correctly. Many attempted to use the future tense of *rentrer* but not always successfully, and while expressing the time in figures was straightforward, *douze* was less well-known.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-25

For this exercise, candidates had a longer piece of text to read. Questions were looking for precise information, which could sometimes be given in one or two words, but credit was given for longer sections copied from the text, provided that they included the correct answer and did not contain any additional elements which contradicted it. Incorrect use of pronouns and possessive adjectives was tolerated so long as candidates could show that they had understood what was needed. Many candidates scored very high marks, in between eight and ten, and no question seemed to prove too challenging. The majority of candidates realised why Jamel was writing, for **Question 17,** and what his parents had received, for **Question 18**, but answers to **Question 19** showed that some candidates thought it was the *professeur* who was angry – perhaps *colère* was not well known. **Question 20** needed two ideas to be mentioned – firstly that Jamel's work was poor/could be better, and secondly that he needed to work harder. Most candidates managed to score a mark for at least one of these ideas. **Questions 21** and **22** were relatively straightforward, though for **Question 23** some candidates found it difficult to express the idea that the tickets had been bought a month ago, and there was some confusion between *mois* and *moins*. The addition of *ce soir* sometimes invalidated an otherwise correct answer. Most candidates answered the last two questions correctly.

Exercise 2 Question 26

Almost all candidates tried their hand at this: pocket money is a subject with which most candidates were familiar, and all ways of obtaining it were given credit, whether this was money given by parents or other people, or money earned in some way. Candidates were asked to say for **(a)** who gave them the money, and when, for **(b)** what they did with the money, and for **(c)** what they would like to do if they had a lot of money. There was a lot of repetition from the rubric – *je recevez sans doute de l'argent de poche,* versions such as *pouche,* and confusion over the use/meaning of *donner* – and weaker candidates tended to rely heavily on lists. It was sometimes difficult to tell whether candidates were making points for **(b)** or **(c)**, as it was not always clear from the tense chosen, but very few candidates failed to mention something from each category, and many were able to cover all aspects very fully. Many candidates were planning extensive travels, houses by the beach, private planes, and even more said they would give money to charities important to them – a laudable ambition! Extra credit was given where candidates were able to explain why they chose to spend their money in a particular way. Some struggled hard to express themselves in appropriate/correct verbs and tenses, but others were able to express themselves fluently and accurately, showing excellent control of the language.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 27-32

In this section, Examiners are looking not just for evidence that candidates are able to locate the correct information in the passage but for signs of genuine comprehension. Having read the text, candidates have to make up their minds which of the given statements are *Vrai* and which are *Faux*, and then go on to correct the false ones in the style of the example given – Examiners do not accept merely the negative version of the original statement for the award of a mark. There is no need to provide a sentence where candidates decide that the statement is true. In this section, it is still sometimes possible to lift answers from the text, but candidates need to be very precise in what they choose for their answer as additional material copied indiscriminately may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. It is therefore important that candidates are trained to answer succinctly as the longer the answer the higher the risk of including extra material and invalidating an otherwise correct answer.

Many candidates scored very well for correctly identifying *Vrai/Faux* statements, but not all were as successful with their corrections. **Question 27** could be answered by *il étudie avec succès dans une école de commerce,* but a number of candidates chose to include the previous part of the sentence in their answer as well, and the addition of *cependant* invalidated an otherwise correct answer. **Question 30** could be simply corrected with *elle/Hélène hésite* and it was possible to correct **Question 31** either by explaining that it was Hélène who taught the children to read, or that Michel taught them about the sea, the wind, and navigation. Some chose incorrectly that *Hélène raconte à ses enfants l'histoire des pays qu'ils visitent.*

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Question 32 could be corrected either by a reference to the limited space available on a boat, to the fact that initially there were quarrels, or to the fact that it took the family time to get used to the conditions.

Exercise 2 Questions 33-40

In this, the very last exercise of the paper, Examiners once again wanted to see evidence of genuine comprehension of the text and questions. Candidates were able to demonstrate their understanding by carefully selecting the appropriate information from the text and by framing their answer in such a way as to answer the question set. For **Question 33**, the information needed was that Salima's father had work in Marseilles, but lifting the whole sentence, including ...*où...* invalidated the answer. There were three possible answers for **Question 34** – that Salima's father fell ill, lost his job, and was unable to pay the rent, and most candidates were able to identify two of them and score the available marks. **Question 35** was also straightforward – Salima had abandoned her studies in order to help her mother *élever ses frères et sœurs,* but not *lever* – and not in order to become *femme de ménage dans un hospital*. For **Question 36**, the answer needed was not that Mikhove thought her situation was *difficile*, but that her situation did not change his feelings in any way. Some mistakenly thought the answer was that Mikhove's parents did not approve. **Question 37** was where candidates struggled with manipulation of the language – they needed to be able to express the idea that Salima was happy because she had passed (*réussi*) her examination and because she was married to Mikhove/was about to give birth to her son. **Question 38** needed just an answer of *3 ans/années* for a mark – however, a fair number of candidates fixed on *l'Institut d'Études* Politiques in the text and incorrectly offered *les candidats sont nombreux.* The last two questions were answered correctly by many candidates, who successfully gave *son intelligence* and *la détermination* – candidates who looked for the simplest, most straightforward answers scored better here than those opting for lengthier lifting of material from the text.

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Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

In general, candidates seem to have coped well with this paper – there were no indications that they had insufficient time to complete it, and presentation and legibility were generally good. Candidates had been well-prepared to cope with the type of questions and most made some attempt at all the exercises in all three sections, with the vast majority scoring well.

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Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Questions 1, **2** and **4** were usually well-answered, but **Question 3** was not always successful. Candidates did not seem familiar with *côtelette d'agneau* and chose either A or B instead of C. **Question 5** also posed some problems as the word *patinoire* was not widely known, resulting in many candidates choosing D.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise, which required candidates to match a place to the activity in the speech bubble, was very successful with the vast majority of candidates scoring the five marks available. Candidates seemed very secure in their understanding of places to go to in case of problems.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

Here, candidates had to read a short text and decide on their answers for five multiple choice questions. Most candidates scored at least four marks for the exercise. The most common wrong answers were A instead of B for **Question 13** and B instead of A for **Question 14**.

Exercise 4 Question 16

For this piece of writing, there were three marks available for communication and two for language: candidates were asked to leave a message saying **(a)** where they were going, **(b)** with whom they were going, and **(c)** at what time the film started. Many candidates answered **(a)** and **(b)** in the same sentence, which was perfectly acceptable. One of the simplest possibilities was: *je vais au cinéma avec une amie, et le film commence à 14h*. For **(a)** *aller au cinéma* and *regarder un film* were both allowed. For **(b)** any person (or persons) was credited e.g. *avec* + name, *avec mon amie/avec mon père, avec mes copains.* For **(c)** while expressing the time in figures was straightforward, *douze* was sometimes given by those attempting *deux.*

Most candidates managed all three marks for communication and managed at least two accurate verbs – *je vais* + infinitive was well-used – and many produced much more than the basic requirement. There were some candidates who scored all three marks for being able to communicate the three tasks, but were unable

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to produce correct verbs to score the marks for appropriateness of language. Past tenses were accepted as possible for the first two tasks, but not for the last task, where there had to be some idea that the film was at a moment in the future. Candidates who offered *elle/qui s'appelle...* to refer to the person with whom they went to the cinema could be credited with a language mark.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-24

For this exercise, candidates had a longer piece of text to read. Questions were looking for precise information, which could sometimes be given in one or two words, but credit was given for longer sections copied from the text, provided that they included the correct answer and did not contain any additional elements which contradicted it. Incorrect use of pronouns and possessive adjectives was tolerated so long as candidates could show that they had understood what was needed. Many candidates scored very high marks, in between eight and ten marks, and no question seemed to prove too challenging.

Many candidates were able to say what Hélène's thoughts were at the prospect of this holiday, for **Question 18**, how long Hélène had been on holiday, **for Question 19**, why she found it easy to make friends, for **Question 20**, give her views of the organisers, for **Question 21(i)** and **(ii)**, and say what she and the rest of the group did in the evening, for **Question 24(i)** and **(ii)**. For **Question 17**, the key piece of information to explain why Hélène didn't have time to write was *activités* To say Hélène was 'doing a lot' or 'on holiday/at holiday camp' was not quite enough. Answers to **Questions 22** and **23** (why they went to the beach and how they went to the beach) were sometimes inverted. It was not clear whether this was due to a problem with understanding *pourquoi/comment* or a careless lapse. For **Question 22** the reason for the outing to the beach was to have a picnic and not 'because no-one goes there' as some candidates thought

Exercise 2 Question 25

Only a very small number of candidates failed to attempt this question, and a full range of marks was scored, with many candidates scoring full marks. Candidates were expected to write about a teacher they admired. They had to say **(a)** how long they had known the teacher and what subject(s) s/he taught, **(b)** give a description of the teacher, **(c)** explain why they thought s/he was a good teacher and **(d)** say whether or not they would like to become a teacher themselves and give reasons for their decision. Usually, candidates gained many communication points for **(b)**. However, to be awarded the 10 marks available for communication, candidates need to cover all of four of the tasks.

For **(a)** some candidates tried to be adventurous with the subjects taught but did not always know the correct French for them and then resorted to using the English equivalent (eg physics/economics). The spelling of chemistry seemed to cause a few problems and was often rendered as *chemie* or in some cases *chemise*. Many were able to express effectively the amount of time they had known the teacher, even though some could not cope with the first person singular or the correct object pronoun. For **(b)** many candidates gave a full description of the teacher – physical appearance, clothes, likes/dislikes as well as nationality. However, there was much confusion as to the use of *être* or *avoir* or the correct spelling for *cheveux.* Position and agreement of adjectives were a bit erratic at times. For **(c)** candidates offered many reasons to justify their admiration for their teacher, e.g. the help they received, the improvements they had made in the subject, the interesting lessons and the lack of homework. For **(d)**, candidates' opinions were divided as to whether they would contemplate teaching as a future career. Whilst many would be happy to teach as they liked children and would like to help them learn, many felt it was not a job for them as they did not have the patience and did not fancy the long hours or the poor pay. There was confusion amongst some weaker candidates who misunderstood task **(d)** and wrote about being taught by the same teacher in the future or whether they would like to be like him/her. As far as marks for language were concerned, some struggled hard to express themselves using appropriate/correct verbs and tenses, but others were able to express themselves fluently and accurately, showing excellent control of the language

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

In this section, Examiners are looking not just for evidence that candidates are able to locate the correct information in the passage but for signs of genuine comprehension. Having read the text, candidates have to make up their minds which of the given statements are *Vrai* and which are *Faux*, and then go on to correct the false ones in the style of the example given. Examiners do not accept merely the negative version of the

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original statement for the award of a mark. There is no need to provide a sentence where candidates decide that the statement is true. In this section, it is still sometimes possible to lift answers from the text, but candidates need to be very precise in what they choose for their answer, as additional material copied indiscriminately may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. It is therefore important that candidates are trained to answer succinctly as the longer the answer the higher the risk of including extra material and invalidating an otherwise correct answer.

Many candidates scored very well for correctly identifying *Vrai/Faux* statements, but not all were as successful with their corrections. For **Question 26** the mark was awarded for *elle faisait l'école d'infirmière*, but the inclusion of *alors qu'* at the beginning was judged to invalidate (the resulting sentence was meaningless). Similarly, **for Question 27**, *Fabienne ne veut absolument pas abandonner ses études d'infirmière* could be lifted from the text and scored the mark. However, answers which included *mais* at the beginning could not be rewarded. For **Question 29,** *c'était un choc* was sufficient to score the mark for the correction. However a number of candidates thought that Fabienne was already aware of conditions before her arrival in the refugee camp and ticked *Vrai*. **Question 30** was well answered by candidates, with answers along the lines of *elle reste quatre ans dans le camp* scoring the mark.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-40

In this, the very last exercise of the paper, Examiners once again wanted to see evidence of genuine comprehension of the text and questions. Candidates were able to demonstrate their understanding by carefully selecting the appropriate information from the text and by framing their answer in such a way as to answer the question set. Weaker candidates tended to write long answers which included extra material making it impossible for the Examiner to tell whether or not they had understood. Some weaker candidates seemed to lose track of the questions in relation to the text as their answers were often out of step with the questions.

Question 32 caused some unexpected problems as candidates seemed not to understand *métier* and often answered *son italie natale*. *Cuisinier* was sufficient to score the mark. For **Question 33**, the information Examiners were looking for was that at first Marcello found it difficult to gain acceptance. A few candidates thought it was Marcello's restaurant that the villagers did not accept, which did not score. **Question 34** required two answers: Marcello's restaurant is popular because Marcello is *sympathique* and because the food is good. For *il est sympathique* to score it had to be clear this statement referred to Marcello. *Sa cuisine est si bonne que* was not rewarded as the *que* on the end was judged to render the sentence meaningless. **Questions 35**, **36**, **37** and **38** were usually successfully answered with many candidates scoring the four marks available for saying that Marcello liked cycling when he wasn't cooking, that he prepared a picnic for the end of the cycle rides he organised, that his death was a shock to the villagers and that Alain created *Pique-nique Marcello* in memory of Marcello/to celebrate the anniversary of his death. **Question 39** proved more challenging for the majority of candidates. For the mark to be awarded it needed to be clear that it was Marcello who taught Alain to make the dish but many were not able to meaningfully adapt the object pronoun to its third person form. Examiners accepted a variety of attempts, eg c*'est Marcello qui il/le/l'a appris à le faire,* but *s'a appris* made the answer ambiguous and could not be credited. For **Question 40**, many candidates were able to successfully convey that the money raised from the picnics was used to provide cooking lessons.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/03
Speaking

General comments

This Paper was common to all candidates, whether they had followed a Core Curriculum or an Extended Curriculum course. The full range of marks was available to all candidates and, as in previous years, a wide range of performance was heard by Moderators.

Overall, the standard of work produced by candidates was very similar to that produced last year, with many examples of very good work from candidates of all abilities. The best work came from Centres in which it was clear that oral work had been practised on a **regular** basis and had been a central learning activity. In most Centres, conduct of the Speaking test was correct and professional: examining was sympathetic to candidates and questioning pitched sensibly, according to the ability of the candidates. It was clear that candidates in these Centres had been prepared appropriately and the test gave them the chance to show they could communicate in everyday situations and discuss a **good** variety of topics. The best examining gave candidates the opportunity to work in a variety of tenses in both conversation sections and invited candidates to respond in a **spontaneous** way.

Although the majority of Centres carried out their Speaking tests in a highly professional way there were also Centres where candidates were disadvantaged by poor examining technique. In such cases, Examiners were often unfamiliar with the test requirements and the mark scheme. It is particularly important that Examiners prepare Role plays carefully, that they keep to the 'script' provided in the Teachers' Notes Booklet and give candidates the opportunity to attempt all the stipulated tasks and to work for the marks. Examiners sometimes pre-empted candidates by completing the tasks for them, thus denying them the opportunity to score the available marks. Examiners need to be particularly careful not to offer candidates vocabulary items or options in the Role plays, unless these appear in the Teachers' Notes booklet. In some cases, conversation sections were either brief or omitted, affecting candidates' scores: marks cannot be awarded for missing sections of the examination. Centres are reminded that, in the conversation sections, marks of more than 6 cannot be awarded for language unless the candidate shows s/he is able to convey past and future meaning. It is therefore crucial that Examiners ask questions to elicit a range of tenses. Centres are advised to seek clarification from CIE if they are uncertain about any part of the instructions.

Administration

Pleasingly, Moderators reported a decline in the number of clerical errors from Centres this year. However, although the majority of Centres carried out clerical work efficiently there were still a number of Centres which submitted paperwork containing clerical errors – often the worst offenders were Centres with small numbers of candidates. Centres are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the addition of each candidate's marks on the Working Mark Sheet (WMS) is correct and that each candidate's Total Mark is transferred correctly from the Working Mark Sheet to the Computer-printed Mark Sheet (MS1) or CAMEO. Centres submitting MS1 Mark Sheets must check that for each candidate the lozenges are correctly shaded **and** the mark is entered in digits in the appropriate column. **It is extremely important that all clerical work is checked carefully by the Centre before marks and samples for Moderation are submitted to CIE.**

Completion of the Cover Sheet for Moderation Sample

This year saw the introduction of the Cover Sheet for Moderation Sample. This checklist is provided in the Teachers' Notes booklet and its purpose is to help Centres to submit the correct sample and accompanying paperwork for external moderation by CIE. A copy of the Cover Sheet for Moderation Sample **must** be completed by the Centre and enclosed with the moderation documentation and recorded sample to be despatched to CIE. The majority of Centres complied with this new procedure but some were either not aware of the new requirement or ignored it. Centres are reminded that in future sessions the cover sheet **must be completed and submitted**. (Please see page 21 of the June 2010 Teachers' Notes booklet for an example of the cover sheet.)

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Sample size and recordings

Centres usually complied with the instructions on sample size and most Centres with 6 or more candidates sent the required sample of six candidates spread evenly across their full range of performance. Some Centres sent in the work of all their candidates: Centres are reminded that it is their responsibility to select an appropriate sample in accordance with CIE's instructions. **Centres are also reminded that the size of the recorded sample required for external moderation will change in 2011 and that they should consult the 2011 0520 French syllabus (available on the CIE website) for further information**.

Moderators commented this year that many recordings were now being made using digital technology. This was most welcome as the quality of such recordings was usually very good. Centres choosing to record digitally are required to save the recording for each candidate individually and to save each file as .mp3 in order that it can be accessed by the Moderator. Whichever method of recording is used, all recording equipment should be tested well before the examination and an examination room which is quiet and free from echo should be chosen. If external microphones are used, they should be placed to favour the candidate rather than the Examiner. Before cassettes/CDs are despatched, spot checks must be made to ensure that every candidate is clearly audible and if for any reason the cassette/CD has failed to record or there are problems with audibility, the Centre must contact CIE Customer Services immediately to seek advice. As stated in the Handbook for Centres, CIE will not issue a mark for a Speaking test component unless external moderation has taken place. It is essential that CDs/cassettes and boxes are clearly labelled and that the Examiner, not the candidate, identifies each candidate on the recording.

Centres using more than one Examiner

Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner to conduct and assess the Speaking Tests for their candidates are reminded that they must seek permission to do so from CIE prior to each examination session. Where permission to use more than one Examiner is granted it will be on the understanding that internal standardisation/moderation is undertaken in the Centre to ensure that the conduct and assessment of the Speaking test is consistent for all candidates irrespective of which Examiner conducted and assessed their examination. The Centre's recorded sample should include the work of each Examiner and a separate Working Mark Sheet should be enclosed for each Examiner. Details of the Centre's internal standardisation/moderation procedures must be enclosed with the materials for external moderation.

Duration of Speaking tests / Missing elements

Most Centres adhered well to timings and conducted the Speaking test very efficiently. However, as last year, some Centres submitted tests with very short conversation sections. Each of the 2 conversation sections must last approximately 5 minutes. Where they are shorter than this, candidates do not have the opportunity to show what they can do and marks will be affected accordingly. There were, pleasingly, only very few instances of over-long tests.

Regrettably, some Centres missed out one of the conversation sections completely. **It is not acceptable to miss out either of the conversation sections.** Marks cannot be awarded for sections of the test not attempted and Centres which omit sections disadvantage their candidates.

In the Role play section it is important that Examiners keep to the 'script' provided in the Teachers' Notes booklet in order to give candidates the opportunity to attempt all mark-bearing tasks and to work for the marks allocated to each task. Examiners sometimes denied candidates the opportunity to score the available marks, either by departing from the Role play situation as laid out in the Teacher's Notes booklet or by pre-empting candidates and completing the tasks for them. Examiners need to be particularly careful not to offer candidates vocabulary items or options unless these appear in the Teachers' Notes booklet. **Centres are reminded that Examiners may open the Teachers' Notes booklet 4 working days in advance of their Speaking Tests in order to prepare for the examination**. Please note that the Teacher's Notes booklet is a confidential document, and once opened it **must** remain in the Centre in secure conditions and the contents **must not** be divulged to candidates in any way.

Application of the marking scheme

Most Centres were consistent in their application of the mark scheme. Some Centres had large adjustments to their marks due to the following:

- Short Topic conversation and/or General conversation sections

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- Failure to complete all the Role play tasks
- Lack of questions to elicit past and future meaning in both conversation sections.

Centres with more than one Examiner usually marked consistently within the Centre. Such Centres are reminded to seek permission from CIE (from the Product Manager) if more than one Examiner is to be used. If more than one Examiner examines, internal moderation **must** take place in the Centre in order to ensure consistency in marking standards between Examiners. A common standard of marking should be applied to the whole candidature and a recorded sample of 6 candidates submitted for external moderation, selected from across the mark range, and to cover all examining groups.

Generally, Examiners did mark consistently and it was heartening to see that there were many Centres whose marks were in line with the agreed standard or required only small adjustments. Examiners in new Centres did not always realise that in the Role plays, short responses, if appropriate, can score 3 marks. In other cases, Moderators commented that Examiners were too generous in awarding 3 marks for a Role play task when candidates offered a verb which was inaccurate or inappropriate. In Role play tasks requiring 2 elements to be completed both elements must be completed for a mark of 3 to be awarded. Conversation marks were usually awarded consistently, but were sometimes generous: Centres are reminded that a mark of 7 or more cannot be awarded on Scale (b) if past and future meaning are not conveyed. There was also some generosity on Scale (a), Comprehension/responsiveness, as some Examiners awarded marks in the 'Good' and 'Very Good' ranges when there was little or no evidence that candidates could respond to spontaneous/unexpected questions.

Comments on specific questions

Role Plays

Centres are reminded to encourage candidates to attempt all parts of each task. Examiners are reminded of the need for careful preparation. They should ensure that they do not miss out or change any tasks, nor should they add extra tasks which can confuse candidates. Marks can only be awarded for completing the tasks as presented on the Role play cards.

Role Plays A

As in 2009, the A Role plays were perceived to be of equal difficulty and a fair test at this level. They are designed to be easier than the B Role plays and are set using vocabulary and topics from the Defined Content (Areas A, B and C). Candidates generally found them to be accessible and even weaker candidates were able to score at least one mark on each task. Moderators were pleased to note that Centres had trained candidates to include a greeting and thanks where appropriate. Centres are reminded that on some tasks a short response may be sufficient to attract a mark of three.

Buying tickets for a boat trip

Candidates coped well with this Role play. The most frequent problem encountered was the mispronunciation of *ticket* on Task One. Nearly all could choose an appropriate day for Task Two and were successful in choosing a time from those offered in Task Three. For this task, the Teachers' Notes booklet specified the alternatives that Examiners were required to offer candidates (in this case *10h* and *14h*). Where alternatives are specified in this way in the Teachers' Notes Booklet, Examiners are requested not to offer candidates a different set of choices. On the final task some candidates did not ask a question related to the boat.

At the sports centre

This Role play was well within the reach of the candidature. Again, some mispronounced *billet* or *ticket* but the main challenge for candidates was to give an appropriate age in accurate language. Many candidates insisted they were six or sixty years old! On the final task, candidates found it difficult to formulate a question as to when the sports centre was closed. Weaker candidates often tried to formulate a question using *fermeture* and frequently tripped themselves up – they might have been more successful using the verb *fermer instead.*

At the post office

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Again, mispronunciation of *paquet* was a common problem here. *Timbres* was also often mispronounced when used on Task Four but this was ignored as the Task required a number only. There were some imaginative responses as to the contents of the parcel! Most were able to ask the price without too many difficulties.

Role Plays B

These B Role plays were deliberately more demanding in that they required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, give an opinion and justify this opinion. These Role plays differentiated well across the candidature, but where examining was sympathetic and Examiners were familiar with the testing points, even the weakest candidates were able to score some marks. Candidates should be reminded that there will always be one task in which they have to listen to the Examiner and reply to an unexpected question. They should consider likely questions when preparing their card in the time prior to the test and then listen carefully in the examination room.

Making final arrangements prior to a trip to stay with a French family

Many candidates failed to conjugate the verb correctly in Task One which prevented a mark of 3 from being awarded. Most could give two things they wanted to do during their stay, (the Eiffel Tower remains a firm favourite but is still very poorly pronounced). Pleasingly nearly all were able to give an opinion about French cooking and many could explain this opinion. Task Five proved the most difficult as some chose to ask about *le métro* having misread *la météo*! Surprisingly few candidates were able to provide the simple *quel temps fait-il?*

Inviting a French friend to stay with you

Again, provided that the Examiner had prepared his/her role well this was straightforward. Most were able to offer an invitation even if the weaker candidates confused the direct object pronoun before *inviter.* Again, candidates could usually give two things to do in their area. Asking how the friend intended to travel proved to be one of the harder tasks on this Role play. Better candidates usually skirted round the use of *comment…?* and asked *tu vas prendre l'avion?* which was quite acceptable. The last task proved easier and was usually well done.

Getting information from a language school

Some candidates seemed not to have heard *quand*? on Task Two: it was helpful where Examiners split the two elements of the task. For Task Four candidates occasionally ignored the instruction to say what they had done in France and when asked if they had been to France replied that they had not, denying themselves access to the marks available. Thankfully when this happened Examiners were usually able to save the situation by rephrasing the question so as to get a positive response! Most candidates were able to give an opinion about their trip with relative ease and in a correct tense. The last task was usually well done.

Topic Presentation & Conversation

Generally timings were good on this section but in some Centres, candidates were allowed to carry on presenting their topic for up to 3 minutes. This is not good practice as it leaves the Examiner with little to ask about which has not already been included by the candidate in their initial presentation, thus reducing many of the possibilities for follow-up conversation. Candidates must not be allowed to carry on presenting for more than the specified 1-2 minutes; the Topic Presentation plus Topic Conversation should last about 5 minutes in total.

The follow-up questions on the candidate's topic should not be pre-learnt. Questions should be spontaneous and should arise out of the Examiner's interest in the material the candidate has presented. They must certainly not be so practised and pre-learnt that both the Examiner and candidate know what questions are coming and in which order! Thankfully such examining was rare. Most Examiners were clearly aware of the need for candidates to show they could accurately convey both past and future meaning and asked questions in different tenses. It is important to remember that marks of more than 6 cannot be awarded for linguistic content if candidates cannot communicate past and future meaning.

The topics chosen by candidates were often the expected ones such as*, mes vacances, mes projets d'avenir, mon école, le sport, mes loisirs.* This year 'food and health' and 'environment' proved popular as did 'new technology' and associated leisure activities. Some candidates continue to choose ambitious topics

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that go well beyond the requirements of the syllabus, eg 'AIDS' or 'global warming'. Such topics are fine provided that they are appropriate to the linguistic maturity of the candidate. There were some very interesting topics in which candidates recounted their schooling in different countries and explained why their education and ambitions were important to them. It was gratifying to hear how much this candidature values its education and the place of languages within it.

Moderators reported very few cases of Centres allowing candidates to present 'Myself' as their topic. New Centres should note that this is not a good topic to choose for the Presentation as it restricts the possibilities for General Conversation. Please note that it is not within the spirit of the syllabus for all the candidates at a Centre to present the same topic.

As last year, candidates had usually prepared their topics well and most were presented at a good pace. The better candidates had equipped themselves with appropriate vocabulary and structures and were able to sustain their level of performance in the follow-up conversation. Candidates who were able to go beyond the factual and present their opinions and explanations scored well.

General Conversation

Most Centres had clearly understood the need to cover at least 2 or 3 topics from the syllabus in this section of the test. The same topics must not be covered with all candidates in a Centre. In some Centres, although Examiners varied the topics from candidate to candidate they asked the same questions on a topic each time it arose. Please try to avoid this. While it is good practice to help candidates in class by using banks of questions, over reliance on such banks in the examination can lead to stilted conversations which do not flow naturally, at worst reducing what is intended to be a genuine interchange of information to nothing more than a series of mini presentations. It is far better once in the examination room to listen and respond as spontaneously as possible. The Mark Scheme makes it very clear that both straightforward and unexpected questions must feature in the General Conversation. Examiners are also reminded that this section of the test should last around 5 minutes.

Moderators listened to some excellent conversations in this part of the examination. Candidates had been well taught and many had clearly been trained to respond to open questions which invited them to take the initiative and develop their answers. The majority were well able to go beyond simple opinions and could develop their answers in an interesting way. It was particularly pleasing to hear candidates go beyond the expected and use their imagination when responding to questions such as 'if you were … what would you do?' Moderators commented that the control of tenses was frequently very good and that many candidates made successful use of enhancing structures, subordinate clauses and adverbial phrases of time.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/41
Continuous Writing

General comments

Once again Examiners commend the majority of candidates for their enthusiasm and their knowledge of the French language. In many Centres candidates displayed a wide range of structures and vocabulary and a readiness to tackle the Continuous Writing Paper in the right spirit.

While the overall standard was encouraging there are aspects candidates need to address in order to improve their performance, particularly where examination technique is concerned. A number of quite able candidates failed to do themselves justice when attempting the communication tasks. The tasks set out in the rubric are prescriptive and not mere suggestions. Each task carries a certain number of communication marks. A distortion or the omission of any of the prescribed tasks will result in the candidate forfeiting at least one communication mark. If a task is dealt with outside the word limit of 140 words it does not score any marks. It is therefore important that candidates cover all the tasks in a maximum of 140 words. This year many made the mistake of writing over long pieces.

Accuracy of written French is very important. Misspelled or misused words are not credited. Any careless errors will be reflected in the marks awarded for language. The time allowed for this component is sufficient to permit careful revision of answers. Many candidates do not seem to make full use of the allocated time in order to eradicate careless slips from their work.

Presentation continues to improve and some scripts were a pleasure to read. However a minority were barely legible, either because of extremely small handwriting or ambiguity in the formation of letters. Examiners do not give the benefit of the doubt when they are unable to decipher handwriting.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1(a) *La lettre d'invitation*

This question was the more popular option. The letter to a friend is a familiar format which candidates no doubt perceived to be straightforward. Some excellent answers were presented.

Most began by thanking the pen friend for his/her hospitality in France and relating in some detail the return journey. They usually enjoyed the experience of travelling alone, possibly for the first time. Some travelled by air, others by boat or train or a combination of different means of transport. Language relating to travel was quite well known. Some had a trouble free trip while others had a succession of misfortunes. They lost tickets or passports. They missed trains or planes. There were cancellations and delays. The journey was long and tiring. Narration in the first person using perfect tenses was well handled generally although *partir* and *quitter* were confused and *retourner* was commonly used when *rentrer* or *revenir* were more appropriate. The need for the auxiliary *être* and a past participle agreement with certain verbs was not universally recognised.

The things the writers enjoyed most about the stay in France were varied. Those who went to Paris enthused over the Eiffel Tower or the Champs Elysées, although not all could cope with the spelling. Many remembered fondly the games of football and basketball which they enjoyed with the pen friend. Others remembered the shopping excursions. All seemed to relish French cooking and many referred to eating out in expensive restaurants. Above all, candidates politely mentioned the company of the correspondent's family and friends as being a highlight of the experience. The verb *s'amuser bien* was very commonly used, mostly with success.

The invitation to stay with the writer was well handled by the majority. Stronger candidates were able to say *je t'invite à* with an infinitive. A simpler method was to say: veux-*tu passer tes vacances chez nous?* or *tu*

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peux venir chez nous si tu veux. A minority addressed the friend rather stiffly as *vous*. This formal usage, while not really appropriate in this context, was not penalised as an error providing the use was consistent throughout the letter.

Suggested activities were well expressed usually, although some who had written at length about the journey home had already exceeded the word limit and did not gain any marks for communication. A feature of the better responses was the use of conditional tenses as in *si tu venais chez moi on ferait du ski*. Also the verb *pouvoir* was well used as in *on pourrait/nous pourrions visiter des musées* or *vouloir* as in *je voudrais te montrer le centre-ville*. The reasons for suggesting these activities were often omitted or made unclear by over complication. Simple reasons were accepted such as *on pourrait jouer au foot – je sais que tu aimes ça*. Or *je veux faire du shopping avec toi – les magasins sont super*.

Average to weak candidates should be urged to find simple ways of fulfilling the tasks. It was a pity to find such candidates putting undue pressure on themselves in the attempt to express abstractions which were outside their linguistic compass.

Question 1(b) *Le shopping*

Far fewer candidates chose this question but some very good responses were received just the same.

Describing a day you spent shopping involved going round many shops, admiring the merchandise, nearly always clothes, and making a range of purchases. Not many went to the supermarket for necessities such as food. Adjectives employed to describe items were not always used competently and the use of agreements was often poor. Money never seemed to be a problem as candidates fantasised about a spending spree. Large numbers wrote only about their regular shopping activities in the present tense, thereby losing a mark for communication. Careful reading of the rubric is essential if this kind of mistake is to be avoided

Nearly all seemed to love shopping, to the point of obsession in many cases. Some went as far as to say: *c'est ma vie, ma passion*. Reasons given included a simple love of clothes and looking was as pleasant as actually buying. The expression *lèche-vitrines* was widely known. The day was often shared with a friend or a member of the family, which was a reason given for enjoying it so much. Girls valued a second opinion. A minority, usually boys, found the whole thing utterly boring, something to be endured while a parent or friend did the shopping.

The final task (what I would buy if I had a lot of money) was well handled. Most could say *j'aimerais/je voudrais acheter* or *j'achèterais*. A number would buy an extravagant gift for a friend or relative, a car or a house, even a plane. Others would buy themselves something exotic, jewellery or a yacht. Reasons were often omitted. Again a simple reason was accepted, as in *j'achèterais des billets pour les Six Nations: j'adore le rugby*.

Question 2 Le spectacle

Again a number of excellent answers were presented but in many cases the quality of the French used in the narrative did not match that found in **Question 1**. Average to weak candidates had difficulty in relating an imaginary sequence of events in past tenses and even some strong candidates did not make the most of the opportunity to display their linguistic competence, making elementary errors. Many answers would have been improved by careful initial planning and by a more painstaking approach when putting pen to paper.

Most understood the task and began by relating the events of the day of the show. Others devoted undue time and space to explaining how the prize was won. The first task, to describe the show, brought out the best in the most able candidates. They went to see a play (often Shakespeare!) or a musical and some were able to write an excellent brief synopsis. Others went to a circus or an outdoor display and they were able to give vivid descriptions of what they saw (animals, acrobats etc.). Examiners accepted a wide variety of interpretations of what *le spectacle* might be (even sports events were allowed) but some did not mention it at all after the first sentence so a mark was lost for communication.

'What happened during the day' allowed for considerable license and virtually anything reasonable was rewarded. At outdoor events picnics were bought and consumed. Games were played. Journeys to the show were described. Problems occurred. Teachers lost the tickets. The train/bus broke down (many remembered *tomber en panne*). Pupils had accidents or fell ill. There were delays getting to the theatre and they missed the start. Some classmates had too much beer and got drunk. All the things which teachers

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dread and which amuse pupils! The performance itself was usually described in glowing terms. The actors/dancers/singers were superb and sometimes even condescended to talk to the school party. In a minority of cases the show was a great disappointment. In one case the actor playing Macbeth collapsed and died. What an unlucky play indeed! The key to high scoring for language was of course coping with a series of verbs in past tenses. The better candidates did this very well although casual errors crept in on many scripts when candidates tried to handle a range of verbs with a variety of subjects (*nous*, *je*, *il*, *ils*, *elles* etc.).

Reactions to the day out were clearly expressed and usually scored well for communication. Some concentrated on their impressions of the show which were nearly always favourable. Others commented on the success of the trip as a whole. It was *inoubliable* or *fantastique*. Many simply delighted in a free outing with friends and vowed to enter the competition again next year. All had a good time (*s'amuser bien* was widely used again) despite the problems.

The enthusiasm for the account was not always matched by grammatical accuracy and as stated earlier elementary mistakes flawed many scripts. Friends began as masculine (*mes amis*) but later adjectives suggested they were all girls. The writer's gender varied from time to time. The same word was used several times with differing spelling or gender. Simple agreements were missed on adjectives and past participles. Common words were misused. *Joli* was thought to mean happy. *Trop* was mistaken for *très*. Common verb forms were not always well known. Perfect and imperfect tenses were used interchangeably without regard to meaning. Casual errors in the spelling of everyday words, especially *beaucoup* and *malheureusement* were a feature of so many scripts. Words from languages other than French appeared. If more candidates had spent time at the end checking for these inaccuracies higher marks for language would undoubtedly have been achieved.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/42
Continuous Writing

General comments

Once again Examiners commend the majority of candidates for their enthusiasm and their knowledge of the French language. In many Centres candidates displayed a wide range of structures and vocabulary and a readiness to tackle the Continuous Writing Paper in the right spirit.

While the overall standard was encouraging there are aspects candidates need to address in order to improve their performance, particularly where examination technique is concerned. A number of quite able candidates failed to do themselves justice when attempting the communication tasks. The tasks set out in the rubric are prescriptive and not mere suggestions. Each task carries a certain number of marks for communication. A distortion or the omission of any of the prescribed tasks will result in the candidate forfeiting at least one communication mark. If a task is dealt with outside the word limit of 140 words it does not score any marks. It is therefore important that candidates cover all the tasks in a maximum of 140 words. This year many made the mistake of writing overlong pieces.

Accuracy of written French is very important. Misspelled or misused words are not credited. Any careless errors will be reflected in the marks awarded for language. The time allowed for the component is sufficient to permit careful revision of answers. Many candidates do not seem to make full use of the allocated time to eradicate careless slips from their answers.

Presentation continues to improve and some scripts were a pleasure to read. However a minority were barely legible, either because of extremely small handwriting or ambiguity in the formation of letters. Examiners do not give the benefit of the doubt when they are unable to decipher handwriting.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1(a) *Les loisirs*

Describing 'how I spend my free time' was a task almost universally understood and there was a good response from candidates. Some devoted much space to this part of the answer at the expense of others. Most were able to answer with an appropriate present tense. *J'aime* with a noun or the infinitive of a verb was frequently used successfully (*j'aime lire* or *j'aime la lecture*) and many simply put a verb as in, eg *je fais des promenades avec le chien*. Difficulties were encountered when candidates tried to adapt the stimulus using *passer* but were unable to find such expressions as *je passe mon temps à écrire*. The verb *jouer* inevitably occurred on many scripts and weaker candidates had trouble with prepositions (*jouer de la guitare* but *jouer au tennis*). Candidates at boarding schools were happy to say they spent time with their friends and family at home which was of course acceptable.

The second task, explaining the importance of leisure for young people, was more demanding. Many attempted to say free time and hobbies were necessary as a form of relaxation after academic work or as an antidote to stress. These relatively abstract concepts proved to be difficult to express. Simple explanations such as *le stress est fatigant* or *les jeunes ont besoin de se reposer* were accepted. An equally valid response was to say that leisure time activities were desirable for keeping fit. A physical activity such as sport, walking or swimming was good for young people and their general health.

A wide variety of activities were included in response to 'what activities I would do given the time and the means'. Some would opt for a new and often dangerous hobby. They would take up deep sea diving, rock climbing or bungee jumping. Others would learn a new instrument or travel the world. Many used the conditional tense appropriately as in the use of *je voudrais/j'aimerais* with infinitives. Scoring for this task was quite high. Finding a reason for their choice was more difficult. Some lost out by attempting to express something beyond their linguistic competence. Full credit was given to simple responses such as *je voudrais*

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apprendre à jouer du piano: j'adore la musique. Sadly some wrote very long pieces and failed to score communication marks for the last two tasks which fell outside the word limit.

Question 1(b) *Vivre en ville ou à la campagne*

Most candidates wisely responded to the tasks set rather than embarking on a discursive debate about the pros and cons of town or country.

Describing one's own home area was a familiar task and most responded well and sometimes at length. Most said they enjoyed living where they did. They liked the facilities of an urban environment or they appreciated the charms of the countryside. There was an over reliance on the use of certain phrases, especially *il y a* and the verb *être* with adjectives. Candidates should try to show the full range of their linguistic skills and repeating the same phrase many times does not do this. There was also a tendency to use lists as in *à Paris il y a des musées, des églises, des discos* etc.

Candidates were able to respond well to finding positive aspects of living where they did. Sports and social facilities offered the chance to be active and make friends. Many quoted the availability of big shops as a major asset. The proximity of beautiful scenery was a positive aspect of country life as was the absence of traffic, pollution and noise. Negative aspects were less numerous but most managed to find a disadvantage to living where they did. Urban dwellers complained about traffic jams, overcrowding, dirt and noise. Country dwellers found big distances separating them from friends and family a major problem and the absence of facilities such as clubs, swimming pools and shops.

Saying where they would like to live in future was usually well handled but as in **Question 1(a)** marks were sometimes lost when the word count had been exceeded. Most were able to answer *je voudrais habiter* with a place. Some would live abroad, some opting for supposedly glamorous locations such as Paris, London or New York. Some city people would seek the quiet of the country while some rural people would seek a livelier existence in a city. Finding a reason for their choice usually required the use of the conditional tense and the quality of answers varied. Large numbers decided to say they were happy to stay where they were to be near friends and family or because they liked it so much.

Question 2

Most candidates understood that the tasks were to describe a period of part time work to earn money for a holiday and to say how they spent that holiday, in each case giving impressions. A minority said they spent the whole school holiday working, which suggested they had not read or had perhaps misunderstood the top line of the rubric. Others, perhaps taking *travail* to mean 'travel', wrote exclusively about the holiday, omitting the experience of work. Examiners took a generous view of such misinterpretations and while some communication marks may have been lost no penalties for language were incurred.

As is usual for this question, past tenses were required and most candidates recognised this and correctly wrote in the past throughout. Provided a past tense was used full communication marks were given for conveying a message but the misuse of a perfect when an imperfect was needed or vice versa could not score for language. Weaker candidates tended to use a variety of tenses, including the present. Use of the present did not meet the requirements of the exercise.

Many candidates said they worked in an office, a primary school or a restaurant. Most enjoyed the work though others found it tiring or boring. Candidates referred to long hours and early mornings, neither of which went down well. Those young people who had not personally engaged in part time work seemed to find it easy to imagine themselves in this situation. There were some interesting accounts of the work place. They got on well with colleagues or employers (*s'entendre bien avec* was well known) or they found a cold reception. They had little to do but make the tea or they were overrun with work. Some found it a very rewarding experience, as part of growing up and taking responsibilities. Most however were just glad to be paid.

The holiday spent with friends was related as a success in most cases. Some had extravagant trips abroad, often to Paris to see the Eiffel Tower or to exotic beaches. They stayed in big hotels or went to expensive restaurants. Others stayed at home for the holiday but enjoyed the usual sports, discos and shopping. The best part of the holiday for most was the pleasure of the company of friends and the freedom to do as they wished, probably for the first time without adults.

While there was much to admire in many scripts, some candidates let themselves down in a variety of ways. Errors were made in the spelling of a multitude of everyday words such as *beaucoup* and

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(mal)heureusement. Friends were *amis* but the agreements suggested they were all girls. Gender and spelling of the same word differed at different points in the exercise. Common words were confused. *Trop* was used for *très*, *joli* was used for *joyeux*. The formation of past tenses of common verbs was faulty and many did not cope with auxiliaries and past participles. Elision was frequently overlooked as in *parce que il* (*sic*). Many if not most of these errors seemed to be due to slips or lack of concentration. As stated earlier if candidates had spent time at the end checking for these inaccuracies higher marks for language would undoubtedly have been achieved by many.

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