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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/11
Listening

Key messages

- Performance on this Listening paper continues to be of a high standard. Candidates fared very much as last year on the first two sections of the paper and found the last section more difficult.
- Most candidates were aware of the need to write clearly in blue or black ink and not to write answers first in pencil and then overwrite in pen. New Centres should remind candidates to write clearly and to cross out any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Answers are marked on the basis of communication and comprehension. Accuracy is only taken into account should the message become ambiguous. Where the mis-spelling of a word means another French word with a different meaning is produced, communication is affected. Candidates should therefore be reminded that careless spelling mistakes can affect their final mark.
- Centres need to remind candidates to try to be as concise as possible. Full sentences are not required. Indeed, overlong answers often include extra material which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- It remains important that all candidates have the opportunity to practise past papers and become familiar with the examination rubrics and structure.

General comments

The candidature for this examination continues to grow and a very full range of performance was seen on this paper. Candidates had, generally, been well prepared and seemed familiar with the structure of the paper and the required response types in all three sections. The exercises discriminated appropriately and the choice of topics was found to be equally accessible by candidates from a wide range of different cultural contexts.

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 tested in the first two sections of the test is drawn from the Defined Content.

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. Brief answers are possible and, in fact, desirable. As the Listening paper aims to test comprehension, inaccuracies in written French (e.g. incorrect spellings or verb endings) are normally tolerated provided the message conveyed is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French, it will be accepted, provided that the message is unambiguous. However, where candidates add extra information which distorts an otherwise valid answer (and therefore 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. So, for example, if a candidate offers two details of which only one is correct or heard on the recording, the mark cannot be awarded, as the Examiner is being required to make the choice which should have been made by the candidate. Candidates should not answer from general knowledge and 'infer' what may not in fact be stated on the recording. The inclusion of extra incorrect material can prevent the mark from being awarded. Any material which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider should be clearly crossed out.

Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and that there is not a period of reading time before the examination starts. It is helpful to point out to candidates new to the paper that they will hear everything twice and to familiarise them with when the pauses occur in the different exercises.

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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. As last year, candidates performed very well in this opening exercise which is intended to give candidates a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short, and the vocabulary areas tested (prices, time, shops, furniture, food and places etc.) were familiar to candidates and posed few problems. **Question 8** proved to be the most challenging. Some candidates clearly confused *portefeuille* with *portable* and chose option A instead of the correct option C. Candidates understood that only one box should be ticked.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-16

Candidates heard an announcement for a young people's festival and were mostly required to show their understanding of the extract by selecting one out of three visual options. This exercise was very well done. Candidates coped well with the number *vingt-huit* on **Question 9** – they should be reminded that numbers can be given as a figure and do not need to be written out in full. Answers to **Questions 10-12** were frequently all correct. Some were less sure on **Question 13** *(cirque)* and **Question 14** *(feu d'artifice).* **Questions 15** and **16** were usually answered correctly.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 17

Candidates heard four young people talking on the topic of cinema. Questions tested specific facts and some opinions. The topic area was within the experience of candidates and large numbers scored at least four or five marks on the exercise. Incorrect options were fairly evenly distributed when they occurred, but option **k** was quite popular.

The vast majority of candidates understood that the rubric required them to tick (or cross) six of the boxes. A handful of candidates need to be reminded that on this exercise six boxes only should be ticked. A combination of ticks for true statements and crosses for false statements should not be used as this can cause confusion.

Exercise 2 Questions 18-22

In the first part of this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Vishwa, a young Indian girl who had spent time studying in France and living with a French family. Candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements by supplying the correct word(s). The requirements of the exercise were well understood. On **Question 18** the word *écrivain* was required and appeared in various forms in candidates' answers. A wide number of spellings were accepted as conveying the idea, including *écrivin, écrivan, écriva(t)*, to cite just a few, and this meant that many did gain the mark, despite inaccuracies. Answers featuring recognisable attempts at the verb *écrire* were also accepted. On **Question 19** many successfully identified *libre(s).* Incorrect answers sometimes featured the misheard *livre* (for *libre).* On **Question 20** many candidates answered correctly with *chat(s).* Examiners also accepted the answer *d'chat*, as well as spellings such as *cha* (on the 'sounds like' principle). Incorrect answers often featured the word *chien(s)*, which was heard on the recording in connection to India and not France, underlining the need for careful reading of the question. Candidates also fared quite well on **Question 21**. On **Question 22**, there were many incorrect renderings of *fruits de mer* which made this the most challenging question in this part of the exercise. Spellings such as *frites de mer* and *fruits de mère/maire* were unacceptable as they introduced incorrect concepts.

Exercise 2 Questions 23-27

Generally, candidates did quite well on this exercise which made very comparable demands to the equivalent exercise last year. Candidates should be reminded to make full use of the reading time.

Candidates heard an interview with a young German girl who had also lived and studied in France. Candidates were required to give short written responses in French. Most had clearly understood that full

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sentences were not required and that a few words were often enough to be able to express the correct concept. On **Question 23**, candidates needed to identify *note(s)* and *français* to convey the required concept. Some added in *mauvaises,* which, as it had been correctly heard in the recording, was acceptable. Answers featuring *notre* did not gain the mark. **Question 24** tested a comparison and was presented as a sentence with a blank to avoid the need for candidates to write a long answer. The required answer (*moins proche)* was accessible to many candidates. Mis-spellings such as *mois* and *moi* distorted meaning by introducing other concepts. The spelling *moin* was tolerated. Candidates would benefit from practice at communicating comparatives. On **Question 25**, candidates were more successful in identifying the *journée scolaire.* Other correct answers referred to school being long or school hours being long. **Question 26** was often answered well. Weaker candidates opted for the time at which people ate in Germany: they may not have read the question carefully as both answers had to refer to France. Some found it hard to render the word *chaud* – distortions such as *chou* did not gain the mark. As intended, the final question on this exercise proved to be one of the most challenging on this section of the paper and a suitable step up towards the final section of the paper. **Question 27** required candidates to identify and communicate the concept of getting on with the French family. The question had been phrased so as to avoid the need for the candidate to have to produce a negative in his/her answer. Many still tried to include it and this was tolerated. Correct answers to this question featured an attempt to render the reflexive verb *s'entendre* plus *la famille.* Answers in the first person such as *m'entendre/m'entends avec la famille* were acceptable. The verb *attendre* was often used and was not accepted, neither was *mentendre* written as a single word, and sometimes also rendered as *montondre.*

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 28-33

The extract featured a longer interview with Reza, a photographer, talking about his work. Candidates coped quite 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 rubric well and the vast majority managed to pick up at least two or three marks even if they went on to find the last exercise demanding. On **Question 28** there was occasionally some confusion between the verbs *vouloir and pouvoir.* Many found **Questions 29, 30, 31** and **32** fairly straightforward and scored well on these questions. The most able candidates (many of whom went on to score well on the last exercise) were able to answer **Question 33** correctly. There was no particular pattern of incorrect responses in this exercise, but on **Question 33,** candidates often chose option C, probably because they heard *on pouvait se déplacer facilement* on the recording. Candidates needed to appreciate the difference between the present tense of *pouvoir* in the question and the past tense they heard on the recording, which was then reinforced with *ce n'est plus le cas*.

It is worth reminding candidates to make effective use of the reading time available at the beginning of this exercise and to read the questions and options carefully. Reading the questions will also help to give candidates an overview of the content of the recording and help them to sequence the information which they will hear.

Exercise 2 Questions 34-41

Candidates heard an interview with a young female fire-fighter, Christine. This final exercise was intended to be the most demanding on the paper and included questions that were suitably challenging for the more able candidates. Deliberately, some very accessible questions were also included to help maintain concentration and motivation and these were successfully answered by a good proportion of the candidates. Candidates generally scored fewer marks on this exercise than last year.

Candidates were required to write their answers in French. The language required in the answers featured vocabulary which was in the Defined Content. Many of the questions could be answered briefly and also without a verb (though **Questions 39(b), 40** and **41** did need an attempt at an appropriate verb (see below)). Candidates do not have to write in full sentences. Most candidates had been well trained and understood the need to write as concisely as possible but there were still examples of very long answers, some of which featured several crossings out and were difficult to read. Answers in which candidates have merely tried to transcribe as much as possible of the material they hear will rarely be successful. If an Examiner is put in the position of having to try to locate the correct answer in the midst of extra irrelevant material (in some cases several contradictory statements) which distorts the correct answer, the mark will not be awarded. Candidates should be advised not to include in their answers personal inferences which do not feature on the recording as these may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

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While many candidates fared well on **Question 34**, some invalidated their answer by writing *9 moins* instead of *9 mois.* **Question 35** proved to be one of the most difficult on the paper. *Esprit* was often missing or was incorrectly spelt. Renderings such as *esprite/espri/espiri/espirit* were accepted. Answers to **Questions 36(i)** and **(ii)** were interchangeable. **Question 36(i)** only required the word *petite/petit* to score the mark and weaker candidates were often successful. Some candidates invalidated their answers by adding *très* or *trop* which distorted. On **Question 36(ii)** the required concept was *matériel lourd*. *Lourd* was not well known and some missed out matériel. Those who also chose to include the additional *à porter* often invalidated their answers by writing *apporter.* Candidates were more successful on **Question 37** which required the concept of *pleine (de) fumée.* The stem of the answer was provided in order to reduce the amount candidates had to write and this did seem to have helped. The word *pleine* was often mis-spelt, but the mark scheme was tolerant on this point provided that another word such as *plaine/plan* was not produced. **Question 38** was the easiest on the exercise and many successfully identified *minimum (de) force.* Candidates did not need to use the word *avoir* to gain the mark. Those who misheard this on the recording and answered *avant un minimum de force* did not score the mark. Good numbers of candidates were successful on **Question 39(a)**: *peur* was enough, by itself, to gain the mark. **Question 39(b)** provided an appropriate challenge for the best candidates who were able to render *savait quoi faire.* To be successful on this question, candidates did need to include an appropriate attempt at the verb *savoir*: renderings such as *savé/sais* were acceptable. **Question 40** was suitably challenging for this stage of the test. Examiners were looking for the concept of collective responsibility: *chacun/chaque pompier est responsable des autres.* The mark scheme allowed for various recognisable versions of *responsable* which often proved difficult to spell accurately. Answers which did not include the notion of 'for others' were incomplete and did not gain the mark. On the final question, candidates needed to include an appropriate verb expressing future intention such as *devenir* (but not *deviner), voudrait être, être, sera,* together with *professionnelle.* Candidates needed to read this question carefully as it asked what Christine wanted to do **after** passing her exams. This was a good test of listening which required candidates to think carefully about the sequence of events heard. Some invalidated their answers by including the required details but then adding in extras such as *passer des examens* or *travail volontaire.* Candidates often produced the correct events but in the wrong order. Some also mis-heard the recording and tried to render the last sentence (which included the phrase *projet à long terme)* as *devenir interne.* Other incorrect attempts featured the idea of becoming a teacher. A good number of candidates did however manage to score this last mark by being concise, correctly identifying the notion of turning professional and rendering this in an acceptable form.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

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Exercise 1 Questions 28-33

The extract featured a longer interview with Reza, a photographer, talking about his work. Candidates coped quite 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 rubric well and the vast majority managed to pick up at least two or three marks even if they went on to find the last exercise demanding. On **Question 28** there was occasionally some confusion between the verbs *vouloir and pouvoir.* Many found **Questions 29, 30, 31** and **32** fairly straightforward and scored well on these questions. The most able candidates (many of whom went on to score well on the last exercise) were able to answer **Question 33** correctly. There was no particular pattern of incorrect responses in this exercise, but on **Question 33,** candidates often chose option C, probably because they heard *on pouvait se déplacer facilement* on the recording. Candidates needed to appreciate the difference between the present tense of *pouvoir* in the question and the past tense they heard on the recording, which was then reinforced with *ce n'est plus le cas*.

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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. As last year, candidates performed very well in this opening exercise which is intended to give candidates a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short, and the vocabulary areas tested (prices, time, shops, furniture, food and places etc.) were familiar to candidates and posed few problems. **Question 8** proved to be the most challenging. Some candidates clearly confused *portefeuille* with *portable* and chose option A instead of the correct option C. Candidates understood that only one box should be ticked.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-16

Candidates heard an announcement for a young people's festival and were mostly required to show their understanding of the extract by selecting one out of three visual options. This exercise was very well done. Candidates coped well with the number *vingt-huit* on **Question 9** – they should be reminded that numbers can be given as a figure and do not need to be written out in full. Answers to **Questions 10-12** were frequently all correct. Some were less sure on **Question 13** *(cirque)* and **Question 14** *(feu d'artifice).* **Questions 15** and **16** were usually answered correctly.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 17

Candidates heard four young people talking on the topic of cinema. Questions tested specific facts and some opinions. The topic area was within the experience of candidates and large numbers scored at least four or five marks on the exercise. Incorrect options were fairly evenly distributed when they occurred, but option **k** was quite popular.

The vast majority of candidates understood that the rubric required them to tick (or cross) six of the boxes. A handful of candidates need to be reminded that on this exercise six boxes only should be ticked. A combination of ticks for true statements and crosses for false statements should not be used as this can cause confusion.

Exercise 2 Questions 18-22

In the first part of this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Vishwa, a young Indian girl who had spent time studying in France and living with a French family. Candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements by supplying the correct word(s). The requirements of the exercise were well understood. On **Question 18** the word *écrivain* was required and appeared in various forms in candidates' answers. A wide number of spellings were accepted as conveying the idea, including *écrivin, écrivan, écriva(t)*, to cite just a few, and this meant that many did gain the mark, despite inaccuracies. Answers featuring recognisable attempts at the verb *écrire* were also accepted. On **Question 19** many successfully identified *libre(s).* Incorrect answers sometimes featured the misheard *livre* (for *libre).* On **Question 20** many candidates answered correctly with *chat(s).* Examiners also accepted the answer *d'chat*, as well as spellings such as *cha* (on the 'sounds like' principle). Incorrect answers often featured the word *chien(s)*, which was heard on the recording in connection to India and not France, underlining the need for careful reading of the question. Candidates also fared quite well on **Question 21**. On **Question 22**, there were many incorrect renderings of *fruits de mer* which made this the most challenging question in this part of the exercise. Spellings such as *frites de mer* and *fruits de mère/maire* were unacceptable as they introduced incorrect concepts.

Exercise 2 Questions 23-27

Generally, candidates did quite well on this exercise which made very comparable demands to the equivalent exercise last year. Candidates should be reminded to make full use of the reading time.

Candidates heard an interview with a young German girl who had also lived and studied in France. Candidates were required to give short written responses in French. Most had clearly understood that full

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sentences were not required and that a few words were often enough to be able to express the correct concept. On **Question 23**, candidates needed to identify *note(s)* and *français* to convey the required concept. Some added in *mauvaises,* which, as it had been correctly heard in the recording, was acceptable. Answers featuring *notre* did not gain the mark. **Question 24** tested a comparison and was presented as a sentence with a blank to avoid the need for candidates to write a long answer. The required answer (*moins proche)* was accessible to many candidates. Mis-spellings such as *mois* and *moi* distorted meaning by introducing other concepts. The spelling *moin* was tolerated. Candidates would benefit from practice at communicating comparatives. On **Question 25**, candidates were more successful in identifying the *journée scolaire.* Other correct answers referred to school being long or school hours being long. **Question 26** was often answered well. Weaker candidates opted for the time at which people ate in Germany: they may not have read the question carefully as both answers had to refer to France. Some found it hard to render the word *chaud* – distortions such as *chou* did not gain the mark. As intended, the final question on this exercise proved to be one of the most challenging on this section of the paper and a suitable step up towards the final section of the paper. **Question 27** required candidates to identify and communicate the concept of getting on with the French family. The question had been phrased so as to avoid the need for the candidate to have to produce a negative in his/her answer. Many still tried to include it and this was tolerated. Correct answers to this question featured an attempt to render the reflexive verb *s'entendre* plus *la famille.* Answers in the first person such as *m'entendre/m'entends avec la famille* were acceptable. The verb *attendre* was often used and was not accepted, neither was *mentendre* written as a single word, and sometimes also rendered as *montondre.*

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 28-33

The extract featured a longer interview with Reza, a photographer, talking about his work. Candidates coped quite 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 rubric well and the vast majority managed to pick up at least two or three marks even if they went on to find the last exercise demanding. On **Question 28** there was occasionally some confusion between the verbs *vouloir and pouvoir.* Many found **Questions 29, 30, 31** and **32** fairly straightforward and scored well on these questions. The most able candidates (many of whom went on to score well on the last exercise) were able to answer **Question 33** correctly. There was no particular pattern of incorrect responses in this exercise, but on **Question 33,** candidates often chose option C, probably because they heard *on pouvait se déplacer facilement* on the recording. Candidates needed to appreciate the difference between the present tense of *pouvoir* in the question and the past tense they heard on the recording, which was then reinforced with *ce n'est plus le cas*.

It is worth reminding candidates to make effective use of the reading time available at the beginning of this exercise and to read the questions and options carefully. Reading the questions will also help to give candidates an overview of the content of the recording and help them to sequence the information which they will hear.

Exercise 2 Questions 34-41

Candidates heard an interview with a young female fire-fighter, Christine. This final exercise was intended to be the most demanding on the paper and included questions that were suitably challenging for the more able candidates. Deliberately, some very accessible questions were also included to help maintain concentration and motivation and these were successfully answered by a good proportion of the candidates. Candidates generally scored fewer marks on this exercise than last year.

Candidates were required to write their answers in French. The language required in the answers featured vocabulary which was in the Defined Content. Many of the questions could be answered briefly and also without a verb (though **Questions 39(b), 40** and **41** did need an attempt at an appropriate verb (see below)). Candidates do not have to write in full sentences. Most candidates had been well trained and understood the need to write as concisely as possible but there were still examples of very long answers, some of which featured several crossings out and were difficult to read. Answers in which candidates have merely tried to transcribe as much as possible of the material they hear will rarely be successful. If an Examiner is put in the position of having to try to locate the correct answer in the midst of extra irrelevant material (in some cases several contradictory statements) which distorts the correct answer, the mark will not be awarded. Candidates should be advised not to include in their answers personal inferences which do not feature on the recording as these may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

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While many candidates fared well on **Question 34**, some invalidated their answer by writing *9 moins* instead of *9 mois.* **Question 35** proved to be one of the most difficult on the paper. *Esprit* was often missing or was incorrectly spelt. Renderings such as *esprite/espri/espiri/espirit* were accepted. Answers to **Questions 36(i)** and **(ii)** were interchangeable. **Question 36(i)** only required the word *petite/petit* to score the mark and weaker candidates were often successful. Some candidates invalidated their answers by adding *très* or *trop* which distorted. On **Question 36(ii)** the required concept was *matériel lourd*. *Lourd* was not well known and some missed out *matériel*. Those who also chose to include the additional *à porter* often invalidated their answers by writing *apporter.* Candidates were more successful on **Question 37** which required the concept of *pleine (de) fumée.* The stem of the answer was provided in order to reduce the amount candidates had to write and this did seem to have helped. The word *pleine* was often mis-spelt, but the mark scheme was tolerant on this point provided that another word such as *plaine/plan* was not produced. **Question 38** was the easiest on the exercise and many successfully identified *minimum (de) force.* Candidates did not need to use the word *avoir* to gain the mark. Those who misheard this on the recording and answered *avant un minimum de force* did not score the mark. Good numbers of candidates were successful on **Question 39(a)**: *peur* was enough, by itself, to gain the mark. **Question 39(b)** provided an appropriate challenge for the best candidates who were able to render *savait quoi faire.* To be successful on this question, candidates did need to include an appropriate attempt at the verb *savoir*: renderings such as *savé/sais* were acceptable. **Question 40** was suitably challenging for this stage of the test. Examiners were looking for the concept of collective responsibility: *chacun/chaque pompier est responsable des autres.* The mark scheme allowed for various recognisable versions of *responsable* which often proved difficult to spell accurately. Answers which did not include the notion of 'for others' were incomplete and did not gain the mark. On the final question, candidates needed to include an appropriate verb expressing future intention such as *devenir* (but not *deviner), voudrait être, être, sera,* together with *professionnelle.* Candidates needed to read this question carefully as it asked what Christine wanted to do **after** passing her exams. This was a good test of listening which required candidates to think carefully about the sequence of events heard. Some invalidated their answers by including the required details but then adding in extras such as *passer des examens* or *travail volontaire.* Candidates often produced the correct events but in the wrong order. Some also mis-heard the recording and tried to render the last sentence (which included the phrase *projet à long terme)* as *devenir interne.* Other incorrect attempts featured the idea of becoming a teacher. A good number of candidates did however manage to score this last mark by being concise, correctly identifying the notion of turning professional and rendering this in an acceptable form.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/21
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

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

- keep their answers brief and focused, particularly in *Section 3*;
- avoid indiscriminate lifting in *Section 3*;
- read the essay question carefully and answer every part of it;
- allow time for reading through their answers to check that they have answered every question and have made any corrections needed;
- ensure that when they change an answer they do so in such a way as to make it clear what is their final answer and what the Examiner is to mark.

General comments

The paper proved accessible to candidates. They seemed to be well-prepared for the style of the paper, and had no obvious difficulties in completing it within the time allowed. The vast majority attempted all sections and exercises on the paper.

Levels of grammatical accuracy were not generally high, with verbs, genders, possessives and pronouns showing problems. Candidates should re-read what they have written once they have finished the paper, and correct simple errors such as words miscopied from the text (sometimes copied differently each time), and singular and plural verb agreements, for example, particularly in *Section 3* where such errors may mean that a mark cannot be awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

The majority of candidates scored well here, with most achieving at least four of the five marks available. In **Question 1** some could not correctly identify *bananes.* *Manteau* was also not always well known – candidates sometimes gave C (a washing machine) as the answer to **Question 3**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise tested the comprehension of items that Joséphine would take with her on holiday to the seaside, and was generally very well done. Candidates occasionally chose B, *crème solaire*, as their answer for **Question 6** or for **Question 8**.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

For this exercise, candidates read a short piece of text and answered a series of multiple choice questions. Most candidates scored full marks here. Those who did not, usually lost the mark for **Question 13** as they chose B rather than A.

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Exercise 4 Question 16

For this piece of writing, there are three marks available for communication, and two for accurate use of language. Candidates were asked to write a short email to a French friend and provide three pieces of information, based on the pictures given:

(a) where they are (*gare*, with *station/métro/train* also being accepted);
(b) what they are buying (*bouteille,* any drink);
(c) what they are going to see (*Tour Eiffel*, *monument*, *Paris* – all accepted).

Most candidates managed something appropriate for the first task although some candidates confused the issue by using *gare routière*, which could not be accepted as it clearly gave the wrong message. Similarly, credit could not be given where candidates wrote *j'ai la gare* (instead of *je suis*...) or *je travaille dans le train*.

The second task needed the use of *acheter*, and the majority managed this, opting to buy a wide variety of drinks. For the last task, the spellings of *Tour Eiffel* were many and various, but where the result was close to the correct spelling, the mark was awarded, as was mention of visiting Paris, or going to see the monuments.

In order to score the two marks available for language, candidates had to use two correct verbs in appropriate tenses – Examiners accepted present, future and past tenses here, provided that the version of events offered showed some internal logic. Candidates tended to be very successful with their use of *je vais* + infinitive. *J'achète* caused some problems for the language mark – although the present tense was accepted without an accent, *je achète* and *j'ai achete* were not. Care must be taken with the use of accents.

Candidates should take note that they do not need to write at great length here – **three brief sentences can score full marks**. Most scored well for this exercise, with many achieving the maximum of five.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-25

For this exercise, candidates were asked to read a longer piece of text (in this instance, an email from Charles about a walking holiday) and answer the questions in French. The majority of candidates coped extremely well with this exercise. Often a one or two word answer was sufficient, but provided that what the candidate had written contained the correct answer, additional material copied from the text was usually tolerated. The quality of the written French was considered only in terms of whether or not it communicated.

For **Question 17** the answer looked for was some version of *passer vacances*, and for **Question 18**, the idea of walking in the mountains, though some candidates left out the necessary mention of *montagne*. For **Question 19**, the idea to be conveyed was *partir avec (père)*, and most scored here, though a few gave *partir avec Adrien* (incorrect). The next answer needed the two elements of *randonnée* + *difficile*: some candidates opted for only one of these and did not score. For **Questions 21** and **22** (these were the two questions where wrong answers were most common), the ideas looked for were firstly that Charles and his father had undertaken *une marche de 15 km*, and then that Charles *pouvait/peut/a pu faire cette marche*. The last three questions were generally very well done, although for **Question 24** candidates sometimes offered the date, *15 juillet*, rather than how long the trip was intended to take – *une dizaine de jours* or *dix jours*, with some candidates reading this as twelve days. The answers to **Question 25**, *tente* and *carte* were very straightforward – those who wrote *tante* did not score.

Exercise 2 Question 26

This writing task – a short essay of 80 to 90 words – was well within the experience of all candidates. Candidates were asked to

(a) describe what they do at school;
(b) say what they like and do not like at school;
(c) say whether they would like to become a teacher themselves, together with reasons why or why not.

Ten marks were available for communication of the required elements and five marks were available for language. Many candidates scored the maximum marks available and very few failed to attempt the question.

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Candidates found this essay very accessible and their essays were often lively and interesting. Some candidates spent several sentences describing their school, for which there were no marks available. Tasks **(a)** and **(b)** were very well done: many candidates gave lists of subjects they studied and the sports activities available to them, and scored well for the first task. The same school subjects could not score again for the second task. Candidates were credited for the numerous reasons why they did or did not like them, and for the other likes and dislikes about school – a common dislike was school uniform, because it was uncomfortable, though the opposite view also appeared, that school uniform was a good thing because it saved time in the morning since there was no question over what to wear. There were a number who said they would like to become teachers because they liked young people, and others who said they would not choose this career, in spite of the long holidays, because of the poor pay! Task **(c)** was misunderstood by some candidates, who clearly read it as *Aimez-vous votre professeur?* and who therefore talked at some length about the teachers they liked/disliked and then failed to deal with whether they would like to become a teacher themselves – most were still able to score nine of the possible communication marks because of the many mark-worthy elements mentioned for the first two tasks.

The language used was good, for the most part, and many candidates scored four or five – there were some candidates who stuck to simple repetitive language and others who had clearly spent a lot of time writing very elaborate and well-practised language, full of idioms and elegant touches. There were many problems with the spellings of *intéressant, matières, cours, chimie, physique, professeur* and *ennuyeux,* and also with the use and conjugation of the verbs *apprendre, étudier* and *s'ennuyer*.

Section 3

In this section, candidates are expected to show a more precise level of understanding of longer French texts. It is no longer enough just to be able to locate the correct area of the text which will supply the answer looked for: candidates need to show that they have understood the text and have focused on precisely the details required for the answer. In *Section 3*, while it may still be possible to lift answers from the text, candidates need to be very precise in what they choose for their answer – additional material copied may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates who lift indiscriminately do not demonstrate genuine comprehension and, therefore, cannot score the marks. The inclusion of unnecessary connectives such as *mais, alors, donc,* etc. will often result in the invalidation of an otherwise correct answer. Candidates would do well to be guided by the length of space allocated for an answer – if there is only one line shown, the answer is expected to fit in that space.

Exercise 1 Questions 27-32

For this exercise, having read the text, candidates have to make up their minds which of the given statements are *Vrai* and which are *Faux,* and they are told that two are *Vrai* and four are *Faux*. Having made their choice, they must then go on to correct the false ones in the style of the example given. There is no credit given for a version which just adds *...ne...pas...* to the original statement. Candidates had been well-trained to tick only four false statements and to only offer corrections for these.

Questions 27 and **29** were the two most often incorrectly identified as true or false – the others were usually correctly ticked. Those who thought that **Question 27** was true were unable to score the mark for the justification, but those who had correctly identified it as false were generally able to offer as a correction, either that *Monique aide les gens dans les pays où la vie est moins facile* – a required element of the answer – or *elle rejoint Médecins du Monde*. The justification for **Question 28** was straightforward and generally well done – *elle donne une formation*. Those who used *information* did not score, neither did those who chose to begin their answer with *où...* – an instance where extra material invalidated an otherwise correct answer. **Question 29** was true and needed no correction. There were two possible justifications for **Question 30**: either that *Monique avait peu de contact avec ses collègues (en France)* or that *Monique apprécie les relations amicales avec (les équipes de) Médecins du Monde*. For **Question 32** the information looked for was either that the parents chose traditional medicine, or that they refused modern medicine (which would be of benefit to their child) – candidates who included both aspects also scored the mark. Some candidates failed to score because they referred to Monique's parents, or because they lifted the whole of the last sentence rather than choosing the exact detail needed.

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Exercise 2 Questions 33-41

This final exercise was, as intended, the most demanding part of the paper and many candidates found it quite challenging. Even though many candidates were able to locate the correct part of the text, they were not selective enough when choosing what was a relevant response to the question. It was often the case that where candidates chose to copy a chunk of text with the correct answer buried within it, the extra details they included rendered their answer invalid.

Many candidates were able to answer **Question 33** correctly with *un collègue le/lui demande*. Some thought it was just because he was a journalist, and some tried to express the required concept but tangled themselves with the *le/lui demande* construction. A few mis-copied from the text – *collège* instead of *collègue* – and could not score the mark because of the altered meaning. The majority of candidates provided a correct answer for **Question 34**, *loin des villes* or *loin des endroits touristiques*, and many also managed **Question 35**, although they needed to include four elements – *il vit + seul + deux mois + en forêt* – in order to score the mark. **Question 36** was sometimes answered with *c'est déjà le désastre* which did not score, but this was generally well done, since the simple answer *on coupe les arbres* was rewarded.

For **Question 37** the answer needed to mention *montrer ce qu'on va perdre* – there was some invalidation from candidates who mis-copied *monter* and *prendre*/*pendre* or changed the tense to a past tense. Some candidates thought that the answer was *protéger endroits sauvages* which was actually the correct answer for **Question 38**. Here, there were some who thought the important element was the *association*, but Nicholas's objective, according to the text, was the protection of *endroits sauvages* and the *association* was the means he used to achieve this. **Question 39(a)** was very straightforward – the answer looked for was simply *les jeunes*, and candidates who added additional material from the text – *surtout* or *qui doivent apprendre à respecter la nature* could not score. For **Question 39(b)** many candidates thought the answer was to do with the money collected, rather than the creation of *le meilleur projet environnement-nature*. **Question 40** was generally well done. The answer was simply *les/des paysages les plus beaux et (les plus) sauvages* – both elements were needed. Some candidates copied the whole sentence beginning *on y voit un jeune*... which did not score because of the additional material. **Question 41** presented candidates with some problems: this could also be answered very simply by choosing *il est sportif* or *il a la passion des voyages* or *il n'a pas peur du risque*. Some candidates tried to combine two or more possibilities, but referred to *ce jeune* (not identified) or *ces qualités* (again not identified) or tried to include *ne pas avoir peur du risque* from the text without correctly manipulating the infinitive.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/22
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

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

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- avoid indiscriminate lifting in *Section 3*;
- read the essay question carefully and answer every part of it;
- allow time for reading through their answers to check that they have answered every question and have made any corrections needed;
- ensure that when they change an answer they do so in such a way as to make it clear what is their final answer and what the Examiner is to mark.

General comments

The paper proved accessible to candidates. They seemed to be well-prepared for the style of the paper, and had no obvious difficulties in completing it within the time allowed. The vast majority attempted all sections and exercises on the paper.

Levels of grammatical accuracy were not generally high, with verbs, genders, possessives and pronouns showing problems. Candidates should re-read what they have written once they have finished the paper, and correct simple errors such as words miscopied from the text (sometimes copied differently each time), and singular and plural verb agreements, for example, particularly in *Section 3* where such errors may mean that a mark cannot be awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Most candidates scored very well in this exercise and seemed very familiar with all the items of vocabulary tested.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise tested the comprehension of items that Jean would take with him on holiday to the mountains, and was generally very well done. Candidates usually scored the three marks available for **Questions 6-8**. Answers to **Questions 9** and **10** revealed some confusion as to the meaning of *imperméable, chaussures de marche* and *maillot de bain*.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

For this exercise, candidates read a short piece of text and answered a series of multiple choice questions. The vast majority of candidates scored full marks here. Those who did not, usually lost the mark for **Question 11** as they chose B rather than C.

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Exercise 4 Question 16

For this piece of writing, there are three marks available for communication, and two for accurate use of language. Candidates were asked to write a short email to a French friend and provide three pieces of information, based on the pictures given:

(a) where they are (*gare routière, station de bus, arrêt de bus* or *dans le bus* – all accepted);
(b) what they are buying (*magazine, livre, journal, programme* – all accepted);
(c) what they are going to see (*concert, spectacle, festival de musique, groupe, orchestre* – all accepted).

Most candidates managed something appropriate for the first task although some candidates confused the issue by using *gare (SNCF)*, which could not be accepted as it did not convey the correct message.

For the second task, the spelling of *magazine* was not widely known and there was much confusion with *magasin*. For the last task, a variety of 'shows' were accepted. *Discothèque* and *bande* were not rewarded.

In order to score the two marks available for language, candidates had to use two correct verbs in appropriate tenses – Examiners accepted present, future and past tenses here, provided that the version of events offered showed some internal logic. Candidates tended to be very successful with their use of *je vais* + infinitive. *J'achète* caused some problems for the language mark – although the present tense was accepted without an accent, *je achète* and *j'ai achete* were not. Care must be taken with the use of accents.

Candidates should take note that they do not need to write at great length here – **three brief sentences can score full marks**. Most scored well for this exercise, with many achieving the maximum of five.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-25

For this exercise, candidates were asked to read a longer piece of text (in this instance, an email from Nancy about her new home) and answer the questions in French. The majority of candidates coped extremely well with this exercise. Often a one or two word answer was sufficient, but provided that what the candidate had written contained the correct answer, additional material copied from the text was usually tolerated. The quality of the written French was considered only in terms of whether or not it communicated.

Questions 17, 18 and **19** were usually very successfully answered. Some candidates became slightly confused as to where Nancy used to live and was now living when answering **Questions 20** and **21**. *Un appartement à Paris* were the two elements expected for **Question 20** and either *à la campagne* or *près d'une petite ville* for **Question 21**. Candidates who wrote *dans une petite ville* without any mention of *à la campagne* did not score the mark. **Questions 22** and **23** were very well answered. For **Question 24** *être dans une maison qu'elle ne connaît pas* was the expected answer and many candidates conveyed the message successfully. For **Question 25** candidates could either state that *Marjorie/son amie arrive dans deux semaines* or *passer les vacances avec Marjorie/son amie*. Ambiguous answers such as *elle arrive dans deux semaines* could not be rewarded as there was no indication of who *elle* was meant to be.

Exercise 2 Question 26

This writing task – a short essay of 80 to 90 words – was well within the experience of all candidates. Candidates were asked to

(a) describe what they do on their birthday;
(b) say how they celebrate their friends' birthdays;
(c) say what present they would like to receive in the future and why.

Ten marks were available for communication of the required elements and five marks were available for language. Many candidates scored the maximum marks available and very few failed to attempt the question.

Candidates found this essay very accessible and their essays were often lively and interesting. The emphasis for both **(a)** and **(b)** was on what they did. They were also rewarded for one reaction, e.g.: *c'est super* and mentioning their presents. Candidates should avoid repeating the same piece of information as it can only be credited once. Going to a restaurant/a disco/a cinema, swimming and shopping often appeared

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in both **(a)** and **(b)**. **(c)** was usually well done with candidates indicating what they would like to receive, mainly a car, a cat or a new computer, and providing satisfactory justifications.

The language used was good, for the most part, and there were many very pleasing essays which demonstrated a secure and accurate use of the language. To achieve a high mark for language, candidates need to vary their choice of vocabulary and check the accuracy of the verb forms and tenses they use. Some candidates stuck to simple, repetitive language – there was much repetition of *je vais, je suis allé(e), je joue* – and others had clearly spent a lot of time writing very elaborate and well-practised language, full of idioms and elegant touches. There was some confusion in between *gâteau* and *cadeau.*

Section 3

In this section, candidates are expected to show a more precise level of understanding of longer French texts. It is no longer enough just to be able to locate the correct area of the text which will supply the answer looked for: candidates need to show that they have understood the text and have focused on precisely the details required for the answer. Candidates who lift indiscriminately do not demonstrate genuine comprehension and, therefore, cannot score the marks. The inclusion of unnecessary connectives such as *mais, alors, donc,* etc. will often result in the invalidation of an otherwise correct answer. Candidates would do well to be guided by the length of space allocated for an answer – if there is only one line shown, the answer is expected to fit in that space.

Exercise 1 Questions 27-32

In this exercise, having read the text, candidates have to make up their minds which of the given statements are *Vrai* and which are *Faux*, and they are told that two are *Vrai* and four are *Faux*. Having made their choice, they must then go on to correct the false ones in the style of the example given. There is no credit given for a version which just adds ...*ne...pas...* to the original statement. Candidates had been well-trained to tick only four false statements and to only offer justifications to these.

For **Question 27**, which was false, candidates could select from the text that *ses parents la poussent à continuer ses études* or adapt the statement to *ils espèrent qu'elle continuera ses études.* Candidates who answered *ils espèrent qu'elle <u>à</u> continuer ses études...* did not score the mark as the message conveyed was ambiguous. **Question 28** was also false and candidates could choose either *les médecins lui interdisent de refaire du vélo* or *ils lui conseillent les sports d'eau* to correct the statement. For **Question 29** two answers were acceptable: *elle ne sait pas ce que c'est* or *une amie lui propose le bodyboard,* but without the *alors* after the verb. **Question 30** was true. **Question 31** was the fourth false statement and required *elle n'est (vraiment) pas enthousiasmée* as a correction. Candidates who provided justifications for the protagonist's lack of enthusiasm – *il n'y a pas de vagues et elle a froid dans l'eau* – were not penalised. **Question 32** was true and needed no correction.

Exercise 2 Questions 33-41

This final exercise was, as intended, the most demanding part of the paper and many candidates found it quite challenging. Even though many candidates were able to locate the correct part of the text, they were not selective enough when choosing what was a relevant response to the question. It was often the case that where candidates chose to copy a chunk of text with the correct answer buried within it, the extra details they included rendered their answer invalid.

Many candidates successfully answered **Question 33** with the brief response *ses explorations dans les régions polaires.* For **Question 34** *dans l'océan Pacifique* was sufficient to gain the mark. Answers to **Question 35** were often invalidated by the inclusion of *qui servira* before *à étudier la vie dans l'océan.* It is important to note that if a conjugated verb is used, a subject will usually be required. *Servira à étudier la vie dans l'océan* was therefore not credited. Candidates often lost the mark available for **Question 36** by adding *qui viennent polluer l'île* to the correct answer *emportés par la mer*. The mark was also lost if candidates chose to use *les déchets/ils* without *sont.*

Nettoyer l'île was sufficient to gain the mark for **Question 37**. This question was usually well answered. **Question 38** did not always seem to have been understood by candidates who listed *brosses à dents, morceaux de plastique, jambes de poupées* instead of the expected *ils ont trouvé un moyen de se servir (de la plupart) de ces objets.* **Question 39** also caused a few problems as even though candidates located the correct part of the text, they produced the full lift *en nettoyant il ne faut donc pas détruire ce nouvel équilibre* rather than the required answer *il ne faut pas détruire le nouvel équilibre*. **Question 40** posed similar problems as candidates lifted indiscriminately *cette liste va permettre aux scientifiques de commencer à*

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/23
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

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

- keep their answers brief and focused, particularly in *Section 3*;
- avoid indiscriminate lifting in *Section 3*;
- read the essay question carefully and answer every part of it;
- allow time for reading through their answers to check that they have answered every question and have made any corrections needed;
- ensure that when they change an answer they do so in such a way as to make it clear what is their final answer and what the Examiner is to mark.

General comments

The paper proved accessible to candidates. They seemed to be well-prepared for the style of the paper, and had no obvious difficulties in completing it within the time allowed. The vast majority attempted all sections and exercises on the paper.

Levels of grammatical accuracy were not generally high, with verbs, genders, possessives and pronouns showing problems. Candidates should re-read what they have written once they have finished the paper, and correct simple errors such as words miscopied from the text (sometimes copied differently each time), and singular and plural verb agreements, for example, particularly in *Section 3* where such errors may mean that a mark cannot be awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Most candidates scored very well in this exercise and seemed very familiar with all the items of vocabulary tested.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise tested the comprehension of items that Jean would take with him on holiday to the mountains, and was generally very well done. Candidates usually scored the three marks available for **Questions 6-8**. Answers to **Questions 9** and **10** revealed some confusion as to the meaning of *imperméable, chaussures de marche* and *maillot de bain*.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

For this exercise, candidates read a short piece of text and answered a series of multiple choice questions. The vast majority of candidates scored full marks here. Those who did not, usually lost the mark for **Question 11** as they chose B rather than C.

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Exercise 4 Question 16

For this piece of writing, there are three marks available for communication, and two for accurate use of language. Candidates were asked to write a short email to a French friend and provide three pieces of information, based on the pictures given:

(a) where they are (*gare routière, station de bus, arrêt de bus* or *dans le bus* – all accepted);
(b) what they are buying (*magazine, livre, journal, programme* – all accepted);
(c) what they are going to see (*concert, spectacle, festival de musique, groupe, orchestre* – all accepted).

Most candidates managed something appropriate for the first task although some candidates confused the issue by using *gare (SNCF)*, which could not be accepted as it did not convey the correct message.

For the second task, the spelling of *magazine* was not widely known and there was much confusion with *magasin*. For the last task, a variety of 'shows' were accepted. *Discothèque* and *bande* were not rewarded.

In order to score the two marks available for language, candidates had to use two correct verbs in appropriate tenses – Examiners accepted present, future and past tenses here, provided that the version of events offered showed some internal logic. Candidates tended to be very successful with their use of *je vais* + infinitive. *J'achète* caused some problems for the language mark – although the present tense was accepted without an accent, *je achète* and *j'ai achete* were not. Care must be taken with the use of accents.

Candidates should take note that they do not need to write at great length here – **three brief sentences can score full marks**. Most scored well for this exercise, with many achieving the maximum of five.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-25

For this exercise, candidates were asked to read a longer piece of text (in this instance, an email from Nancy about her new home) and answer the questions in French. The majority of candidates coped extremely well with this exercise. Often a one or two word answer was sufficient, but provided that what the candidate had written contained the correct answer, additional material copied from the text was usually tolerated. The quality of the written French was considered only in terms of whether or not it communicated.

Questions 17, 18 and **19** were usually very successfully answered. Some candidates became slightly confused as to where Nancy used to live and was now living when answering **Questions 20** and **21**. *Un appartement à Paris* were the two elements expected for **Question 20** and either *à la campagne* or *près d'une petite ville* for **Question 21**. Candidates who wrote *dans une petite ville* without any mention of *à la campagne* did not score the mark. **Questions 22** and **23** were very well answered. For **Question 24** *être dans une maison qu'elle ne connaît pas* was the expected answer and many candidates conveyed the message successfully. For **Question 25** candidates could either state that *Marjorie/son amie arrive dans deux semaines* or *passer les vacances avec Marjorie/son amie*. Ambiguous answers such as *elle arrive dans deux semaines* could not be rewarded as there was no indication of who *elle* was meant to be.

Exercise 2 Question 26

This writing task – a short essay of 80 to 90 words – was well within the experience of all candidates. Candidates were asked to

(a) describe what they do on their birthday;
(b) say how they celebrate their friends' birthdays;
(c) say what present they would like to receive in the future and why.

Ten marks were available for communication of the required elements and five marks were available for language. Many candidates scored the maximum marks available and very few failed to attempt the question.

Candidates found this essay very accessible and their essays were often lively and interesting. The emphasis for both **(a)** and **(b)** was on what they did. They were also rewarded for one reaction, e.g.: *c'est super* and mentioning their presents. Candidates should avoid repeating the same piece of information as it can only be credited once. Going to a restaurant/a disco/a cinema, swimming and shopping often appeared

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in both **(a)** and **(b)**. **(c)** was usually well done with candidates indicating what they would like to receive, mainly a car, a cat or a new computer, and providing satisfactory justifications.

The language used was good, for the most part, and there were many very pleasing essays which demonstrated a secure and accurate use of the language. To achieve a high mark for language, candidates need to vary their choice of vocabulary and check the accuracy of the verb forms and tenses they use. Some candidates stuck to simple, repetitive language – there was much repetition of *je vais, je suis allé(e), je joue* – and others had clearly spent a lot of time writing very elaborate and well-practised language, full of idioms and elegant touches. There was some confusion in between *gâteau* and *cadeau.*

Section 3

In this section, candidates are expected to show a more precise level of understanding of longer French texts. It is no longer enough just to be able to locate the correct area of the text which will supply the answer looked for: candidates need to show that they have understood the text and have focused on precisely the details required for the answer. Candidates who lift indiscriminately do not demonstrate genuine comprehension and, therefore, cannot score the marks. The inclusion of unnecessary connectives such as *mais, alors, donc,* etc. will often result in the invalidation of an otherwise correct answer. Candidates would do well to be guided by the length of space allocated for an answer – if there is only one line shown, the answer is expected to fit in that space.

Exercise 1 Questions 27-32

In this exercise, having read the text, candidates have to make up their minds which of the given statements are *Vrai* and which are *Faux*, and they are told that two are *Vrai* and four are *Faux*. Having made their choice, they must then go on to correct the false ones in the style of the example given. There is no credit given for a version which just adds ...*ne...pas...* to the original statement. Candidates had been well-trained to tick only four false statements and to only offer justifications to these.

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Exercise 2 Questions 33-41

This final exercise was, as intended, the most demanding part of the paper and many candidates found it quite challenging. Even though many candidates were able to locate the correct part of the text, they were not selective enough when choosing what was a relevant response to the question. It was often the case that where candidates chose to copy a chunk of text with the correct answer buried within it, the extra details they included rendered their answer invalid.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/03
Speaking

Key messages

- Examiners generally kept well to Role play scripts which in turn enabled candidates to stick more closely to the cues on their cards. To score well in the Role plays, candidates need to be as concise as possible.
- Time limits were generally well observed. Where conversation sections are too short or too long there is a risk that candidates will be disadvantaged.
- Most Centres remembered to include questions in **both** conversation sections to elicit past and future tenses from candidates. Candidates must show they can use past and future tenses consistently and accurately if they are to score more than six marks for Linguistic content (scale (b)).
- Centres should ensure that a wide range of topics is covered across their candidates in both the Topic and General conversation sections.
- The best performances at all levels of ability occurred in Centres where there had not been over-preparation, and where conversations were allowed to develop in a natural way. In such Centres, candidates were given the opportunity to respond not just to straightforward questions but also to unexpected ones, and were encouraged to develop their answers and explain their opinions.

General comments

This paper was common to all candidates, whether they had followed a Core Curriculum or an Extended Curriculum course.

The general standard of work heard by Moderators was very good. Most Examiners had familiarised themselves with the requirements of the Speaking test and with the mark scheme, and seemed well aware of the need to give candidates the opportunity to show what they knew and could do. Candidates were aware of the demands of the test and had usually prepared well.

Role plays were usually conducted efficiently, with Examiners sticking closely to the cues provided. Centres are reminded that teacher/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. 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 the last Speaking test has been conducted, they must remain in secure storage until the end of the Speaking test period.

In the conversation sections it is essential that Examiners 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, if Examiners include unexpected questions and go beyond the straightforward then candidates will have the possibility of scoring in the Good band or above on scale (a), Comprehension/responsiveness. Likewise, to score a mark beyond six on scale (b), Linguistic content, candidates need to be able to answer questions which require them to use past and future tenses accurately. The full requirements of the test are explained in the Teachers' Notes booklet and all Centres must ensure they understand them well in advance of the test (e.g. by looking at a past copy of the booklet) so that they have plenty of time to contact Cambridge in order to clarify any uncertainties. A French language version of these requirements also exists and is available on the Cambridge website.

- **Clerical checks**

In most Centres, the addition and transfer of marks was accurate. Some large clerical errors were found and corrected by Moderators: it is essential that all clerical work is checked with great care in the Centre to ensure that all candidates receive the correct mark. On the working marking sheet, the addition of the

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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. Centres using MS1 mark sheets to return marks to Cambridge must enter the total mark for each candidate in figures as well as shading the lozenges.

- **Cover sheet for moderation sample**

Most Centres remembered to submit the Cover Sheet for Moderation Sample, duly completed, along with the other materials for external Moderation. Completion of this form allows Centres to check that their moderation sample is correct.

- **Sample size and recording quality**

Centres usually complied with the sampling procedures. The sample size of 16 was particularly useful in the case of Centres with a wide range of marks. One or two Centres sent in very large samples: Centres are reminded to check the instructions on sample size carefully and to ask for advice from Cambridge if they are unsure how to proceed.

A high proportion of the recordings received by Cambridge were of a good quality and Centres are thanked for this. The use of digital recording technology has resulted in a great improvement in sound quality. Some Centres still use cassettes and this is also acceptable. Whatever the method chosen for recording, if an external microphone is used, this should be positioned to favour the candidate.

This year there was a noticeable increase in the number of instances of 'problem' CDs. Centres submitting recorded samples on CD are asked to take careful note of the following:

- Centres must check that their recorded sample is clearly audible on the CD before sending it to Cambridge. This check should be carried out on a different machine to the one on which the recordings were made. If there is a problem, Centres should contact Cambridge immediately in order to discuss how best to proceed.
- All digital recordings must be saved as .mp3 files. If Centres are considering future equipment needs, it is well worth investing in a digital voice recorder (IC recorder). These machines are easy to use and the sound quality of the recordings they produce is excellent. Once the recordings have been made, they can easily be transferred to a computer and from there to a CD. Because the device itself is small it is less intimidating for candidates.
- Good quality CDs must be used.
- Labels must not be stuck on CDs.
- Only a CD marker pen should be used for writing on the surface of the CD – use of any pen that is not specifically labelled as a 'CD/DVD marker' is likely to damage the recordings and/or the Moderator's equipment.
- The sound file for each candidate's recording must saved as a separate file and named according to the following convention: Centre number_candidate number_syllabus number_component number. The box for the CD should be clearly labelled and a list of which candidates are on which CD and in which order should be enclosed for each CD.
- Each CD must include a recorded introduction by the Examiner, listing the CD number, Centre number, examination number, examination name, name of Examiner and date. This introduction needs to be made only once, and should be saved as a separate file (named 'recording introduction').
- CDs should ideally be sent in their box. These should then be carefully wrapped in some form of protective packaging before they are placed in the envelope with the moderation paperwork. A number of CDs arrived broken. If a CD box is not available, even greater care must be taken to ensure that packaging will protect the CD in transit.

If the recorded sample is submitted on cassette, each cassette must be accompanied by a list of the featured recordings in order of play. At the start of each cassette there must be a recorded introduction by the Examiner, listing the cassette 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 each candidate by name and number and announce the Role play card number. This introduction must not be made by the candidate.

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Once the recorded sample has been carefully wrapped in protective packaging, it should be placed in an envelope with the moderation paperwork, for despatch to Cambridge. The appropriate label (which includes the Centre name and a bar-code) should be placed on the envelope. The envelope containing the recordings and paperwork should then be packaged in another parcel/envelope and one of the return labels with the Cambridge address should be attached before it is returned to Cambridge.

- **Internal moderation in Centres**

Centres which had been given permission to use more than one Examiner had, as last year, adopted a thoroughly professional approach to internal moderation and had carefully documented their procedures for achieving consistency. It was clear that in many Centres great efforts had been made to cross-check the standard applied by different Examiners and to ensure that marks awarded followed a single rank order before these were submitted to Cambridge.

Any Centre wishing to use more than one Examiner to conduct the Speaking tests for its candidates must apply to Cambridge for permission to do so 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 and sent to Cambridge for checking.

New Centres are reminded that where more than one Examiner is used, it is crucial that the recordings supplied to Cambridge as part of the sample allow Moderators to check that all Examiners have adopted a uniform approach to the test and applied the mark scheme consistently.

Where more than one Examiner is used, the coordinating Examiner will check a sample of two or three recordings for each Examiner to ensure that marking is consistent for all candidates at the Centre. Where this checking reveals a particular Examiner's marking to be harsh or lenient, the coordinating Examiner will decide whether the differences are such as to make it necessary to adjust the marks for any candidates examined by that Examiner. The marks of the individual candidates listened to must not be adjusted in isolation. The necessary adjustment must be applied to any candidates marked by that Examiner who may have been marked severely or leniently. All decisions must be recorded in such a way as to make it clear to the external Moderator exactly what has taken place. Particular care must be taken to ensure that the correct final total mark is transferred to the MS1 mark sheet or to computer.

- **Duration of tests / missing elements**

Most Centres adhered to the stipulated timings. Some Centres continue to go under or over the five minutes prescribed for the Topic conversation **and/or** the General conversation. Each of these sections **must** last for approximately five minutes. Where conversations are short or missing, candidates are not given the opportunity to work for marks. Where conversations are long, candidates become tired and this also affects performance.

- **Application of the mark scheme**

Generally, Examiners in Centres were successful in applying the mark scheme fairly and consistently. Many Centres had no adjustments made to their marks as they were in line with the agreed standard. Some Centres had adjustments made to just part of the mark range.

As in 2011, some Examiners did not realise that a short response in the Role plays, if appropriate, can earn a mark of three. If there are two parts to a task then Examiners are free to split the task, but should only one part of a task be completed by the candidate, the maximum mark which can be awarded is one. If a candidate uses a verb to complete a task and makes an error of tense or conjugation, a maximum mark of two and not three is appropriate.

In some Centres, there was a tendency for marks to be generous in the conversation sections because 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**.

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Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Centres should encourage candidates to attempt all parts of each task, as presented on the Role play cards: if only one part of a two-part task is completed, only one mark can be awarded. This year, two-part tasks were split into (i) and (ii) on the Role play cards. This clearly helped candidates to remember to attempt both parts of the tasks and there were fewer cases of candidates (and Examiners) missing out parts of tasks. This, together with the numbering of tasks, seems to have helped candidates to use their preparation time productively.

Overlong answers are not to be encouraged as marks are only awarded for the set tasks. Indeed, should candidates (or Examiners) expand the set tasks, there is a danger that any extra material will distort meaning and detract from an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should be reminded that it is important to always listen to the Examiner as on all the A Role plays there is a task which requires them to listen and choose from two options offered by the Examiner, and on the B Role plays there is always one task which requires them to respond to an unexpected question. Examiners are reminded not to change the cues provided in the Teachers' Notes booklet unnecessarily.

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.

A Role plays

The A Role plays were perceived to be of equal difficulty, very similar in difficulty to those of 2011, and a fair test at this level. They 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 cards featured one 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 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 three can be awarded.

Reserving at a campsite

Candidates performed well on this Role play. On the first task, to have access to the three marks, candidates needed first to greet the receptionist and then to indicate that they wanted to make a reservation. If they stated that they already had a reservation then the message was confused. Nearly all candidates went on to successfully choose a place for either a tent or a caravan. On the next task any logical time of arrival was accepted such as *demain,* a time, or a date. Most were then able to indicate the number of nights required – answers including references to weeks and months were accepted. For the last task, candidates showed they could phrase an appropriate question.

Buying a bus ticket

On the first task, candidates could have access to the three marks by greeting the employee and then either stating their intent to buy a ticket or go to the beach. On task 2, a specific time was required. Candidates were generally successful in stating how many tickets they wanted, but many still mispronounce *ticket.* Most were able to choose between a single and a return ticket for the next task and coped well with thanking the employee and asking the price in the final task.

Buying a pizza

The first task was done well and candidates had few problems greeting the employee and saying that they wanted to buy pizza. On the second task a few candidates did not always wait for the Examiner to provide the options and sometimes inserted their own preference instead. Provided that the Examiner went on to read the scripted options so that the candidate had to choose one of them this did not present a problem. All were able to communicate how many portions they wanted and the number on its own gave access to the three marks. On task 4, brand names were accepted. As in 2011, those who chose to use the word *jus* did not always pronounce it well. Nearly all remembered to include their thanks and most were able to ask the price.

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B Role plays

The B Role plays were deliberately more demanding in that they required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, give an opinion, or express pleasure. The level of challenge was balanced across the Role plays. They differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score marks on most 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. They should be advised to consider likely questions in the 15 minutes of preparation time, immediately prior to the Speaking test, and to listen carefully in the examination room.

Telephoning the sports centre

Candidates were usually able to use a perfect tense appropriately on the first task. The use of either of the verbs *oublier or laisser* was acceptable. On the second task any extra detail of location such as *dans le café/à la piscine* was accepted. A few candidates combined the first two tasks and providing all the required elements were there, the marks for both tasks were awarded. The third task was well done and nearly all candidates were able to supply two appropriate adjectives. Task 4 was a task in which candidates were required to express pleasure. This was not always well done. Some merely thanked the employee and went straight into the description of the contents of the bag which was not the most appropriate language and therefore gained two not three marks. Some did say something appropriate such as *je suis content(e). S*horter reactions such as *Super! / Fantastique! / Cool!* were also acceptable. Candidates were usually able to ask an appropriate question about the opening times, but some attempts showed a need for more careful control of verb endings.

Thanking a friend after a holiday

Most candidates were able to greet and thank Claude for the holiday. On task 2 some candidates limited themselves to a mark of one as they only gave an opinion about their return trip (i) and did not add a relevant activity (ii). Weaker attempts mentioned what the candidate had done at Claude's house, indicating that the reference to the *voyage de retour* had not been fully assimilated. Many gave a brief but appropriate response on the third task such as *chez moi.* The fourth task proved difficult for some. Candidates needed to ask Claude to stay with them but some asked Claude back to his own house or invited themselves back to Claude's house. The last task was well done and many were able to communicate two activities for the visit.

Telephoning about a problem with a rented car

Candidates generally approached the first task well, greeting the employee and saying that the car had broken down. The second task was also fairly straightforward with nearly all candidates able to identify themselves and then say for how long they had rented the car. On the unexpected task, many were able to offer a relevant detail about the car. Not all were able to formulate a question in the third person on task 4. Task 5 required the candidate to express an emotional reaction, and some missed this out. Most were able to say where they were.

Topic presentation & conversation

Moderators were again impressed with the high standard of work heard in this section. The whole section (Topic presentation and Topic conversation) should last about five minutes. As last year, the timings were generally good. The Topic presentation should last between one and two minutes. Candidates must not be allowed to present their prepared material for longer than two minutes. The remainder of the five minutes allotted to this section should consist of a spontaneous conversation with the candidate about his/her topic. There were cases of overlong presentations (which then restricted the amount of time for follow-up questions) and there were also cases of very short presentations. Examiners should not start asking questions too early during the presentation time but must start asking questions once the candidate reaches the two minute point. 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. It is also important that the questions do not encourage the candidate merely to repeat information which has already been given in the presentation. Questions should instead arise spontaneously as the conversation develops in a natural way. Examiners were usually aware of the need to elicit both past and future tenses.

In general, a very wide range of topics was heard this year and there was usually a good range of topics presented within each Centre. It is not within the spirit of the syllabus for all candidates in a Centre to present the same topic. This year, healthy living and the environment were more in evidence along with the

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perennial favourites such as *mes vacances, mon pays, mes projets d'avenir, mon école, le sport, mes loisirs*. Literature is not part of the IGCSE syllabus, but should candidates wish to prepare a topic on a book or a film this is quite acceptable providing that their linguistic ability can keep pace with the ideas they wish to express. Some candidates spoke in a very interesting way about their schooling in different countries, their travels and why their education and ambitions were important to them.

Moderators reported that there are now very few cases of Centres allowing candidates to present 'Myself' as their topic. New Centres should note that candidates should not be allowed to choose this as their topic as if they do so it leaves little material to explore in the General conversation section.

Candidates had put effort and thought into their preparation and most presentations were presented at a good pace. The best performances came from candidates who, in their preparation, had equipped themselves with appropriate vocabulary and structures and who were able to sustain the level of performance they produced in their presentation in the follow-up conversation. Candidates who were able to go beyond the factual and express their opinions and present explanations scored well. As always, the best performances were elicited when the Examiner listened carefully and questions arose spontaneously out of the discussion.

General conversation

Most Centres aimed to cover two or three topics from the syllabus with each candidate in the General conversation section. Some Centres tried to cover too many topics with each candidate. With most candidates, it is preferable for the Examiner to explore two or three topics in some depth rather than to cover a greater number superficially. Weaker candidates are the exception to this approach and with them it may be necessary to cover a larger number of topics in order to keep questioning at a level they can cope with. A few Centres asked the same questions on the same topics from candidate to candidate: **this is not appropriate and must be avoided**. It is common practice in classrooms to make use of banks of questions when practising Speaking skills, but over reliance on such banks in the live examination often results in stilted conversations which do not flow naturally and which, at worst, do not seem to develop beyond a series of pre-learnt mini presentations. 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 descriptors in the mark scheme state clearly that there should be the opportunity for candidates to respond to both straightforward and unexpected questions in both conversation sections.

This year, a wide range of performance was heard by Moderators in the General conversation section. Many candidates were clearly used to responding to open style questions which required them to express their ideas wherever possible and to develop their answers in a spontaneous way. The language used by candidates in such performances was often of a high quality, displaying very good control of tenses and use of subordination, as well as a wide range of structures and appropriate vocabulary. Also very much in evidence were Examiners who routinely asked questions to elicit tenses and opinions on each topic covered.

Given the diverse nature of this truly international entry, it is remarkable that the candidates themselves, whatever their learning context, hold common interests and aspirations and have clearly appreciated the opportunities their education and learning a language offer them. The quality of the performances produced in this examination demonstrates the importance accorded to the skill of communicating via the spoken word in many IGCSE classrooms.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/41
Continuous Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should follow the rubric closely.
- Candidates should plan their answers.
- Candidates should make full use of the time allowed.
- Candidates should aim to write between 130 and 140 words as directed.
- Candidates should write what they know to be French and avoid attempting to use language with which they are unfamiliar.
- Handwriting must be clearly legible.

General comments

The standard of response to this year's paper remained high. There were large numbers of excellent scripts and the hard work and preparation of candidates were rewarded with high marks. Performances in **Question 1** were particularly impressive, where candidates tackled topics, parts if not all of which, they had covered thoroughly in the course of their studies. The quality of written French often declined somewhat when they undertook **Question 2**, the free narrative, which required them to tell their own story and to set the events in the past. That said, there were some outstanding answers to this question also, as better candidates were given free rein to display their knowledge of French vocabulary and structures. The very best were able to achieve this with minimal incidence of error. Others, while not in the top bracket, presented answers which were relevant and communicated effectively, giving a true reflection of their ability.

A number of candidates did not do themselves justice due to shortcomings in examination technique, and it is to this group that the Key messages, listed above, are directed with the aim of improving performance.

The rubric is not a list of suggestions to be interpreted freely. Instead, it sets out a number of required elements, each of which carries one or more specific communication marks. Candidates should keep closely to these stated tasks and avoid irrelevance. Material introduced which does not pertain to the subject is not credited for content or language. Normally a statement expressed using a finite verb is required for each task and candidates should use tenses as appropriate to the tasks set.

Candidates are advised to prepare a brief plan of their answers under certain headings or paragraphs. As the recommended length is 140 words, they should plan to spread their answer fairly evenly over the 'bullet points' in the rubric. In **Question 1** in particular, if they devote too much of the answer to the first one or two points they may not have enough words left to complete the later tasks within the word limit. If they cover all the points in 100 words or fewer then they may be reduced to 'padding out' their answer to reach 140 words, so they should look for areas where they can expand their answers with relevant examples before they start to write. Examiners do not mark for content or language anything which falls outside the word count. Short answers limit their own chances of accessing the maximum marks for language.

Once the plan is in place, candidates should compose each sentence carefully and pay particular attention to verb forms. They should remember that grammatical accuracy and correct spelling are essential to acquire marks for language. They should try to avoid too much repetition of certain words and structures. An over reliance on repeated items (such as *il y a* or possessive adjectives) tends to impair the overall quality of the piece and this may reduce the mark given for impression. Candidates should remember to stay within their limitations and to avoid over-complicated sentences which may expose weaknesses. Some candidates try to 'force in' certain phrases or idioms, regardless of the context. This has a detrimental effect on the quality of the answer which may be reflected in a reduced impression mark. Others cram in as many adjectives as they can, often gratuitously. This too should be discouraged as it is unnecessary and spoils the effect of the response.

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When they have finished, candidates are advised to make full use of the time left to revise and check their work for careless errors which can be very costly. The time allowed is quite generous and is normally sufficient to allow for this. They should look closely at genders in particular, and the agreements of adjectives and past participles in the perfect tense of reflexive and *être* verbs. Accents should be clear and unambiguous.

Presentation is very important. Examiners do not reward French which they cannot read. This year saw a decline in standards of presentation and some answers were delivered in such minuscule handwriting that Examiners had great difficulty in deciphering what was intended. Some used a style of handwriting which made certain letters ambiguous. Examiners will give the benefit of the doubt whenever they reasonably can, but there are limits and marks are often lost through illegible writing.

Question 1(a) *Une demande d'emploi*

Although not as popular with candidates as **Question 1(b)**, this question was usually well handled and high marks were regularly achieved.

A letter to an employment agency required a formal register and marks were gained for appropriate openings and endings. Better candidates began with *Monsieur* or *Madame* and closed with *agréez, Monsieur, l'expression de mes salutations distinguées* or the equivalent. No credit was given for *tutoiement* or informalities such as *bien à toi* or *amicalement*.

The first task was for candidates to introduce themselves and a communication mark was given to the basic *je m'appelle* with their name. It was a pity some overlooked this simple task and missed an easy mark. 'The kind of work they hoped to do' was more testing. Some said they wished to work in a hotel, a shop, a school or a restaurant, beginning quite properly: *je veux/voudrais travailler dans*... Others said they wished to work as a waiter, receptionist, even ski instructor. Not all knew to omit the article in *travailler comme serveur*.

The above should have led naturally into the next task: *ce que vous avez déjà fait comme travail*. This task was not always well done, although a communication mark was given for a simple statement such as *j'ai déjà travaillé* with a place (*une ferme*, *un hôtel* etc.) or occupation (*comme serveur* etc.). Some elaborated on their response here by including some interesting details which were relevant to the application. Some did not seem to recognise the past tense in the rubric and wrote about jobs they were currently doing. A minority thought *travail* meant 'travel'. No marks were withheld for correct language when this misunderstanding occurred.

The next task was to state some positive aspect of their previous employment. Some said they welcomed having money in their pocket. Others enjoyed meeting their colleagues or having contact with other people, particularly small children in the case of those who wanted to help in a school or a colony. Some had enjoyed *le plein air* at a campsite. Others were able to practise their favourite sport, usually skiing as the agency was based in the mountains.

Unfortunately, a number omitted to say when and for how long they were available and lost a mark. Of those who did attempt the task a number had difficulty in expressing dates and periods of time. No credit was given for the misleading *au 15 septembre du 30 septembre*. Marks were awarded for responses such as *pendant les vacances scolaires*, *tout le mois de juin*, *deux semaines en octobre* and *tous les week-ends/soirs*. *Je serai libre* was an appropriate response to *quand vous serez libre* but the present tense (*je suis libre*) and the conditional tense were also accepted.

In response to the last task, candidates seemed to relish the chance to write about their own glowing qualities. They were *sérieux*, *travailleur*, *patient*, *sympa*, *gentil*, *intelligent* and sometimes all of these! They got on well with small children if they applied to work at a school or a colony (*s'entendre bien avec* was well known). They spoke several languages. They liked working in a team. They were competent in all the right areas. They were good at personal relations, cooking and serving food, and washing up. Some gained the communication mark for expressing their enthusiasm for the work (*c'est ma passion*) thereby implying that they were suitable applicants. Some referred to past experience again but made use of different language to that employed in task (ii) and were rewarded with the communication mark.

Question 1(b) *Le pays où j'habite*

This was the more popular option and some excellent responses were received. Candidates for the most part must have felt that they were on familiar territory, writing about their own lives, the places they lived and the places in which they wished to live later.

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The first task required a simple *je suis né(e)* with a place to acquire a communication mark. Some mistakenly answered *j'habite en…* The second element (*où vous avez passé votre enfance*) elicited some interesting accounts which covered where candidates had lived in their childhood. Some gave an amazing range of locations as a parent's work took the family all around the world. Tenses were tricky and candidates sometimes struggled with *j'habite ici depuis dix ans* and *j'ai habité à… pendant cinq ans*. Many used *pour* when *depuis* or *pendant* were required.

The next task invited positive and negative aspects of the place in which the candidate lived now. Despite the present tense and the inclusion of *en ce moment* in the stimulus, some mistakenly wrote in past tenses to describe a place where they lived formerly. Candidates should be advised to look carefully at the tenses employed in the rubric and select the tenses of their response accordingly. Negative aspects included bad weather, traffic congestion, pollution, noise, unpleasant inhabitants and a lack of facilities, especially for young people. The place was boring. (Many could not spell *ennuyeux*.) Some relied over heavily on *il y a trop de…* Not many could say *il n'y a rien à faire* though many attempted it.

Positive aspects tended to outweigh the negative ones. Their home country was beautiful. The people were *sympa*. There were many diversions and attractions. The climate was good. Some mistook *la météo* (weather forecast) for *le temps* (weather) or *le climat*. A surprising number were unable to say *il fait beau* or *il pleut*. There were *beaucoup de choses à faire*. There was no penalty for those who wrote about their home town or area rather than their country.

The next task was to say where they would like to live in future and why. As usual, future intentions were generally well expressed. Candidates were comfortable with *je voudrais* with an infinitive, in this case *habiter*. No credit was given for going on holiday. The most popular place was France followed by USA, England and Spain. Some said they wished to continue to live where they are living now, which was accepted of course. Prepositions with countries were a regular source of difficulty as many struggled with *en France*, *au Japon* and *aux États-Unis*.

Reasons for their choice were disappointingly mundane on many scripts. *Le temps est beau* was the only reason some gave. More ambitious candidates wrote about the attractions and advantages of living in the country of their choice. These included lovely scenery, good job opportunities, the presence of family and friends and a healthy and peaceful environment.

Some candidates had written at such length on earlier tasks that the last two tasks fell outside the 140 limit on the word count and were not credited for communication or language.

Question 2 *Le sac perdu*

As stated above, the standard of work produced in response to this question often fell below that achieved in **Question 1**. Candidates are given less guidance in **Question 2** and have to think more for themselves about content. There is added difficulty in that past tenses are required throughout. Many better and above average candidates rose to the challenge and some outstanding pieces of work were presented. Those with a more modest knowledge of French were also able to produce creditworthy answers which scored quite well for communicating a number of events and reactions in past tenses, employing simpler language. A number made the question more difficult for themselves by embarking on a very ambitious narrative which made unnecessarily heavy demands on their French. It is in the interests of all candidates to recognise their limitations and to write what they know to be correct French as far as possible, avoiding complications.

Most candidates began quite properly at the moment the narrator realises the bag has disappeared. No credit was given for material copied verbatim from the 'lead-in' in the rubric, as this was excluded from the word count. Communication marks were not given for events taking place before the realisation that the bag has gone, as the rubric directs candidates to continue the story (*Continuez l'histoire*). The first statement was often an emotional reaction to the situation. Many put *j'étais choqué* or *j'ai paniqué* and secured their first communication mark for expressing a reaction. Next they asked the other people on the beach if they had seen the bag. There were linguistic problems with *demander à* and *si* followed by a pluperfect which only the better candidates could handle without error. Many incorrectly used a perfect tense to say what had happened. The people replied saying they had seen nothing. (Only the best could use *ne…rien* correctly.) A minority confused the correct verb, *dire,* with *parler*. Some witnesses said they had seen it. Someone had stolen it and taken it away. Here and at other points of the story it was an important asset to be able to use object pronouns, direct and indirect, as in *je lui ai demandé s'il l'avait vu*.

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Next, candidates began to look for the bag on the beach. Most handled *commencer à* and *décider de* with infinitives correctly. Some wrote *dans la plage* instead of *sur*, which was given in the rubric. Others put *regarder pour le sac* instead of *chercher* while others put *chercher la plage* instead of *chercher le sac sur la plage*. The search having been fruitless they then revisited the places they had been to earlier or returned to their hotel to check their bedroom. The search ended there in some cases as the bag turned up under the bed. A number did not seem to know *trouver* and put *chercher* or some other verb instead. For the majority the search continued. They had to walk to the police station to report their loss, as their precious mobile phone was in the bag. Or they used a public phone to telephone their parents or the police. Not all knew to use *à* after *téléphoner*. Vocabulary was tested here. Few knew *commissariat* and even *agent de police* was not found very often. The best candidates came up with *syndicat d'initiative* although the spelling was not usually correct. Some knew *bureau des objets trouvés* and *j'ai déposé plainte* which was impressive. Again, reported speech was attempted, with varying degrees of success, as in *j'ai dit à l'agent que j'avais perdu mon sac* and *on m'a dit qu'ils essayeraient de le trouver*. The bag was sometimes recovered at this point. A thief had been arrested carrying the bag or a tourist had handed it in. It was returned to its grateful owner, although many used *retourner* and not *rendre*.

For many the search went on. They went back to the beach and saw the bag under a tree or even in the sea. Some used *regarder* when they meant *voir*. Some met parents or siblings who had had the bag all the time, either to keep it safe or as a joke. Some tried to say that a person had taken it by mistake as s/he had a similar bag but only the most able had the language skills to convey such a complex message. Nearly all recovered their bag and its contents in the end, although a minority gloomily resigned themselves to its permanent loss. Sometimes the bag was unfortunately empty. Many did not spell *malheureusement* correctly. Most were at pains to stress the importance of the bag as it contained their passport, their cash, their clothes and their train/airline tickets. Their recovery offered the writer the chance to express a reaction of joy, relief or happiness which secured a mark for communication. Many ended by saying they had learned a lesson. They would never again take their valuables to the beach and they would never fall asleep in a public place! Such statements were also rewarded for communication as reactions.

The response to this question was appropriate in the vast majority of cases and there was little incidence of verbiage or irrelevance. There seemed to be plenty to say which was within candidates' linguistic compass, in fact the problem was rather that they could not condense their anecdote to 140 words. Almost all understood what was required by the rubric and most made a creditable attempt to tell a suitable story, often with a degree of good humour. This was achievable by using mainly everyday vocabulary and common structures. A firm grasp of verb forms in past tenses is essential to score high marks. Candidates should prepare this area thoroughly in their revision for the paper. The strongest were able to display their French to best advantage and made minimal errors. Some very high scores were achieved.

All Examiners stressed in their reports the need for candidates to revise their work at the end in an attempt to eradicate careless errors. On many scripts the gender of the narrator was variable and agreements of common adjectives were not made. A thorough check of verb forms, spellings and genders in particular would be richly rewarded on so many scripts.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/42
Continuous Writing

Key messages

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- Handwriting must be clearly legible.

General comments

The standard of response to this year's paper remained high. There were large numbers of excellent scripts and the hard work and preparation of candidates were rewarded with high marks. Performances in **Question 1** were particularly impressive, where candidates tackled topics, parts if not all of which, they had covered thoroughly in the course of their studies. The quality of written French often declined somewhat when they undertook **Question 2**, the free narrative, which required them to tell their own story and to set the events in the past. That said, there were some outstanding answers to this question also, as better candidates were given free rein to display their knowledge of French vocabulary and structures. The very best were able to achieve this with minimal incidence of error. Others, while not in the top bracket, presented answers which were relevant and communicated effectively, giving a true reflection of their ability.

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Candidates are advised to prepare a brief plan of their answers under certain headings or paragraphs. As the recommended length is 140 words, they should plan to spread their answer fairly evenly over the 'bullet points' in the rubric. In **Question 1** in particular, if they devote too much of the answer to the first one or two points they may not have enough words left to complete the later tasks within the word limit. If they cover all the points in 100 words or fewer then they may be reduced to 'padding out' their answer to reach 140 words, so they should look for areas where they can expand their answers with relevant examples before they start to write. Examiners do not mark for content or language anything which falls outside the word count. Short answers limit their own chances of accessing the maximum marks for language.

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Presentation is very important. Examiners do not reward French which they cannot read. This year saw a decline in standards of presentation and some answers were delivered in such minuscule handwriting that Examiners had great difficulty in deciphering what was intended. Some used a style of handwriting which made certain letters ambiguous. Examiners will give the benefit of the doubt whenever they reasonably can, but there are limits and marks are often lost through illegible writing.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1(a) ***Un stage de cuisine***

Some high scoring responses were submitted for this question, although a number found it demanding or made it more difficult for themselves by creating unnecessary complications. The vocabulary required to answer the question was within the compass of most and the tasks were accessible for those who had only a modest range of grammatical structures, if they stayed within their limitations.

Most began their letter of application correctly with *Monsieur* or *Madame* and addressed the recipient using the formal *vous* throughout. A formal register was necessary for this kind of letter and no credit was given for *tutoiement* or informal usages such as *salut* or *bien à toi*. The very best candidates were able to use the formal language effectively and began with *je voudrais postuler ma candidature* and ended with *veuillez agréer l'expression de mes salutations distinguées* or the equivalent.

The first task required candidates to introduce themselves and Examiners rewarded *je m'appelle* with a name. This was an easy communication mark but some did not think to include it. Candidates should take care to answer all parts of the task set out in the rubric. Reasons to apply for the course were varied. Most said how enthusiastic they were (*la cuisine c'est ma passion* etc.) or detailed their competence in the kitchen (they helped with the cooking at home). Others said they wanted to go to Paris and improve their French. Any sensible reason was rewarded.

Task (ii), when I wish to do the course, was not usually well handled. A communication mark was given for the straightforward *je voudrais faire ce stage* with a time. Examiners rewarded a general period of time (*en été*, *en juin*, *le mois prochain*) or specific dates (*du 12 au 28 juin*). Dates were not often well expressed and the muddled *au 2 du 15 septembre* was not rewarded. Marks were given for *tous les soirs*, *après les examens* or *pendant les vacances scolaires*. A number either overlooked the task or did not seem to understand *quand?*

Past tenses were required in task (iii) 'say you have already worked in the kitchen of a hotel'. Most were able to say *j'ai déjà travaillé dans une cuisine*, although a minority mistakenly thought travel was involved. Finding a positive aspect to the work experience in task (iv) was more demanding and some omitted the task altogether. Better candidates said they learned new cooking techniques or recipes. Or they were able to observe a chef in action. Others stressed the advantage of earning pocket money or said they enjoyed the company of the kitchen staff.

A wide range of reasons was given in support of their application in task (v). Some said they were passionate about cooking, while others said they were already experienced in the world of work. Others wrote of their personal qualities. They were polite, hard working, patient, good at working in a team and were of a pleasant disposition. They spoke several languages, including French. They were *un bon candidat* or even *le meilleur*.

Question 1(b) ***Mes études***

This was the more popular option as many candidates chose a topic area they knew well i.e. school.

The first task, 'when and where the candidate began his/her studies', proved to be quite demanding, partly because a number did not recognise the need for a past tense. A full communication mark was given for *j'ai commencé mes études* with a time and place. Some offered a year for 'when?' (*en 2002*). Others attempted to say 'when I was five' but large numbers were unable to say *quand j'avais cinq ans*. For 'where?'

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Examiners rewarded the name of an establishment as their first school, and *une école primaire* or *une petite école* with a location were also accepted. A minority understood the task to be 'when did you begin studying at your present school?' No penalty was incurred.

Task (ii) invited the simple statement *j'aime étudier à mon école* which scored a communication mark, and it was surprising that so many omitted to say so. (*Je n'aime pas étudier à mon école* was rare.) Instead candidates set about describing, often at length, their school, the buildings, the time-table, the uniform, the number of teachers, none of which was required by the task. Again candidates are reminded to keep to the tasks set out in the rubric.

Reasons for enjoying their studies were numerous and varied and occupied a large proportion of many answers. This time the present tense was appropriate. Their schools had many advantages. The teachers were excellent, being mostly kind and supportive. They had many friends. The school subjects were interesting. (Many could not spell *intéressant* or remember to make it agree with a plural noun.) The facilities (not *les facilités* in French) were superb. They included labs, libraries, playing fields and swimming pools. The *ambiance* was good. A number of marks were gained for fairly simple French here, but there were errors such as *beaucoup des salles* instead of *de salles* and a common failure to make adjectives agree with plural nouns. The mis-spelling of *professeur* and *étudier* (which was in the rubric) was common.

In task (iv) most were able to score a communication mark for *je voudrais étudier* and a subject. Many opted for *les sciences* or *le commerce*. Reasons for their choice (task (v)) usually involved their love of the subject (*j'adore*…, *ma passion*… again) or the desire to follow a certain career. Many wanted to do science and go on to be *médecins*, which was often confused with *médecine*. These two tasks were usually well handled by candidates. Some omitted the subject(s) in task (iv), saying instead that they wanted to study at university or abroad. While no mark was gained in (iv) due to this misunderstanding, the reason given for going to university or abroad was given full credit in task (v).

Question 2 ***Catastrophe au restaurant***

As stated above, the standard of work in this question often fell below that achieved in **Question 1**. Candidates are given less guidance in **Question 2** and have to think more for themselves when it comes to content. There is added difficulty in that past tenses are required throughout. A number of candidates made the question more difficult for themselves by embarking on a fanciful or exotic anecdote which made unnecessarily heavy demands on their French. Wiser candidates took a more mundane, though often quite amusing approach and made maximum use of the French they knew relating to the everyday world instead of exposing their lack of knowledge through over-ambition.

The more successful responses usually began with the candidate's arrival at the restaurant. The object of the visit was often a family occasion such as a birthday treat although some related a date with their boy/girl friend which went badly wrong. Mention was made of a table reservation which had been made previously but only the better candidates could use a pluperfect tense. There followed a series of calamities, mostly minor, related with humour by many. Firstly there was the long wait for a table (the said reservation having been lost or forgotten): *attendre pour une table* was a common error. To their disgust they were shown to a table near the toilets. The meal itself was inevitably unpleasant. There were further delays over the menu. The room was crowded and noisy. The waiters were rude. The tableware was dirty. The toilets were filthy. At last the choices were made and the meals were ordered. Many did not know to use *commander*. The wrong food items were served or their choices were unavailable. One felt some wrote from personal experience. The meal was of course awful. 'Hot meals' were served cold. 'Cold meals' were warm. Soup contained flies or human hairs. Salads contained snails or even cockroaches! The bill was astronomical. Credit cards or money had been lost or left at home. (Many attempted but few could spell *malheureusement*.) Some even found themselves in the kitchen washing up. Other catastrophic incidents included waiters spilling food and or wine over the wretched narrator's clothes and family members being violently sick as a result of the dreadful food. The narrator and his companion(s) had such a bad time of it that they vowed (as a last reaction) never to return to the restaurant or indeed never to dine out again. Home cooking was cheaper and much safer.

There was it seems a rich variety of material candidates could exploit to tell an interesting even humorous story using everyday vocabulary and grammatical structures and the better candidates seemed to relish the task. It was a pity some chose to write only briefly about events in a restaurant and instead wrote about a dreadful accident or robbery to which the restaurant was merely a starting point. The rubric directed candidates to relate what happened in the restaurant so communication marks were not awarded for events which took place before or after leaving the restaurant.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/43
Continuous Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should follow the rubric closely.
- Candidates should plan their answers.
- Candidates should make full use of the time allowed.
- Candidates should aim to write between 130 and 140 words as directed.
- Candidates should write what they know to be French and avoid attempting to use language with which they are unfamiliar.
- Handwriting must be clearly legible.

General comments

The standard of response to this year's paper remained high. There were large numbers of excellent scripts and the hard work and preparation of candidates were rewarded with high marks. Performances in **Question 1** were particularly impressive, where candidates tackled topics, parts if not all of which, they had covered thoroughly in the course of their studies. The quality of written French often declined somewhat when they undertook **Question 2**, the free narrative, which required them to tell their own story and to set the events in the past. That said, there were some outstanding answers to this question also, as better candidates were given free rein to display their knowledge of French vocabulary and structures. The very best were able to achieve this with minimal incidence of error. Others, while not in the top bracket, presented answers which were relevant and communicated effectively, giving a true reflection of their ability.

A number of candidates did not do themselves justice due to shortcomings in examination technique, and it is to this group that the Key messages, listed above, are directed with the aim of improving performance.

The rubric is not a list of suggestions to be interpreted freely. Instead, it sets out a number of required elements, each of which carries one or more specific communication marks. Candidates should keep closely to these stated tasks and avoid irrelevance. Material introduced which does not pertain to the subject is not credited for content or language. Normally a statement expressed using a finite verb is required for each task and candidates should use tenses as appropriate to the tasks set.

Candidates are advised to prepare a brief plan of their answers under certain headings or paragraphs. As the recommended length is 140 words, they should plan to spread their answer fairly evenly over the 'bullet points' in the rubric. In **Question 1** in particular, if they devote too much of the answer to the first one or two points they may not have enough words left to complete the later tasks within the word limit. If they cover all the points in 100 words or fewer then they may be reduced to 'padding out' their answer to reach 140 words, so they should look for areas where they can expand their answers with relevant examples before they start to write. Examiners do not mark for content or language anything which falls outside the word count. Short answers limit their own chances of accessing the maximum marks for language.

Once the plan is in place, candidates should compose each sentence carefully and pay particular attention to verb forms. They should remember that grammatical accuracy and correct spelling are essential to acquire marks for language. They should try to avoid too much repetition of certain words and structures. An over reliance on repeated items (such as *il y a* or possessive adjectives) tends to impair the overall quality of the piece and this may reduce the mark given for impression. Candidates should remember to stay within their limitations and to avoid over-complicated sentences which may expose weaknesses. Some candidates try to 'force in' certain phrases or idioms, regardless of the context. This has a detrimental effect on the quality of the answer which may be reflected in a reduced impression mark. Others cram in as many adjectives as they can, often gratuitously. This too should be discouraged as it is unnecessary and spoils the effect of the response.

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When they have finished, candidates are advised to make full use of the time left to revise and check their work for careless errors which can be very costly. The time allowed is quite generous and is normally sufficient to allow for this. They should look closely at genders in particular, and the agreements of adjectives and past participles in the perfect tense of reflexive and *être* verbs. Accents should be clear and unambiguous.

Presentation is very important. Examiners do not reward French which they cannot read. This year saw a decline in standards of presentation and some answers were delivered in such minuscule handwriting that Examiners had great difficulty in deciphering what was intended. Some used a style of handwriting which made certain letters ambiguous. Examiners will give the benefit of the doubt whenever they reasonably can, but there are limits and marks are often lost through illegible writing.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1(a) *Un stage de cuisine*

Some high scoring responses were submitted for this question, although a number found it demanding or made it more difficult for themselves by creating unnecessary complications. The vocabulary required to answer the question was within the compass of most and the tasks were accessible for those who had only a modest range of grammatical structures, if they stayed within their limitations.

Most began their letter of application correctly with *Monsieur* or *Madame* and addressed the recipient using the formal *vous* throughout. A formal register was necessary for this kind of letter and no credit was given for *tutoiement* or informal usages such as *salut* or *bien à toi*. The very best candidates were able to use the formal language effectively and began with *je voudrais postuler ma candidature* and ended with *veuillez agréer l'expression de mes salutations distinguées* or the equivalent.

The first task required candidates to introduce themselves and Examiners rewarded *je m'appelle* with a name. This was an easy communication mark but some did not think to include it. Candidates should take care to answer all parts of the task set out in the rubric. Reasons to apply for the course were varied. Most said how enthusiastic they were (*la cuisine c'est ma passion* etc.) or detailed their competence in the kitchen (they helped with the cooking at home). Others said they wanted to go to Paris and improve their French. Any sensible reason was rewarded.

Task (ii), when I wish to do the course, was not usually well handled. A communication mark was given for the straightforward *je voudrais faire ce stage* with a time. Examiners rewarded a general period of time (*en été*, *en juin*, *le mois prochain*) or specific dates (*du 12 au 28 juin*). Dates were not often well expressed and the muddled *au 2 du 15 septembre* was not rewarded. Marks were given for *tous les soirs*, *après les examens* or *pendant les vacances scolaires*. A number either overlooked the task or did not seem to understand *quand?*

Past tenses were required in task (iii) 'say you have already worked in the kitchen of a hotel'. Most were able to say *j'ai déjà travaillé dans une cuisine*, although a minority mistakenly thought travel was involved. Finding a positive aspect to the work experience in task (iv) was more demanding and some omitted the task altogether. Better candidates said they learned new cooking techniques or recipes. Or they were able to observe a chef in action. Others stressed the advantage of earning pocket money or said they enjoyed the company of the kitchen staff.

A wide range of reasons was given in support of their application in task (v). Some said they were passionate about cooking, while others said they were already experienced in the world of work. Others wrote of their personal qualities. They were polite, hard working, patient, good at working in a team and were of a pleasant disposition. They spoke several languages, including French. They were *un bon candidat* or even *le meilleur*.

Question 1(b) *Mes études*

This was the more popular option as many candidates chose a topic area they knew well i.e. school.

The first task, 'when and where the candidate began his/her studies', proved to be quite demanding, partly because a number did not recognise the need for a past tense. A full communication mark was given for *j'ai commencé mes études* with a time and place. Some offered a year for 'when?' (*en 2002*). Others attempted to say 'when I was five' but large numbers were unable to say *quand j'avais cinq ans*. For 'where?'

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Examiners rewarded the name of an establishment as their first school, and *une école primaire* or *une petite école* with a location were also accepted. A minority understood the task to be 'when did you begin studying at your present school?' No penalty was incurred.

Task (ii) invited the simple statement *j'aime étudier à mon école* which scored a communication mark, and it was surprising that so many omitted to say so. (*Je n'aime pas étudier à mon école* was rare.) Instead candidates set about describing, often at length, their school, the buildings, the time-table, the uniform, the number of teachers, none of which was required by the task. Again candidates are reminded to keep to the tasks set out in the rubric.

Reasons for enjoying their studies were numerous and varied and occupied a large proportion of many answers. This time the present tense was appropriate. Their schools had many advantages. The teachers were excellent, being mostly kind and supportive. They had many friends. The school subjects were interesting. (Many could not spell *intéressant* or remember to make it agree with a plural noun.) The facilities (not *les facilités* in French) were superb. They included labs, libraries, playing fields and swimming pools. The *ambiance* was good. A number of marks were gained for fairly simple French here, but there were errors such as *beaucoup des salles* instead of *de salles* and a common failure to make adjectives agree with plural nouns. The mis-spelling of *professeur* and *étudier* (which was in the rubric) was common.

In task (iv) most were able to score a communication mark for *je voudrais étudier* and a subject. Many opted for *les sciences* or *le commerce*. Reasons for their choice (task (v)) usually involved their love of the subject (*j'adore…*, *ma passion…* again) or the desire to follow a certain career. Many wanted to do science and go on to be *médecins*, which was often confused with *médecine*. These two tasks were usually well handled by candidates. Some omitted the subject(s) in task (iv), saying instead that they wanted to study at university or abroad. While no mark was gained in (iv) due to this misunderstanding, the reason given for going to university or abroad was given full credit in task (v).

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