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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/11
Listening

Key messages

- The performance on this paper was very similar to that seen in 2012. Candidates showed good levels of both specific and general understanding, performing well on the first two sections of the paper. Although the last section was, as intended, found to be more challenging, a good number of candidates managed a strong performance on this section.
- **New Centres should remind candidates to write clearly in blue or black pen.** Candidates should not write first in pencil and then overwrite answers in pen as this can be very difficult to read. Candidates must cross out any material they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is a danger that extra distorting details will be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.

General comments

The demand of this year's paper was found to be very similar to that of the 2012 paper. Overall, the candidature performed well, with even weaker candidates able to achieve marks on a few questions in the final section. The candidature was familiar with the demands and structure of the paper and rubrics were understood. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics were accessible to candidates.

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

It is clear that candidates in many Centres appreciate the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and understand that they are not required to write their answers in full sentences. Brief answers are preferable in order to reduce the risk that the candidate will include extra, distorting material which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should be reminded not to answer or infer from general knowledge.

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

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Comments on specific questions

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Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

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Exercise 2 Questions 9-16

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured a conversation between a tourist and an employee in a tourist office on the subject of renting holiday accommodation in the town of St. Rémy**.** Questions required the identification of key vocabulary such as dates, house details, domestic animals and leisure activities mostly through visual multiple choice questions. **Questions 9** and **10** were well done. On **Question 11**, the word *baignoire* was not well known, with many opting instead for *garage.* It is worth remembering that at this level in the test, the questions only test vocabulary which can be clearly heard on the recording. Candidates heard *il y a deux salles de bains avec douche… mais il n'y a pas de baignoire.* On **Question 12**, while many were able to identify *chat,* some incorrectly opted for *chien.* **Question 13** was done well by candidates. For **Question 14**, many candidates were not familiar with the word *colline. Laverie* was usually recognised by candidates on **Question 15**. Although, the majority managed to give a correct number on the last question, some wrote *4.60* instead of *460.* It is worth reminding candidates that numbers can be written in figures.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 17

Candidates heard four young people talk about their life at school in Martinique. Good numbers of candidates achieved at least 4 marks. Examiners reported no clear pattern of incorrect answers.

Performance over the years has improved on this exercise as candidates have become more accustomed to the requirements. Examiners did, however, report that there is still the occasional case of a candidate ticking too few or too many boxes. Teachers should advise candidates to indicate the six true statements with either a tick or a cross. Some candidates used a system of both ticks and crosses to indicate both true and false statements which often proved confusing for them and for Examiners.

Exercise 2 Questions 18-22

In this exercise, candidates heard interviews with Olivier and Camille about their life in New Zealand. In the first part of the exercise, on the extract featuring Olivier, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The vocabulary items tested were lexically frequent words (all to be found in the Core vocabulary of the defined content) that would be met by candidates at an early stage of their learning. Marks were generally good.

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Exercise 2 Questions 23-27

In the second part of this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Camille, who also talked about her life in New Zealand. Candidates were required to give short answers in French. All questions could be answered with as little as one or two words in French. Performance was, again generally good on this part of the exercise.

On **Question 23**, most were able to give the answer *chef* or the equally acceptable alternative idea of working in a restaurant. Good numbers understood that Camille felt sad and were able to render the word

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triste on **Question 24**. For **Question 25**, candidates needed to be able to convey the idea of *marché. Marche* (another word in French with a different meaning) was only acceptable if accompanied by the idea of *français,* the addition of which which was judged to reduce ambiguity. **Question 26** was the hardest on the exercise with candidates being required to identify the idea of solitude or being alone. There were, however, some good attempts at this question and answers such as *solitude* or *seul* gained the mark. On **Question 27**, there were again good attempts with many scoring the mark for the idea of New Zealanders being relaxed/not in a hurry. Again, some invalidated their answers by adding extra material of a distorting nature such as *pas stressés,* which reflected an incorrect hearing of *pas pressés.* It is worth remembering that at this level, the exam does not aim to test inferential skills and that candidates should be guided by what is on the recording.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 28-33

Candidates heard an interview with a film star in which he talked about his interest in ecology, how this had started and how this interest affected his family life and work. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Questions tested specific factual information as well as the ability to identify attitudes and emotions, and required candidates to follow the sequence of events in a longer extract.

The first question was not well answered. **C** was the commonly given incorrect answer in response to why Lionel was in Paris, indicating that many had not understood the interviewer when she said *vous venez de faire un documentaire* and consequently chose, too hastily, *Pour faire un documentaire*, rather than the correct *Pour aller à une reunion.* **Questions 29** and **30** were answered very well, but only the strongest candidates were able to answer **Question 31** correctly. Candidates needed to identify what Lionel said his family could do **better** in terms of recycling rather than identify what they already did. He stated that he and his family recycled glass and paper and then went on to state what they could do better. On this exercise candidates need to listen carefully before coming to a conclusion. Candidates fared better on the next question but found the last question slightly harder. Some opted for the idea of young people being optimistic, which was what Lionel said about himself, not what he said about young people. Even so, many candidates were successful on this last question and correctly chose option **D**.

Exercise 2 Questions 34-42

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. 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. The performance on this exercise was, again, very much in line with the standard of work seen last year. As last year, this was found to be a suitably demanding and challenging exercise at this stage of the paper.

Candidates heard an interview with Candice who talked about her holiday job, picking fruit. Questions had been phrased in such a way as to encourage candidates to answer briefly, rather than to write at length. Full sentences were not required, but some answers did need to include a verb in order to convey the complete concept.

On **Question 34,** good numbers understood the concept of repeating the year. The verb *redoubler* was known by some, but most scored the mark with an acceptable rendering of *répéter l'année scolaire* **Question 35** was not well answered. Many did not appreciate the negative that qualified the idea of *fâchés,* or included invalidations such as *surpris* or *positifs.* **Question 36** was answered more successfuly with a fair number being able to use an appropriate verb such as *chercher/regarder/surfer* plus *Internet.* Many incorrect responses merely stated *travailler à la ferme* which reflected only partial understanding of what had been heard. **Question 37** was the least well answered question on the paper. For **(a)**, the word *debout* was understood by only a few. Attempts such as *de bout* or *début,* though frequently seen, could not score the mark, as the required answer had been incorrectly split or had been rendered as a word with another meaning in French. Although **(b)** was answered slightly more successfully, few could render *mal au dos* acceptably. On **Question 38**, candidates needed to be able to give the comparative ***plus*** *agés* to score the mark. Candidates were often able to correctly identify and produce *accent* in answer to **Question 39**. The required answer to **Question 40**, *lentement*, was often rendered as *long temps* or *longtemps.* On **Question 41**, an acceptable rendering of *monter dans les arbres* was rewarded. *Rester dans les arbres* did not gain the mark. Examiners accepted spellings such as *arbe(s)/abre(s)* provided that the concept was correct. **Question 42** also proved to be fairly challenging. The brief answer *moins paresseuse* was enough to score the mark. Many could give *paresseuse*, but did not hear the qualifier alongside this concept. Some also invalidated their answer by writing *mois.*

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/12
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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. 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. The performance on this exercise was, again, very much in line with the standard of work seen last year. As last year, this was found to be a suitably demanding and challenging exercise at this stage of the paper.

Candidates heard an interview with Candice who talked about her holiday job, picking fruit. Questions had been phrased in such a way as to encourage candidates to answer briefly, rather than to write at length. Full sentences were not required, but some answers did need to include a verb in order to convey the complete concept.

On **Question 34,** good numbers understood the concept of repeating the year. The verb *redoubler* was known by some, but most scored the mark with an acceptable rendering of *répéter l'année scolaire* **Question 35** was not well answered. Many did not appreciate the negative that qualified the idea of *fâchés,* or included invalidations such as *surpris* or *positifs.* **Question 36** was answered more successfuly with a fair number being able to use an appropriate verb such as *chercher/regarder/surfer* plus *Internet.* Many incorrect responses merely stated *travailler à la ferme* which reflected only partial understanding of what had been heard. **Question 37** was the least well answered question on the paper. For **(a)**, the word *debout* was understood by only a few. Attempts such as *de bout* or *début,* though frequently seen, could not score the mark, as the required answer had been incorrectly split or had been rendered as a word with another meaning in French. Although **(b)** was answered slightly more successfully, few could render *mal au dos* acceptably. On **Question 38**, candidates needed to be able to give the comparative ***plus*** *agés* to score the mark. Candidates were often able to correctly identify and produce *accent* in answer to **Question 39**. The required answer to **Question 40**, *lentement*, was often rendered as *long temps* or *longtemps.* On **Question 41**, an acceptable rendering of *monter dans les arbres* was rewarded. *Rester dans les arbres* did not gain the mark. Examiners accepted spellings such as *arbe(s)/abre(s)* provided that the concept was correct. **Question 42** also proved to be fairly challenging. The brief answer *moins paresseuse* was enough to score the mark. Many could give *paresseuse*, but did not hear the qualifier alongside this concept. Some also invalidated their answer by writing *mois.*

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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:

- read all instructions, questions and texts very carefully.
- answer comprehension questions with brief but focused answers.
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice.
- make any alterations to answers clear.
- allow themselves time to check their work.

General comments

In general, candidates found this paper very accessible. They appeared well prepared and accustomed to the type of exercises found on the paper.

Candidates are not expected to write answers longer than the line spaces provided on the paper, and it is often an advantage to keep answers short and focused.

There were no signs that candidates had not had sufficient time to complete the paper. Any time left after they have finished may profitably be spent checking that they have answered all the questions, that where they have been able to use material directly from the text it has been copied correctly, and that where they have changed their mind about the answer to a question, their final answer is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

This exercise was generally very well done, with the vast majority of candidates scoring full marks. *Robes* (**Question 2**) and *genou* (**Question 4**) were not quite as well known as the other vocabulary items.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Many candidates scored very well on this exercise, though some confused *clé* (the answer to **Question 9**) and *assiettes* (the answer to **Question 10**).

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

The vast majority of candidates achieved the maximum score on this exercise.

Exercise 4 Question 16

This task asked candidates to write a preliminary e-mail to a new French pen friend, giving 3 items of information, based on the pictures provided:

(a) their age (14)
(b) what they like at school (picture of blackboard with mathematical calculation)
(c) how they travel to school (bus)

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For **(a)**, candidates were expected to write *J'ai quatorze/14 ans* – and a variety of spellings for *quatorze* were accepted. For **(b)**, answers needed to supply *J'aime...* plus some reference to mathematics. For the last element, candidates needed to communicate that they travelled to school by bus, eg by writing *Je vais à l'école en autobus* or acceptable alternatives such as *bus* and *car*. Minor spelling errors were tolerated.

In this question, marks are awarded separately for communication and for language, with 1 mark each for communicating the 3 elements and 2 marks for correct use of language. Most candidates were able to score at least 2 of the communication marks, though some failed to score because, instead of writing what the pictures represented, they gave their actual age (15/16), and means of transport to school (by car or on foot).

In order to score the 2 marks for language, candidates must use 2 verbs correctly, and in appropriate tenses. For example, those who used *être* to express their age as 14 were awarded the communication mark, but no mark for language, and similarly with *Je aime*... or *Je adore* – one mark for communication, but 0 for appropriate language.

Some candidates expanded on the required 3 elements; there is no need to add any extra material and there is **no additional credit** available for this, since marks are only awarded for rendering the stipulated elements.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-24

For this exercise, candidates are asked to read a longer text, an e-mail from Philippe to a friend, talking about the economies being practised by his parents. The questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. All that is required is to be able to locate the information needed, which can usually be rendered in just one or two words, rather than complete sentences. For example, **Question 19** could be answered simply with ...*10 euros*... and **Question 20** with ...*sortir*... Additional material from the text is ignored by Examiners, as long as it does not contradict the correct answer, but answers should not need to exceed the single line space allowed.

Most candidates coped extremely well with this exercise, with many scoring the maximum 10 marks.

Exercise 2 Question 25

For this longer piece of writing, candidates were given the topic of meals. The three tasks given were:

(a) a description of the meals they eat with their family;
(b) what they like to eat in a restaurant, and why;
(c) whether they would like to learn to cook, and why or why not.

10 marks are available for the communication of relevant points, spread flexibly across the tasks. There were many maximum scores for communication, though some candidates did not give enough details to score full marks. A small number of candidates did not understand *repas* and talked about leisure activities they did with their families. For task **(c)**, many were already learning to cook, and were awarded the mark for saying this. Reasons for and against learning to cook varied from it being a useful skill in later life, to not wanting to learn to cook because this is women's work.

For accuracy, 5 marks are available, using a banded mark scheme. Many candidates also scored the maximum here. They used straightforward vocabulary and structures and were able to use a range of verbs with some success, writing reasonably accurately and coherently. Candidates would be well advised to keep their answers close to the suggested word limit, allowing them to spend any spare time checking through their work for spelling, genders and adjective agreements, and subject and verb accord.

Section 3

In this section, candidates are asked to read two longer texts and answer questions appropriately. In ***Section 2*** in order to score the mark it is sufficient to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in ***Section 3***, candidates need to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and prevent the mark from being awarded.

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Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

The text here concerns Christophe and his successful career in spite of the difficulties he faced. The rubric gives the information that 2 of the statements are true, and 4 are false, and candidates can score 6 of the 10 marks by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 4 marks are scored by correcting the 4 false statements.

Many candidates were able to identify the true/false statements, but the corrections were not always so successful. Most managed quite well with **Questions 27** and **31**, but **Questions 28** and **29** proved more problematic. For **Question 28**, candidates needed either to be able to express the idea that nothing was done to help Christophe attend university classes, or that he had to stay in the corridor to listen. For **Question 29**, many candidates lifted a long answer from the text, including material referring to Christophe's friends, and this did not score.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-40

This exercise was generally well done. Candidates did not seem to have difficulties understanding the text, but answers were sometimes distorted by an inability to manipulate structures from the text to form an appropriate answer. For example, for **Question 35** many began their answer with *Pour*... but followed it with *expliquent* rather than the required infinitive. **Question 37** was the least well answered in this exercise, with candidates struggling to explain that Sophie's school had lessons just like other schools – many opted for lifting *Chaque matin avant d'aller en classe suivre les cours...* whereas others chose *...ils s'occupent des animaux de la ferme*. **Questions 33**, **34** and **36**, along with the last three questions of the paper, were usually answered well, showing good comprehension of the text.

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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:

- read all instructions, questions and texts very carefully.
- answer comprehension questions with brief but focused answers.
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice.
- make any alterations to answers clear.
- allow themselves time to check their work.

General comments

In general, candidates found this paper very accessible. They appeared well prepared and accustomed to the type of exercises found on the paper.

Candidates are not expected to write answers longer than the line spaces provided on the paper, and it is often an advantage to keep answers short and focused.

There were no signs that candidates had not had sufficient time to complete the paper. Any time left after they have finished may profitably be spent checking that they have answered all the questions, that where they have been able to use material directly from the text it has been copied correctly, and that where they have changed their mind about the answer to a question, their final answer is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

This exercise was very well answered, with most candidates scoring the maximum 5 marks.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Most candidates scored at least 4 of the available marks. **Question 6** (*Je veux faire le plein d'essence*) was often answered with B (*Jardin zoologique*) and occasionally with A (when candidates did not connect ...*être en forme*... with ...*Centre de sport)*.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

This exercise was well done, and many candidates achieved full marks.

Exercise 4 Question 16

This task asked candidates to write a preliminary e-mail to a new French pen friend, giving 3 items of information, based on the pictures provided:

(a) their age (15)
(b) what they like at school (picture of a globe)
(c) how they travel to school (by car)

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For **(a)**, candidates were expected to write *J'ai quinze/15 ans* – and a variety of spellings for *quinze* were accepted. For **(b)**, answers needed to supply *J'aime...* plus some reference to geography, study of the world, or different cultures. For the last element, candidates needed to communicate that they travelled to school by car, eg by writing *Je vais à l'école en voiture/auto* or acceptable alternatives such as *en taxi* and *ma mère me conduit*. Minor spelling errors were tolerated.

In this question, marks are awarded separately for communication and for language, with 1 mark each for communicating the 3 elements and 2 marks for appropriate use of language. Most candidates were able to score at least 2 of the communication marks, though some failed to score because, instead of writing what the pictures represented, they gave their actual age (16/17), and means of transport to school (on foot or by bus).

In order to score the 2 marks for language, candidates must use 2 verbs correctly, and in appropriate tenses. For example, those who used *être* to express their age as 15 were awarded the communication mark, but no mark for language, and similarly with *Je aime*... or *Je adore…* – one mark for communication, but 0 for appropriate language.

A number of candidates expanded on the required 3 elements; there is no need to add any extra material and there is **no additional credit** available for this, since marks are only awarded for rendering the stipulated elements.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-25

For this exercise, candidates are asked to read a longer text, an e-mail from Sylvie to her new pen friend, talking about her family and home. The questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. All that is required is to be able to locate the information needed, which can usually be rendered in just one or two words, rather than complete sentences. For example, **Question 17** could be answered with ...*cinq/*5... and **Question 19(i)** with...*l'aînée*... Additional material from the text is ignored by Examiners, as long as it does not contradict the correct answer, but answers do not need to exceed the single line space allowed.

The majority of candidates found this text very accessible, and many scored the maximum marks. The last three questions of the exercise sometimes presented problems. For **Question 23** a number of answers relied on the lift of *Mon père insiste pour que toute la famille mange ensemble le soir...* whereas the answer actually appeared in the next sentence. For **Question 24**, some missed that the parents had bought a dishwasher, and for **Question 25**, the answer offered was sometimes incomplete, since it mentioned e-mail, but not what was to be sent – photographs.

Exercise 2 Question 26

For this longer piece of writing, candidates were given the topic of school life. The three tasks given were:

(a) a description of the school day they prefer.
(b) the teacher they like best and their reason(s) for admiring this particular person.
(c) what career they would like in the future, and why.

10 marks are available for the communication of relevant points, spread flexibly across the tasks. There were many maximum scores for communication, though some candidates did not give enough details to score full marks and some candidates never really got to grips with the task in part **(a)** – they talked readily about their school and how they get there, but the question asked them to identify and describe their favourite day, and a number of candidates did not do this.

Part **(b)** was generally done very well, with candidates at ease talking about their favourite teacher(s) and why they liked them. For part **(c)** many confused *métier* with *matières* and talked about the school subjects they wanted to study rather than their future career – credit was allowed for this, as well as for more long term future plans.

For accuracy, 5 marks are available, using a banded mark scheme. Many candidates also scored the maximum here. They used straightforward vocabulary and structures and were able to use a range of verbs with some success, writing reasonably accurately and coherently. Candidates would be well advised to keep their answers close to the suggested word limit, allowing them to spend any spare time checking through their work for spelling, genders and adjective agreements, and subject and verb accord.

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Section 3

In this section, candidates are asked to read two longer texts and answer questions appropriately. In ***Section 2*** in order to score the mark it is sufficient to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in ***Section 3***, candidates need to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and prevent the mark from being awarded.

Exercise 1 Questions 27-32

The text here concerns Stéphane, and his project to help young people. The rubric gives the information that 2 of the statements are true, and 4 are false, and candidates can score 6 of the 10 marks by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 4 marks are scored by correcting the 4 false statements.

Many candidates were able to identify the true/false statements, but the corrections were not always so successful. For **Question 27**, a number of candidates talked about Paul leaving school, rather than the simple answer that it was Paul who went to work in the factory. In answer to **Question 28**, many candidates thought it was Stéphane's uncle who had encouraged him, rather than his brother, so did not score. Corrections for **Questions 30** and **32** were more successful.

Exercise 2 Questions 33-41

For the final exercise of the paper, candidates were given a text about Gustave Eiffel. Candidates need to make sure that they read each question with care, and that their answer is focused on what the question actually asks.

Question 33 proved unexpectedly challenging to many candidates who tried to answer by lifting a long sentence from the text – the simplest answer of all was the single word *Paris.* For **Question 34**, many candidates confused the verb *élever* with the noun *élève* and ended up suggesting that the grandmother was Gustave's teacher, rather than that she had brought up him and his brothers. The remaining questions were answered more successfully, particularly **Questions 37** and **40**. For **Question 41**, candidates needed to make it clear that *Jacqueline dit / insiste / assure qu'elle est plus belle en réalité.* Direct speech was not accepted for the answer.

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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:

- read all instructions, questions and texts very carefully.
- answer comprehension questions with brief but focused answers.
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice.
- make any alterations to answers clear.
- allow themselves time to check their work.

General comments

In general, candidates found this paper very accessible. They appeared well prepared and accustomed to the type of exercises found on the paper.

Candidates are not expected to write answers longer than the line spaces provided on the paper, and it is often an advantage to keep answers short and focused.

There were no signs that candidates had not had sufficient time to complete the paper. Any time left after they have finished may profitably be spent checking that they have answered all the questions, that where they have been able to use material directly from the text it has been copied correctly, and that where they have changed their mind about the answer to a question, their final answer is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

These questions were generally very well answered, though for **Question 4**, C was sometimes given rather than B.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Candidates were generally able to locate the vocabulary items correctly – *couverture* (for **Question 6**) was perhaps the least well known item.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

For this exercise, candidates were asked to read a short e-mail about school holidays and answer multiple choice questions. Most managed to score very well, with many achieving the maximum 5 marks.

Exercise 4 Question 16

This task asked candidates to write a preliminary e-mail to a new French pen friend, giving 3 items of information, based on the pictures provided:

(a) their age (16)
(b) what they like at school (picture of scientific/lab equipment)
(c) how they travel to school (on foot)

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For **(a)**, candidates were expected to write *J'ai seize/16 ans* – and a variety of spellings for *seize* were accepted. For **(b)**, answers needed to supply *J'aime...* plus some reference to science, or individual scientific subjects, or laboratory experiments. For the last element, candidates needed to communicate that they walked to school, eg by writing *Je vais à l'école à pied* or acceptable alternatives such as *marcher* and *se promener*. Minor spelling errors were tolerated.

In this question, marks are awarded separately for communication and for language, with 1 mark each for communicating the 3 elements and 2 marks for appropriate use of language. Most candidates were able to score at least 2 of the communication marks, though some failed to score because, instead of writing what the pictures represented, they gave their actual age (15/17), and means of transport to school (by car or by bus).

In order to score the 2 marks for language, candidates must use 2 verbs correctly, and in appropriate tenses. For example, those who used *être* to express their age as 16 were awarded the communication mark, but no mark for language, and similarly with *Je aime*... or *Je adore…* – one mark for communication, but 0 for appropriate language.

Some candidates expanded on the required 3 elements; there is no need to add any extra material and there is **no additional credit** available for this, since marks are only awarded for rendering the stipulated elements.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-23

For this exercise, candidates are asked to read a longer text, an e-mail from Caroline to her friend Angélique, relating her difficulties with her little sister Sophie. The questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. All that is required is to be able to locate the information needed, which can usually be rendered in just one or two words, rather than complete sentences. For example, **Question 19(a)** could be answered simply with ...*Sophie / sœur*. Additional material from the text is ignored by Examiners, as long as it does not contradict the correct answer, but answers do not need to exceed the single line space allowed.

Candidates found this exercise very accessible, and many scored the maximum marks. Answers to **Question 19(b)** sometimes showed confusion over who had written the message on the door. For **Question 22**, candidates did not always make it clear that Sophie would be sharing Caroline's room. The other questions were well answered.

Exercise 2 Question 24

For this longer piece of writing, candidates were given the topic of a person they admired. The three tasks given were:

(a) a description of the person they admire.
(b) their reason(s) for admiring this particular person.
(c) what activity they would like to share with this person during the next weekend.

10 marks are available for the communication of relevant points, spread flexibly across the tasks. There were many maximum scores for communication, though some candidates did not address the third part of the question. Those who chose a family member were generally able to provide plenty of points, though it was sometimes harder for those who chose a pop star to imagine an activity they could undertake together at the weekend.

For accuracy, 5 marks are available, using a banded mark scheme. Many candidates also scored the maximum here. They used straightforward vocabulary and structures and were able to use a range of verbs with some success, writing reasonably accurately and coherently. Candidates would be well advised to keep their answers close to the suggested word limit, allowing them to spend any spare time checking through their work for spelling, genders and adjective agreements, and subject and verb accord.

Section 3

In this section, candidates are asked to read two longer texts and answer questions appropriately. In ***Section 2*** in order to score the mark it is sufficient to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in

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Section 3, candidates need to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and prevent the mark from being awarded.

Exercise 1 Questions 25-30

The text here concerns Marc and his encounter with Amisam and subsequent commitment to fundraising for a new school. The rubric gives the information that 2 of the statements are true, and 4 are false, and candidates can score 6 of the 10 marks by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 4 marks are scored by correcting the 4 false statements.

Many candidates were able to identify the true/false statements, but the corrections were not always so successful. Most managed reasonably well with **Questions 26**, **28** and **30**. **Question 29** proved more problematic, as it needed to be made clear that Marc did not use his salary to fund the new school, because he had, in fact, given up his job in order to look for sponsors who were willing to provide the necessary funds for construction.

Exercise 2 Questions 31-38

For this last exercise, candidates are given a longer text, with questions about it to be answered in French. Most candidates seem to have found this relatively straightforward, though **Question 31** needed some mention that Yann had been lost at sea / after a storm – it was not enough to say ...*son bateau a été retrouvé sans personne à bord*... **Question 33** was the only other question which caused some general difficulties, with many mentioning that Monsieur Dumas was ...*choqué par la pauvreté de la famille et le froid dans la maison*... rather than the response to part **(a)** that... *il était son professeur / elle était son élève*... and to part **(b)** that ...*il est allé chez elle lui apporter du travail scolaire*. The remaining questions were all very well answered.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/03
Speaking

Key messages

- Candidates who performed well in the Role plays were as concise as possible and kept to the tasks as stated on the Role play cards. Good Examiners did not create or change cues and tasks.
- Timings were usually correctly observed. In some Centres, the conversation sections were too short or too long. In a few cases a conversation section was missed out, restricting the marks the candidate could be awarded.
- Most Centres remembered to include questions in **both** conversation sections to elicit past and future tenses from candidates. Such tense usage is essential if candidates are to score more than 6 marks for Linguistic content.
- As in 2012, the best performances at all levels of ability were in Centres where there had not been over preparation of work and where spontaneous and natural conversations were allowed to develop. In such Centres, candidates were given the opportunity to respond not just to straightforward questions, but also to unexpected ones, enabling them to develop their answers and include ideas and opinions.
- While the breadth of topic coverage was good in most Centres, a few Centres needed to cover a wider range of topics. In some Centres, there was a tendency to cover far more than the suggested two or three topics with each candidate in the General conversation, which greatly restricted the opportunities for candidates to develop their answers.
- The quality of recordings continues to improve.
- Centres using more than one Examiner were not always aware of the correct procedure for internal moderation. Feedback to such Centres was provided by the Moderator and should be acted upon in future sessions.

General comments

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

The standard of work heard was good and similar to that heard in previous years. Most Examiners had familiarised themselves with the format of the test and conducted the examination efficiently. In the Role plays, Examiners were usually careful to adhere to the given cues, prompting where necessary and encouraging candidates to work for marks. It should be noted that Examiners who changed the tasks, added to them, or who had not prepared their roles fully, added to the difficulty of this section of the test for their candidates. The majority of Examiners understood the need to give candidates the opportunity to show what they knew and could do in the conversation tests. Candidates were generally aware of the demands of the test and had done the necessary preparation.

Centres are reminded that while Examiners should be granted access to the confidential test materials (Teachers' notes booklet/Role play cards) in the four working days before the first Speaking test is conducted, so that they can prepare the Role plays, **it is the Centre's responsibility to ensure that the contents of these materials remain confidential and are not shared with candidates**. The Teachers' notes booklet and Role play cards must be returned to the Centre's secure storage facility whenever preparation is not taking place and after each session of examining. Once the last Speaking test has been conducted, the materials must remain in secure storage until the end of the Speaking test period. Centres are also reminded that candidates must not be permitted to do any writing during their preparation time or in the examination and must therefore not be allowed to bring any pens/pencils etc with them into the preparation area. There must be no whispering between the Examiner and candidate in the examination: communication between the Examiner and the candidate must be clearly audible on the recording. Candidates must not bring mobile phones into the preparation/examination area and Examiners' phones must remain switched off.

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Examiners need to understand the requirements of the mark scheme in order that they ask the right sort of questions which will stretch candidates and give them the opportunity to fulfil the descriptors in the higher mark bands. For example, Examiners who included unexpected questions and went beyond straightforward 'closed' questions gave candidates the possibility of scoring in the Good band or above on scale (a), Comprehension/responsiveness. **It is also essential to include questions which will elicit past and future tenses in both conversation sections as candidates need to show they can use both of these tenses accurately for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded on scale (b), Linguistic content.**

The full requirements of the test are clearly laid out in the Teachers' notes booklet and all Centres are strongly advised to read through a past paper well in advance of the test so that they have plenty of time 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 clerical work had been completed efficiently and Centres are thanked for this. Moderators reported fewer clerical errors than last year, but there are still cases of large errors. In some cases, the addition of marks was incorrect and in others, although the marks had been added up correctly on the working mark sheet, an incorrect total was then transferred to the MS1 mark sheet/computer. It is essential that all clerical work is checked with great care to ensure that all candidates receive the correct mark. On the working marking sheet, the addition of the individual marks for each candidate must 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. Please note that Centres must include the Moderator copy of the MS1 mark sheet or a print-out of the marks file with the sample for external moderation.

- **Cover sheet for moderation sample**

This form is intended to serve as a checklist for those in the Centre responsible for preparing the sample for external moderation and despatching it to Cambridge. Completion of this form allows Centres to check that their moderation sample is correct before they despatch it to Cambridge, and the completed form must be submitted to Cambridge with the sample. If there is more than one Examiner per Centre, the relevant section on the form must be completed.

- **Sample size**

Nearly all Centres submitted a correct and representative sample. Please remember that if a Centre has 16 or more candidates, the sample must include the recordings of 16 candidates. Centres with more than one Examiner had clearly gone to some trouble to ensure a good range of marks and Examiners were represented on the sample. New 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.

- **Recording quality and presentation of sample**

Moderators commented that a high proportion of the recordings received were of a very good quality and Centres are thanked for this. Most Centres submitted digital recordings which were clear and easy to access. If cassettes are used, sound levels should be checked prior to recording in order to avoid the problem of muffled recordings. Centres are reminded that whatever the method chosen for recording, if an external microphone is used, this should be positioned to favour the candidate.

In some cases, it was difficult or impossible to access the recorded sample provided by the Centre:

- Several Centres sent blank CDs or CDs of recordings that were barely audible: Centres must check the CD to ensure that their recorded sample is clearly audible before despatching 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, the Centre should get in touch with Cambridge immediately. Centres are reminded of the need to check all recording equipment prior to the live exams.
- Some recordings had not been saved as .mp3 files and could not be accessed by the moderator**: it is essential that files are saved as .mp3**. If new Centres are considering ways to record, it is worth obtaining a digital voice recorder (IC recorder). These are easy to use and the sound quality is excellent. Because the device is small, it helps make the experience less intimidating for candidates.

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- Some Centres sent their recordings on a USB/memory stick. Only CDs/cassettes are accepted by Cambridge.
- Some CDs were damaged when they arrived at Cambridge: CDs/cassettes must be carefully wrapped in some form of protective packaging before they are placed in the envelope with the moderation paperwork. The appropriate label (which includes the Centre name and a bar-code) should then 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.
- In some cases, poor labelling made it difficult for the moderator to establish which recordings had been sent as part of the sample and/or to find the particular recordings required. Please note:
    - The cassette/CD must always be accompanied by a list of the featured recordings (candidate name and number). For cassettes these must be presented in order of play.
    - **On CDs, it is essential that each recording be saved as a separate file**. The recording for each candidate must be saved individually and named as follows, Centre number_candidate number_syllabus number_component number.
    - Each CD/cassette must include a recorded introduction by the Examiner, listing the cassette/CD number, Centre number, examination number, examination name, name of Examiner and date. (For CDs, this introduction can be saved as a separate file (named 'recorded introduction'.)
    - Whether Centres are submitting samples on cassette or CD, the Examiner must introduce each candidate on the recorded sample by name and number, and also state the Role play card number. This announcement must not be made by the candidate.

In addition to the above, Centres are reminded to avoid sticking labels on CDs and to only write on the surface of the CD with a CD-friendly pen.

- **Internal moderation in Centres**

The standard of internal moderation in those large Centres **which had been given permission** to use more than one Examiner was generally good and was sometimes extremely good. In such cases, great care had been taken to ensure the consistent application of the mark scheme across different examining groups and a clear explanation of how this consistency had been achieved was enclosed, in line with requirements.

Moderators did, however, comment that there were more cases this year of incomplete or unclear internal moderation procedures in Centres which used more than one Examiner. All Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner to conduct the Speaking tests for their candidates are reminded of the need to apply to Cambridge for permission well before the start of **each** Speaking test period. Permission is normally granted, on the understanding that internal standardisation/moderation takes place at the Centre before a sample is chosen for external moderation by Cambridge. In order to assist Centres that have been given permission to use more than one Examiner, Cambridge has produced guidelines for internal standardisation/moderation.

Where more than one Examiner is used, Moderators need to be able to check that all Examiners in the Centre have adopted a uniform approach to the conduct of the test and have applied the mark scheme consistently. Please note, if internal moderation procedures find only minor differences between the marking of an Examiner and the agreed Centre standard, the marks of candidates in that particular Examiner's group **should not be changed** in the Centre, but should be submitted as they are. In other words, if no adjustment to an Examiner's marks as a whole is necessary, the marks of the specific candidates sampled must not be changed in isolation. However, if after checking the sample for a particular Examiner the decision is taken to adjust that Examiner's marks, **that adjustment must then be applied to the marks of all the candidates who were examined by that Examiner**, and not just to the work of those candidates who were part of the internal check. Likewise, if an Examiner is judged to be out of line over part of the mark range, the marks of all the other candidates s/he examined with a mark in that range should be adjusted. Where a particular Examiner is judged to be out of line, it is good practice to select some more of that Examiner's candidates for a further check.

Where internal moderation is carried out in a Centre it is doubly crucial that the addition of marks is checked for clerical errors before the process begins. This is to avoid the situation where an Examiner's marks are adjusted by the internal moderator on the basis of mark differences created by errors in the adding up.

- **Duration of tests / missing elements**

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Most Centres adhered to the timings stipulated in the syllabus and the Teachers' notes booklet, but some Centres persist in going under or over the five minutes prescribed for the Topic presentation/conversation and/or the General conversation test. Each of these sections **must** last for approximately five minutes. Where conversations are short or missing, candidates will be disadvantaged.

- **Application of the mark scheme**

Examiners were often consistent and fair in the way they applied the mark scheme and in such cases no adjustments were made to marks. In some cases, large adjustments were required to the marks awarded in Centres. Some Centres had adjustments made just to part of the mark range.

In the Role plays, some Examiners did not realise that a short response (in some cases, just one word), if appropriate, can earn a mark of 3. If there are two parts to a task, then Examiners are free to split the task, but should only one part of a task be completed by the candidate, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 1. If a candidate chooses to use a verb to complete a task and makes an error of tense or conjugation, a mark of 2 and not 3 is appropriate. Examiners are reminded that poor pronunciation can be queried if it prevents clear communication of a task.

In the Conversation sections, marking tended to be generous in some Centres, as marks were awarded in the higher bands when there was no evidence that candidates could respond **in a spontaneous way to unexpected questions or that they could communicate consistently and accurately in past and future tenses**. Impression marks were usually awarded fairly in Centres.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

This section of the test was conducted most successfully when Examiners followed the script provided in the Teachers' notes booklet. Examiners are reminded not to change their cues as the level of difficulty of the Role play situations should remain the same for all candidates. Examiners generally prompted candidates when this was necessary, but there are still cases of Examiners not prompting when candidates miss out tasks – candidates should be encouraged to attempt all parts of each task. If only one part of a two-part task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded. As last year, two part tasks were split into (i) and (ii) on the candidate Role play cards. This is intended to help candidates to remember to attempt both parts of the tasks where applicable. Examiners should introduce the Role plays in French and initiate each conversation section. English must not be used to introduce the Role plays.

In preparation for this section of the test, candidates should be reminded that marks are only awarded for completion of the set tasks and encouraged to keep their utterances short and to the point. Where candidates respond at length to the Examiner cues and add material extra to the set task, this additional material may distort meaning and detract from an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should also be reminded to listen carefully to the Examiner, as on all the Role play A situations there is a task which requires them to listen and choose from two options offered by the Examiner. Likewise, on all the Role play B situations there is always one task which requires candidates to respond to an unexpected question.

A Role plays

The A Role plays were found to be of equal difficulty, very similar in difficulty to those of 2012, 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 of the A Role play situations featured a task which required a question to be asked and a task which required candidates to choose an option from two provided by the Examiner. (These options should be offered exactly as they appear in the Teachers' notes booklet and should not be changed by the Examiner.) Candidates generally found the tasks to be accessible and even the weakest candidates were able to score at least 1 mark on each task. Centres had trained candidates well to include a greeting and thanks where required. Centres are reminded that often a short response (perhaps one word) will be appropriate and in such cases a mark of 3 can be awarded.

If it can be done naturally and sympathetically, Examiners should feel free to query pronunciation in the Role plays in cases where mispronunciation renders the message unclear.

In a pizzeria

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Candidates performed well on this Role play. All were able to greet and state either that they wanted a table or that they wanted to buy or eat a pizza. All these approaches were acceptable. Many types of pizza were requested and any understandable variety was accepted. Candidates and Examiners appreciated the need to choose one of the two offered options and most candidates had no trouble choosing between *frites* and *salade.* Most could ask for a drink and many were successful in asking a question. For the latter task, many scored 2 marks rather than 3 because they asked *Où est les toilettes?*

At the railway station

Again, this situation proved to be well within the experience of candidates. All could ask for a ticket, but pronunciation of *billet* was often poor and accentuated the final 't'. Most were able to communicate a date and a time, but were not as successful when choosing which class of ticket they required. Many chose to ask if there was Internet on the train. Prepositions were often incorrect for this task, but this was seen to be a minor error and good marks were often scored, provided that candidates used a correct question form.

Buying cinema tickets

This was clearly a familiar context for many candidates and all could request a ticket. Again, the pronunciation of *ticket/billet* was not always accurate. Alternatively, the use of *places* was acceptable. Examiners should feel able to query unclear pronunciation as it is acceptable for candidates to correct themselves in order to make their message clear. The second task was well done with nearly all candidates able to make a choice from the two options. The third task, however, proved difficult for some in terms of pronunciation and there was at times confusion between the pronunciation of *deux/douze*. Most were able to communicate an appropriate age even if they gave *Je suis* instead of *J'ai.* The last task, which required a question, was done well.

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, apologise or express displeasure. The level of challenge was balanced across the Role plays. As last year, 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 preparation time, immediately prior to the Speaking test, and to listen carefully in the examination room.

Asking permission to go out with friends

Candidates were comfortable with the context of the Role play and usually managed to state that they wanted to go out with friends without too much difficulty. The unexpected question was answered well by candidates, but not all were as confident on the third task which required them to state how they would get back and with whom. The fourth task was found to be the most challenging. Candidates needed to be able to give an apology and then say why they had got in late the night before. Centres should note that the cue used to give an apology (*Faites vos excuses)* is a standard one and that candidates need to be able to cope with the notion of apologising. Most made a good attempt at the last task where there were several ways of asking to be allowed to come home at a later time.

Phoning a friend to say you are ill

Candidates were usually able to convey the idea that they were ill, but *J'ai malade* was often heard. Candidates sometimes only gave one symptom instead of two and in such cases were not always prompted by Examiners to give a second symptom and thus to work for the full 3 marks available on the task. The third task, which required a response to an unexpected question, caused difficulties for some who were perhaps not familiar with the expression *tomber malade.* The minimalist response *hier* was sufficient to gain the 3 marks available. Again, as on the previous B Role play, some were not able to apologise, but most could gain a mark for suggesting a sporting activity of some sort for the following Saturday. There was some confusion on the last task: weaker candidates said they would make the reservation rather than asking that their friend do it. Candidates should be reminded that there is always a task which requires them to ask a question.

Phoning a taxi company

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The first task required a greeting and a simple rephrasing of the rubric with something such as *Mon taxi est en retard.* Candidates who said they wanted to reserve a taxi did not fulfil the task. The second task was usually well done. All could identify themselves and were usually able to give a destination. The answer to the unexpected question was not always successful, with some not hearing the *Quand?*. On task four, some were not able to express their displeasure and, even though suggestions were provided, candidates were not always able to give a reason for their trip. The last task was usually successfully completed despite some mispronunciations of *crédit.*

Topic presentation and conversation

The standard of work heard in this section covered the full range of performance. The whole section (Topic presentation plus Topic conversation) should last for about five minutes. As last year, the timings were generally good. The instructions state that the presentation by the candidate should last between one and two minutes, and candidates must not be allowed to present their prepared material for longer than this. The remainder of the five minutes allocated to this section of the test should be spent on the follow-up conversation. Most Centres were accurate in their timings but there were cases of overlong presentations (which then cut short the time available for the follow-up questions) and there were also cases of very short presentations. In both of these scenarios, candidates are likely to be disadvantaged. Examiners should not ask questions too early during the presentation time, but must start asking questions if the candidate has spoken on their chosen topic for two minutes.

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. While Examiners were usually aware of the need to elicit both past and future tenses, in a few Centres, questions to test different tenses were not asked in the Topic conversation, limiting the mark for Linguistic content to 6.

Centres are clearly warning candidates not to choose 'Myself' as their topic. New Centres should note that this is not a suitable topic for this section of the exam as it can become too much like the General conversation and leave little material to explore in the final section of the examination. It should also be noted that it is not in the spirit of the syllabus that all candidates in a Centre/teaching group prepare the same topic.

Candidates had usually prepared themselves for this part of the test and were enthusiastic about their chosen topic. Many talked about famous people, including sportsmen and women, musicians and film stars. Topics on the environment and healthy living continue to grow in popularity. *Mes vacances, mes projets d'avenir, mon école, le sport, mes ambitions* and *mes loisirs* continue to be popular and many candidates did themselves justice on these topics. This year there were also interesting topics on fashion, traditions and festivals and, by coincidence, Nelson Mandela. Given the very international nature of this candidature, there continue to be fascinating accounts about life in other countries. Many candidates chose to speak about *mon pays* and this often proved to be a very interesting and appropriate topic. Examiners are, however, reminded that with such topics they need to avoid asking questions which require the candidate to provide precise geographical or statistical knowledge. Instead, questioning could focus on what the candidates find interesting/like/dislike etc about their country and why.

The best performances came from candidates who had worked hard to equip themselves with the vocabulary and structures they needed to present their topic, and who could then maintain the level they achieved in the presentation in the follow-up conversation. Such performances were possible where the Examiner allowed a genuine conversation to develop, listening carefully to what the candidate had to say and asking both straightforward and unexpected questions, which arose naturally from the presentation and allowed the candidate to express not just factual information, but also give their opinions and feelings about the topic. Candidates should be reminded that their delivery of the presentation can affect the quality of their performance – if their delivery is too fast, or there are a lot of mispronunciations, the message may become unclear.

General conversation

Most Centres understood that this section of the test should consist of five minutes of discussion and that questions should focus on two or three of the examination topics listed in the syllabus and should encourage better candidates to develop their answers and introduce more complex structures. There was still a tendency in some Centres to ask each candidate a series of questions on a large number of topics with no

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attempt to connect these questions to each other in a logical fashion. With weaker candidates who can only answer 'closed', superficial questions, it may be necessary to cover more than two or three topics, but care must still be taken to link questions and clearly signal any change of topic so as not cause confusion.

Different topics should be covered with different candidates in order to ensure good syllabus coverage for the Centre as a whole. It is not acceptable to habitually cover the same two or three topics with each candidate. In a small number of Centres, while a variety of topics were covered across the candidature, on each occasion that a topic was covered, the same questions were asked: this approach must also be avoided. While it is common practice to make use of banks of questions in the classroom, reliance on such banks in the live Speaking test will result in stilted conversations which do not flow naturally and where the candidate seems to be delivering a series of pre-learnt mini presentations. The descriptors in the Mark scheme refer to a hierarchy of questions, moving from straightforward to unexpected questions, in both conversation sections. In order to access marks in the higher bands, candidates need to do more than answer a series of straightforward, predictable questions. They should also be able to answer unexpected questions, requiring opinions and justifications and the use of more complex language and structures. It was noted by Moderators that there seemed to be a greater awareness in Centres this year of the need to systematically include questions to test past and future tenses. Wherever possible, Examiners should try to ensure that relevant questions to test for past and future tenses are asked on each topic discussed with the candidate so as to ensure that plenty of opportunities to use tenses are given.

As always, a wide range of performance was heard by Moderators. Good numbers showed that they could communicate effectively across a range of topics and, in many instances, candidates not only communicated their message clearly, but could do so in accurate language which showed control of structure and lexis and accurate use of tenses. Candidates who could go beyond straightforward responses, who could respond naturally to unexpected questions, and who could develop their answers to include opinions and justifications, scored high marks for Comprehension/responsiveness. Finally, it was clear from the work heard in many Centres that oral work has become central to foreign language learning activities in IGCSE classrooms and many of the candidates heard by Moderators were enthusiastic about speaking French.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/41
Continuous Writing

Key messages

The more successful candidates' work was characterised by the following features:

- The demands of the rubric were observed throughout.
- The length of each answer was between 130 and 140 words as directed.
- The answers were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- The candidate balanced ambition with the need for linguistic accuracy.
- Presentation was good.

General comments

The entry for the November series continues to grow and the quality of large numbers of scripts remains high. The best candidates rose to the challenge and produced responses which did them great credit. The majority made the best use of their knowledge and ability and presented answers which addressed the tasks in the proper manner, showing good control of the language at their disposal. A number of candidates did not make the most of their opportunity and it is to this group that the following advice is addressed.

Candidates are reminded that specific marks are given for conveying the information required by each task in the rubric. When a task is omitted, the candidate automatically limits the number of marks s/he can access. It is important to observe the tense employed in the stimulus and to use the same tense in the response. In **Question 1**, candidates are required to use three different time-frames, present, past and future. In **Question 2**, the narrative should be expressed in past tenses, as indicated. In **Question 2**, three marks for communication are given for recounting events and two for the candidate's reactions to these events. If these reactions are omitted, the candidate limits their maximum mark for communication to three.

More successful candidates planned their answers with care and prepared a plan under certain headings or paragraphs. To an extent, in **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b)** such a framework is provided by the tasks. In **Question 2** candidates must devise their own anecdote, and a number did not give enough thought to planning their answer. The result was that some answers ran to much more than 140 words, and communication points fell outside the word count and could not be credited. Others concluded their answer in about 100 words and either presented a short answer, which restricted access to the full number of language marks, or resorted to verbiage to pad out the story to the required 130-140 words, thus impairing the general impression.

The better candidates composed each sentence carefully and paid particular attention to verb forms. Correct spelling and genders are necessary to gain language marks, and a faulty noun may invalidate verbs, adjectives or prepositions. Verbs must be in the correct tense and person to qualify for marks. Better candidates did not put too much reliance on certain phrases or possessives. They employed a variety of structures which enhanced their work. Examples of good practice were the use of object pronouns, negatives and a range of infinitive constructions. Those of a more modest capacity should try to stay within their limitations and not to be over ambitious. In free or guided composition it is a wise maxim to say what one knows to be correct and to avoid what one does not know or is unsure of. For instance, if one cannot remember *courir*, one should say *marcher vite*. When they have finished an answer, candidates should make full use of the time left to check their work for basic errors. They should look at the spelling and gender of common nouns in particular, and ensure that the gender of the writer is consistent. Accents should be clear and unambiguous.

Presentation is very important. Examiners are not able to reward French they cannot read. In some cases, the handwriting was so difficult to read that the message was obscured.

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1(a) A thank you letter

This question was by far the more popular choice. Candidates were no doubt attracted to the familiar themes of informal letter writing, holidays and leisure activities.

The informal nature of the letter enabled candidates to use the well learned etiquette. Almost all were able to begin with *Cher ami/Chère amie* and to close with *À bientôt* or something similar. As the recipient was a friend it was normal for the candidate to address him/her as *tu*, but Examiners also rewarded the formal *vous*, provided that it was employed consistently.

The first task invited candidates to recall what they enjoyed doing during the stay with the French friend. This required a past tense to secure the mark for communication. Most, sensibly took their cue from the rubric and responded to *ce que vous avez aimé faire* with *J'ai aimé*… and an infinitive such as *faire de la natation*, *jouer au tennis*, *visiter des monuments*, *aller à Paris* and *faire du shopping*. Some overlooked the second element and omitted to give a reason. This was a pity as a simple sentence such as *parce que… je suis sportif*, *j'aime la mode française*, *il faisait beau* or *c'était très intéressant* was sufficient to score the communication mark.

Next, candidates were asked to say how they were spending the remainder of the school holiday now they were back at home (*chez vous*). A present tense was indicated by the rubric, so candidates mentioned their usual leisure pursuits in simple present tenses. Some stayed at home and watched television or played computer games. Some went out cycling or played outdoor games. Others went shopping or to the cinema. Examiners accepted that candidates might say what they had been doing already and rewarded past tenses. A number did not notice *chez vous* and wrote about the end of their stay in France or the journey home.

Quand est-ce que vous allez rentrer à l'école? was usually understood but attempts to answer the question were not always successful. *Je vais rentrer*… was the natural response but a present tense was also rewarded as in *Je rentre à l'école la semaine prochaine/dans huit jours*. It was allowed that the writer had already returned to school, so a past tense was accepted, as in *Je suis rentré(e) la semaine dernière*.

Inviting the friend to stay was handled in a variety of ways. Some put *Je t'invite à passer deux semaines chez moi/nous*. Others put *Peux-tu/Veux-tu (venir) passer les vacances chez moi?* or used the imperative, *Viens passer* etc. A number wrote *J'invite toi*... This linguistic error was not deemed to impair communication and credit was given. A significant number of candidates were unable to perform this task.

Question 1(b) School uniforms

Only a minority chose this topic. They usually expressed distaste for their own uniform but agreed in general that it was desirable for a number of reasons.

Firstly, candidates were asked what clothing they had put on this morning. Better candidates used the perfect tense (*J'ai mis*) and mentioned several items of clothing with colours. Knowledge of clothing vocabulary was uneven. Spelling and gender errors meant that language marks for adjectives could sometimes not be awarded. Some used the present tense of *porter*, which was deemed to be a suitable response. Some seemed to confuse *porter* and *mettre*.

The advantage of a school uniform was said to be that it made for equality among candidates and it resolved the problem of deciding what to wear on a daily basis. Many had difficulty in expressing these concepts. Credit was also given for why candidates liked their own uniform: it was comfortable, inexpensive and practical and they liked the style or the colours.

Disadvantages included the lack of choice for candidates and a loss of identity. Some said it was uncomfortable or drab. Others found it unfashionable. Girls did not like wearing skirts and would prefer trousers or jeans. Unfortunately, some forgot to mention any disadvantages and forfeited a communication mark.

Lastly, candidates were invited to say what they would like to wear at school if they had the choice and why. A conditional tense was indicated and Examiners gave the communication mark for *J'aimerais* or *Je voudrais* with *porter* and suitable items of clothing. Most opted for casual wear. T shirts, jeans and sweat shirts were

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favoured for being 'cool' and they were also practical and comfortable. Some said they were happy to wear their uniform to avoid making decisions. Marks were usually obtained for these tasks.

As mentioned above, many lost marks in their responses to **Question 1(a)** or **1(b)** due to errors of tense and through omitting certain elements. It is most important that candidates address all parts of the questions and that they match the tense of their answers to the tense in the rubric.

Question 2 A holiday job

Candidates approached the topic with enthusiasm and some interesting responses were received. Presumably, many had never been in temporary employment themselves, but they still wrote convincingly about what they thought would be involved. Others no doubt wrote from personal experience. Nearly all understood what was required and attempted an account of work experience, in past tenses as indicated by the question. Most were able to present a piece of about 140 words as recommended.

Three marks were available for 'what they experienced'. This experience was taken to include getting the job, what duties their work involved, what happened during the period of employment and their relations with colleagues. Some needed money to pay for schooling, holidays or clothes. Some got work to help parents. So they consulted the net or the press or asked a relative and found a temporary job. There was a wide variety of employment. Jobs included working in restaurants as waiters, waitresses or cooks, work in garages, shops, farms, offices and schools. The specific tasks candidates did were often well expressed. They prepared food and drinks for customers. They did washing up. They mended engines and bikes. They served the public. They helped nursery teachers. They made tea for the office staff. Some gave private lessons to small children. Some worked for their father and gained rapid advancement to a position of responsibility. Some made new friends among work colleagues or had bad experiences with the boss.

In the majority of cases, candidates enjoyed work as a release from the discipline of school. They liked the freedom, the responsibilities and especially the pay. Others were perhaps more realistic. They found work to be a shock. They had to be punctual and start early in the day. They had to work long hours and put up with difficult clients and workmates. Work was tiring and often boring.

Two communication marks were available for reactions and opinions. Most candidates provided several of these. The work was interesting, tiring or difficult. They felt pleased, more grown up or proud of their efforts. They were happy in work or unhappy. They were glad or sorry when it was over. Candidates had plenty of opinions to express. Marks for reactions could be given at any point in the story and not just at the end.

The best scripts displayed an impressive range of vocabulary and structures which did them great credit. On the other hand, some candidates let themselves down with basic linguistic errors, many of which might have been eliminated with more care and attention to detail. Typical examples were the failure to make adjectives and past participles agree, spelling and gender errors with common nouns, failure to use elision in such cases as *parce que il*…, the misplacement of negative expressions as in *Il est ne content pas*, and especially, wrong verb forms in the perfect tense. Everyday words were confused as when *joli* was used for *heureux* and *écouter* for *entendre*. Acute accents on past participles were missed. Many of these and other careless slips might have been corrected if a more thorough check had been made at the end.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/42
Continuous Writing

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- The candidate balanced ambition with the need for linguistic accuracy.
- Presentation was good.

General comments

The entry for the November series continues to grow and the quality of large numbers of scripts remains high. The best candidates rose to the challenge and produced responses which did them great credit. The majority made the best use of their knowledge and ability and presented answers which addressed the tasks in the proper manner, showing good control of the language at their disposal. A number of candidates did not make the most of their opportunity and it is to this group that the following advice is addressed.

Candidates are reminded that specific marks are given for conveying the information required by each task in the rubric. When a task is omitted, the candidate automatically limits the number of marks s/he can access. It is important to observe the tense employed in the stimulus and to use the same tense in the response. In **Question 1**, candidates are required to use three different time-frames, present, past and future. In **Question 2**, the narrative should be expressed in past tenses, as indicated. In **Question 2**, three marks for communication are given for recounting events and two for the candidate's reactions to these events. If these reactions are omitted, the candidate limits their maximum mark for communication to three.

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1(a) A birthday present

This question was the more popular option as candidates took the opportunity to write on a familiar topic, a letter to a friend about a birthday. Understanding of the tasks was generally good and there was scant incidence of irrelevance. Most had little difficulty in reaching the recommended length of 140 words – in fact some wrote significantly more and forfeited a communication mark if a task fell outside the word count.

Nearly all were familiar with the format of an informal letter. They began with *Cher/Chère* and a name and closed with *Amicalement* or *À bientôt* or something similar. A brief enquiry as to the friend's well-being was acceptable but this should not take up too much of the letter. As the recipient was a friend it was normal to address him/her as *tu* but Examiners rewarded the use of the formal *vous* provided that it was employed consistently.

The first two communication points concerned an extraordinary present from the writer's family. Communication marks were obtained for identifying or describing the gift and for giving an opinion of it. Two separate statements were required and most candidates were able to supply them as in: *J'ai reçu un vélo de ma famille/mes parents* or *Mes parents m'ont donné/offert un vélo* followed by *Je pense qu'il est magnifique*. A number put *Mes parents ont donné moi un vélo*: this linguistic error was deemed not to impair communication. A minority thought that *cadeau* meant parcel, but most made it clear what the present was and said what they thought of it. Many lucky candidates received a car, which enabled them to write about the advantages of being able to travel without their parents and to impress their friends when they arrived at school in their own personal vehicle. Some imagined they received a Ferrari while the less fortunate had to be content with a Mini Cooper! Other 'dream presents' included new computers, sophisticated phones and pet dogs. Several received extravagant holidays or even a house. Large sums of money were also welcome.

The third task, how the candidate celebrated his/her birthday, was usually well understood and most attempted answers in past tenses as was required by the rubric. Many began: *Pour célébrer mon anniversaire je suis allé(e)…* or *nous sommes allés…* with a suitable destination and a favourite activity. Touchingly, some of those who had received a sports car enjoyed their birthday playing games with friends and eating sweets and cake, so perhaps they were not as grown up as they implied. Many described a *boum* or a teenage party. Others invited all the family and many friends to the house. They danced and sang, played video games and football. Mother baked a cake and everyone sang *Bon anniversaire*. Some even managed to say *J'ai soufflé mes bougies*. Others celebrated by dining at a restaurant with family or friends. The 'dream menu' often consisted of a pizza and a coke. Others enjoyed a variety of treats. These included visits to the cinema or a *parc d'attractions*, shopping outings and trips to sporting events or discos. Candidates found plenty to say.

The final task was to say how they would spend their birthday next year. Clearly a future context was necessary and many candidates achieved this by saying: *Je voudrais…* with an infinitive. This was the natural and the easiest way to respond to *ce que vous voudriez faire* but credit was also given for the simple future as in: *J'irai au bord de la mer avec mes amis*. The choice of activity often reflected the pleasures enjoyed at yesterday's celebration but some were more ambitious and imagined a more exciting event.

A further mark for communication was awarded for extra detail on either task **(iii)** or task **(iv)**.

Question 1(b) A proposed holiday at a flat in the mountains

Although less popular than the birthday question, this topic inspired some very good answers. Most candidates understood the requirements of the exercise, namely to reply to an invitation to spend holidays at a shared flat with friends. Again, the letter format was generally well handled, but the same difficulties over *tu/vous* occurred as in **1(a)**.

The first task consisted of two elements, the first being to accept the invitation. A mark was awarded for the straightforward statement *J'accepte ton invitation (avec plaisir)* or for the expression of a wish or an availability to undertake the trip as in *Je peux/Je veux bien passer des vacances avec toi dans un appartement*. Alternatively, candidates could obtain the mark for stating suitable dates, using an appropriate verb. This could be expressed by *Je suis/serai libre* or *Je peux venir/passer les vacances…* and a specified period of time such as *entre le 10 et le 25 mai*, *du 10 au 25 mai* or *pour 15 jours à partir du 10 mai*. Some over complicated their explanation of the dates and the message was confused.

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The advantages of a flat were not always obvious. The better answers made reference to economy (*C'est moins cher qu'un hôtel*) and to convenience (*C'est pratique/Ce n'est pas trop grand*). Others referred to comfort as in: *Il ne fait pas froid comme dans une tente*. Some wrote of the freedom a shared flat would offer: *On pourra sortir et rentrer quand on veut*/*Les parents ne seront pas là*. Sharing costs was occasionally mentioned but not usually well expressed. Examiners were tolerant when candidates wrote about the advantages of a specific flat and said how it was close to the beach or the town centre.

Most candidates recognized the need to use past tenses to write about a previous holiday. They often began with *Nous sommes allés/Je suis allé(e) à*… with a destination and went on to relate activities in perfect tenses (*Nous avons fait de la natation/On a fait du ski* etc). Language marks were obtained for regular or common verbs, but reflexives and *être* verbs were not always well handled. Expressions such as *Nous nous sommes bien amusés* were seldom free of error.

Plans for the coming holiday were generally well expressed, as most candidates took the cue from the rubric and put *Je voudrais*… with an infinitive such as *faire des randonnées à pied*, *aller à la pêche* and *visiter des musées*. A minority were confused by the tense variation between tasks **(iii)** and **(iv)**.

An additional communication mark was awarded for extra detail on one of the above tasks.

Question 2 Helping an elderly neighbour who has fallen ill

The demands of the main task (how I helped an ill person) were almost universally understood. Past tenses were necessary to obtain the three communication marks for saying how the narrator helped and what happened and two marks were given for the narrator's reactions.

Some candidates did not recognise the word *voisine*. Others overlooked *âgée* and wrote about a school mate. Examiners were tolerant of such misunderstandings or omissions as long as the basic task, to care for another person, was engaged with. Examiners were also tolerant when candidates were confused by *tomber malade* and wrongly deduced that the neighbour had a fall. A small minority overlooked the gender of the victim and wrote about a man. Provided the gender remained consistent, no loss of marks resulted.

Some began by copying the rubric *Le week-end* etc verbatim. No credit was given for this and this introduction was not included in the word count. Most began their answers correctly at the moment of the phone call as directed by the rubric. It is important to make it clear to candidates that their narrative should start at the point indicated by the question and that communication marks are not available for events leading up to that point.

The more able began with reported speech as in *Elle a dit qu'elle était tombée malade* or *Elle a dit qu'elle était malade*. Some used direct speech as in *Elle a dit 'je suis malade'*. Candidates met with difficulties when they attempted to describe symptoms. Many had trouble saying *Elle avait mal à la gorge* and some used *être* with *avoir soif/faim* and *avoir chaud/froid*. *Elle était fatiguée* was often rendered as *Elle avait fatigué* or *fatigant*. More able candidates produced appropriate lexical items such as *douleur* and *avoir de la fièvre*. Those who thought the neighbour had had an accident often attempted *Elle s'était cassé le bras* but few were successful. If in doubt, it is best to abide by the maxim 'use only the French you know'.

How the narrator helped was generally handled well. Some phoned their parents or the doctor, although only a minority used *téléphoner à* correctly. Others sent for an ambulance. The doctor came and gave the neighbour some tablets. Instead of *Il lui a donné des comprimés*, some put *Il s'a donné des comprimés*. Those who assumed it was an emergency said how the neighbour was taken to hospital. Many mistakenly used *prendre* for *emmener* or *transporter*. Candidates were on safer ground when they kept to minor ailments and concentrated on how they helped with household tasks. An impressive number could say *J'ai fait la cuisine/le repassage/la lessive/la vaisselle/le jardinage*. Others kept to simple tasks such as making tea, preparing sandwiches, visiting regularly and generally being a good neighbour. They watched television with the sick person. They played games. They read books and went on walks. They did the shopping and fetched medicine from the pharmacy. There was some confusion over *médecine*, *médicaments* and *médecin*. The neighbour was happy to have the company and usually made a good recovery, although this proved to be difficult to express. Only the best knew *Elle allait bien* or *Elle allait mieux*. The good Samaritan was relieved or joyful, which enabled the candidate to score a communication mark for a *réaction*. In a small number of cases the elderly neighbour died, which made the narrator sad. When she recovered it filled the narrator with pride. Some very thoughtful work was produced as candidates told a 'real life' story with a degree of sympathy and even occasional humour.

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Reactions were usually well expressed and candidates were usually aware of the need to supply at least two reactions to maximise their marks for communication. However, some omitted them altogether, in spite of the rubric and forfeited the chance to gain two marks. Others left their reactions until the very end and sometimes these could not score as they fell outside the word count of 140 words. Marks for reactions may be secured at any point in the narrative.

The best scripts displayed an impressive range of vocabulary and structures which did them great credit. On the other hand, some candidates let themselves down with basic errors which might have been avoided with more care and attention to detail. Typical examples were the failure to make adjectives and past participles agree, spelling and gender errors with common nouns, wrong verb forms and failure to make elision in *parce que il*… Everyday words were confused as when *joli* was used for *heureux*, *pleuvoir* for *pleurer*, *écouter* for *entendre*, *regarder* for *voir* and even *devoir* for *dire*. Acute accents on past participles were frequently omitted and negatives misplaced as in *Elle était ne contente pas*. These errors and others could have been corrected if a thorough check at the end had taken place.

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FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/43
Continuous Writing

Key messages

The more successful candidates' work was characterised by the following features:

- The demands of the rubric were observed throughout.
- The length of each answer was between 130 and 140 words as directed.
- The answers were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- The candidate balanced ambition with the need for linguistic accuracy.
- Presentation was good.

General comments

The entry for the November series continues to grow and the quality of large numbers of scripts remains high. The best candidates rose to the challenge and produced responses which did them great credit. The majority made the best use of their knowledge and ability and presented answers which addressed the tasks in the proper manner, showing good control of the language at their disposal. A number of candidates did not make the most of their opportunity and it is to this group that the following advice is addressed.

Candidates are reminded that specific marks are given for conveying the information required by each task in the rubric. When a task is omitted, the candidate automatically limits the number of marks s/he can access. It is important to observe the tense employed in the stimulus and to use the same tense in the response. In **Question 1**, candidates are required to use three different time-frames, present, past and future. In **Question 2**, the narrative should be expressed in past tenses, as indicated. In **Question 2**, three marks for communication are given for recounting events and two for the candidate's reactions to these events. If these reactions are omitted, the candidate limits their maximum mark for communication to three.

More successful candidates planned their answers with care and prepared a plan under certain headings or paragraphs. To an extent, in **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b)** such a framework is provided by the tasks. In **Question 2** candidates must devise their own anecdote, and a number did not give enough thought to planning their answer. The result was that some answers ran to much more than 140 words, and communication points fell outside the word count and could not be credited. Others concluded their answer in about 100 words and either presented a short answer, which restricted access to the full number of language marks, or resorted to verbiage to pad out the story to the required 130-140 words, thus impairing the general impression.

The better candidates composed each sentence carefully and paid particular attention to verb forms. Correct spelling and genders are necessary to gain language marks, and a faulty noun may invalidate verbs, adjectives or prepositions. Verbs must be in the correct tense and person to qualify for marks. Better candidates did not put too much reliance on certain phrases or possessives. They employed a variety of structures which enhanced their work. Examples of good practice were the use of object pronouns, negatives and a range of infinitive constructions. Those of a more modest capacity should try to stay within their limitations and not to be over ambitious. In free or guided composition it is a wise maxim to say what one knows to be correct and to avoid what one does not know or is unsure of. For instance, if one cannot remember *courir*, one should say *marcher vite*. When they have finished an answer, candidates should make full use of the time left to check their work for basic errors. They should look at the spelling and gender of common nouns in particular, and ensure that the gender of the writer is consistent. Accents should be clear and unambiguous.

Presentation is very important. Examiners are not able to reward French they cannot read. In some cases, the handwriting was so difficult to read that the message was obscured.

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1(a) A reply to an invitation

About half of the candidates opted for this question. Most began and ended their letter with appropriate *politesses*. The informal nature of this letter meant candidates began aptly with *Cher/Chère* and a name and ended with *Amicalement* or *À bientôt* or something similar. A brief enquiry as to the friend's well-being at the start was acceptable, but this should not occupy too much of the letter. As the recipient was a friend, it was normal to address him/her as *tu* but Examiners rewarded the use of *vous*, provided that it was employed consistently.

Understanding of the tasks was usually good. The majority wrote correctly in anticipation of a holiday at the seaside and only a small minority wrote about a holiday which had already taken place.

The first task included two elements, the first being to accept the invitation to spend a week by the sea with the French friend. The communication mark was awarded for the straightforward *J'accepte ton invitation (avec plaisir)* or for the expression of a wish or an availability to make the trip (*Je peux/pourrai* or *Je veux/voudrais passer une semaine chez toi*). Alternatively, candidates could obtain a mark for stating suitable dates, using an appropriate verbal construction. This could be expressed by *Je serai/suis libre* or *Je peux/pourrais venir chez toi* and a period of time (*entre le 10 et le 17 mai*, *du 10 au 17 mai* or *pour 8 jours à partir du 10 mai*). Those who achieved both elements scored two communication marks, but if only one part was rendered correctly, a bonus mark could be obtained for extra details in the other tasks.

Next, candidates were required to say why they were happy to go to the seaside. Many different answers were received, most saying because they loved the beach or because they enjoyed swimming or other water sports.

A number of candidates did not seem to grasp that the next task was to say what preparations they had already made for their holiday (*ce que vous avez déjà fait pour organiser votre voyage*). Even the more able occasionally omitted the task. A perfect tense was required in the response. The preparations usually included buying beach clothes or travel tickets and obtaining passports and currency.

Candidates had rather more success in saying what presents they wanted to bring for their hosts. The most common formula was to employ the phrase used in the stimulus, in this case *Je voudrais apporter*… (some used *acheter)* with a gift such as *des chocolats* or *une bouteille de vin*.

Most candidates adhered to the tasks without resorting to any irrelevance or verbiage, and wrote 140 words without difficulty. Those who exceeded the word limit forfeited communication marks when a task fell outside the word count.

Question 1(b) Cinema

The quality of answers was not generally of the same standard as those for **1(a)**. This was possibly because the letter to a friend about holiday plans was a more familiar area than the topic of the cinema.

As in **Question 1(a)** it was important to use tenses appropriate to the tasks. The first task, to describe a visit to the cinema, invited a past tense. Candidates of average and above average standard normally began with *Je suis allé(e) au cinema*… and provided details as directed by the rubric (*la semaine dernière, près de chez nous, avec mes amis* and/or *pour voir* and the name of a film).

'What kind of film do you prefer?' invited the simple *J'aime/Je préfère les films d'action, les films d'aventure, les films sci-fi, les comédies* etc. Some mistakenly referred to a specific film or lost the communication mark for using *préférez* unchanged from the question paper.

The past tense in the third task (*Avez-vous aimé*…?) was not always observed in the response and the reason for liking it (*Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?*) was often omitted. This was a pity as a simple statement such as …*parce que c'était drôle/passionnant/intéressant/ennuyeux* etc was sufficient to secure the mark. Stronger candidates described the film in question in some detail and showed good language skills.

The majority recognized the need for the future tense in response to the last task, 'When will you next visit the cinema?'. Some took the lead from the rubric and wrote *J'irai*… while others opted for *Je voudrais aller*…

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which was also accepted. The time frame was indicated by *la semaine prochaine, lundi, ce soir* or other points in the future. Some ignored *quand*? and lost the mark for simply saying which film they would see.

Question 2 A lost passport

The narrative question was tackled with relish by the more able candidates who seized the opportunity to display their French. Some lively and incident packed accounts were presented. Weaker candidates usually had a clear understanding of the task and notwithstanding linguistic limitations, were able to write about 140 words relating a series of events with suitable reactions on the part of the narrator.

The majority began at the point when the narrator realized s/he could not find the passport. It should be remembered that the verbatim copying out of the rubric at the start (*Je ne pouvais pas…*) is not included in the word count and gains no credit for language or communication. As the candidate was directed to *continuez l'histoire*, marks for communication were awarded only for events which happened from the moment of realising the passport was lost onwards.

Most assumed that they were about to leave their home country by air for a foreign destination, but full credit was also given to those who had just arrived by plane at an airport and had presumably lost the document in transit. Three communication marks were awarded for events expressed in past tenses which occurred during the attempts to solve the problem. No language marks were awarded for the use of tenses other than the past. Two communication marks were awarded for reactions to these events. The initial response to losing the passport (*furieux, malheureux* etc) was an early opportunity to gain a mark for a reaction. Candidates often kept back their *réactions* until the end but these may be gained at any point of the narrative. When the reactions came at the end, the marks could not be awarded if they fell outside the word count in an over long answer.

As much of the story was related in the first person, it was important that the gender of the narrator remained the same throughout. It was a common error to vary the masculine and feminine agreements on adjectives and past participles. When this happened, Examiners rewarded only the gender which occurred the more often.

Attempts to recover the passport usually began with a search through luggage, pockets and handbags. Some used *chercher mon sac* when *fouiller mon sac* (to search through my bag) was intended. Others seemed to confuse *chercher* with *trouver*. The next resort was often to phone parents for advice or to ask them to look for the passport at home. Few seemed to know that *téléphoner* is followed by *à*. Some went in search of the taxi driver who drove them to the airport in case they had dropped the passport in the cab. Others enquired of airport employees or the police. Not all knew that *demander* required an indirect object with a person. Some dashed home in a taxi only to find the said document in their bedroom. In these cases they usually missed the flight! There was high drama and confusion, often related with a touch of humour. In the end the *problème* was *résolu* and the passport recovered by the narrator. Someone handed it in or it was in the narrator's pocket all the time. He or she then boarded his/her plane or returned home sadly, unable to make the journey. Many berated themselves for their folly (*J'étais stupide/bête*). Others were miserable or relieved. This closing reflection often delivered a communication point for a reaction.

A number of candidates, who had performed well in **Question 1**, had less success in the narrative when a less structured exercise was involved. It is as well to revise thoroughly the perfect and imperfect tenses of regular and common irregular verbs in preparation for this question. It is also strongly recommended to spend time at the end to check for simple errors. It is a pity when marks are lost unnecessarily through careless spelling, inconsistent genders and missed agreements which could have been corrected with a little more care and attention to detail.

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